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Template for Composer Research Using the *Composers Datebook*

Estimated Time:
- 2 sessions, 45 -55 minutes of instructional time each
- 10 – 20 minutes of initial prep

This lesson template combines the K-W-L Plus strategy for reading comprehension with a modified version of the Facets Model for musical and arts understanding. The intent is to provide music and language arts teachers with a resource to quickly develop an interdisciplinary research project using any of the composers featured on the *Composers Datebook* website archive. Students will practice listening and reading comprehension skills as they conduct research on a chosen composer.

The Facets Model was developed to promote the comprehensive study of a musical work and to enhance a student's understanding of that work. For a detailed description and explanation of the Facets Model, visit the BandQuest website (a program of the American Composers Forum):
http://www.bandquest.org/teachers/facets2.shtml.

Materials:
- Computer with Internet connection and speakers.
- Print out and copies of KWL-Plus and Composer Summary worksheets for each student.
- Optional: Transparencies of teacher-selected poems (see prep step 1 below) and "Poetic Commentary" worksheet.
- For session 2, a networked computer with headphones for each student.

Objectives for Middle and High School Students:
- Students will use printed and audio resources to research a composer.
- Students will apply the KWL – Plus strategy and an adaptation of the Facets Model as they research a composer.

Correlations with the Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts

Grade	Subject	Strand	Sub-Strand	Standard	Benchmark(s)
6 -8	Arts	Artistic Interpretation	Music	The student will understand and use artistic processes to analyze and interpret a variety of works in at least two of the three arts areas required to be offered by a school from the following: dance, music, theater, and visual arts.	2. understand the connection between a work of music, its purpose, and its cultural and historical contexts; 4. communicate a personal reaction to performances of original works, compositions, or interpretations and performances of existing music using the components of music;
9 – 12	Arts	Analysis and Interpretation	Music	The student will understand and apply artistic process to analyze, interpret, and evaluate art works in at least one of the three arts areas required to be offered by a school from the following: … music, …	1. understand how a synthesis of the following components of music is used to define a composition, interpretation, or performance in music: a. elements, including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, and form; b. vocabulary; c. styles, such as blues, jazz, or opera; d. structures, such as ABA; and 2. understand the similarities and differences among the structures and styles within music; 6. analyze and interpret music through its historical, cultural, or social context; 8. articulate informed evaluations of performances of original compositions or the interpretations and performances of existing compositions using selected criteria.

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PREP: Estimated time: 10 – 20 minutes

1) Peruse the *Composers Datebook* archive (http://composersdatebook.publicradio.org/listings/) for specific composers you'd like your students to research. Each program contains one or more vetted links to further information about the featured composer. Review these links to be sure they are still active and information is useful.

2) Bookmark the program with which you intend to start the project.

3) Test your speaker set-up to be sure the audio clip can be heard throughout your classroom.

4) Locate black/whiteboard space, transparency paper, etc. for space to write class observations.

5) Print off and make enough copies of the attached worksheets for each student in your class. Consider making a transparency of each worksheet to model the K-W-L Plus strategy and the Facets Model.

6) Think through what in particular you expect your students to learn and which facets you think your students will be able to answer given the information contained in the program.

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INSTRUCTION:

Session 1: Introducing KWL Plus and the composer/piece to be studied.
Estimated time: 35 - 40 minutes, depending on how long the class continues its discussion.

1) **5 minutes:** Distribute the K-W-L Plus worksheet and review/introduce the types of information that belongs in each column (K for what one already knows, W for "want to find out", L for "what was learned").

2) **5 minutes:** Ask your students to share what they already know about the composer you've chosen for them.

3) **5 minutes:** Summarize your students' responses on the white/blackboard area you reserved or on a transparency. Then direct your students to write these ideas down in the "K – Know" column.

4) **5 minutes:** Play the program. Keep the Real Player application open in case you need to rewind or advance the clip to review or make a point.

5) **5 minutes:** Review the K-W-L Plus sheet together. What new information do they now know from listening to the program? Add that information to the "K –Know" column.

6) **5 minutes:** Discuss with your students what they think they would like to learn or need to learn about the composer or musical work? Display the Facets Model to prompt your students for specific pieces of information (e.g., do they know what techniques the composer used for the work, etc.).

7) **5 minutes:** Model how to phrase each piece of "wanted" information as a question and direct your students to write these questions in the "W – Want to Know" column.

8) **5 minutes:** Sort the information in the K and W columns into categories. Possible categories might be:

- Structure/Form (S/F)   • Technique (T)   • Subject (S)   • Context – Why, when, and for whom was the piece made? (C)   • Emotions – What is being expressed? (E)

   Have your students list the categories (and their symbols) in the small table in the K-W-L Plus worksheet's upper right corner.

9) Explain in the next session, your students will use these K-W-L Plus worksheets with the content and links from the *Composers Datebook* website to research the answers to the questions they wrote in step 7.

10) OPTIONAL: Consider collecting the papers to check their questions and make any suggestions, especially if this process is unfamiliar your students. An alternative would be to have students share their papers with others to double check that they have all the necessary information for the next session.

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Session 2: Research in the computer lab.
Estimated time: 45 – 55 minutes, depending on how long students research and discuss their results.

1) **5 minutes:** Explain that the next task will be to research the composer you've chosen using the content and links from the *Composers Datebook* website:

   a. Distribute your students' KWL Plus grids (if you collected them in session 1, step 10).

   b. Ask your students to fire up their Web browser and type in the address, located on their KWL Plus grid or point out the link on the May 2006 Sound Learning page, under "Selected Resources".

   c. Direct your students to click on the link for the archive and then type in the name of the composer you have chosen for them to research.

2) **5 minutes:** Review the categories the class developed in session 1 then remind students that they are looking for information that answers the questions in the "W – Want to Know" column. The answers should be written in the "L – Learned" column. Suggest that they categorize their answers as they complete their research.

3) **20 - 30 minutes:** Direct your students to use the archive search results to start their research.

   a. Encourage your students to listen to each program to get concise and contextual information on the composer.

   b. Point out that more information about the composer can be found by clicking on the links under "Additional Information".

4) **5 minutes:** After an appropriate amount of time, hold a short class discussion on the composer.

   a. Did your reaction to the composer's music change after your thought about it and discussed it?

   b. How did learning about the context or circumstances in which composer worked affect your understanding and appreciation of the piece?

   c. What did you find interesting or noteworthy about the composer you researched?

   d. How is the composer similar to other composers you've studied or listen too (including contemporary music).

5) **10 minutes:** Distribute the "Composer Summary" worksheet. Ask students to complete the summary to demonstrate what they've learned.

6) Collect summaries and KWL Plus grids to assess.

ALTERNATIVES, EXTENSIONS, and ACCOMDATIONS:

- This process may be adapted to study a specific work. Instead of using the "Composer Summary" worksheet, use the worksheet "Using the Facets Model to Understand a Musical Work" located at http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/features/2006/5/facets_musicalwork.pdf

- Use this exercise as a review for a test on a certain composer your students may have studied.

- Consider using this process again as a final project for a class, the second time the student selects a composer to study.

KWL – Plus: Composer Research Using the *Composers Datebook*

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time/Hour:** _____

Step 1: Fill in the columns with what you know and think you need to know about the composer.

Step 2: Categorize the information you have so far.

Step 3: In the "L – Learn" column, add any notes from what you find in the archive of the

      Composers Datebook website: http://composersdatebook.publicradio.org/listings/

Category:	Symbol

K- Know		W – What to Learn/Want to Learn		L - Learn	

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Composer Summary Using Research from The *Composers Datebook*

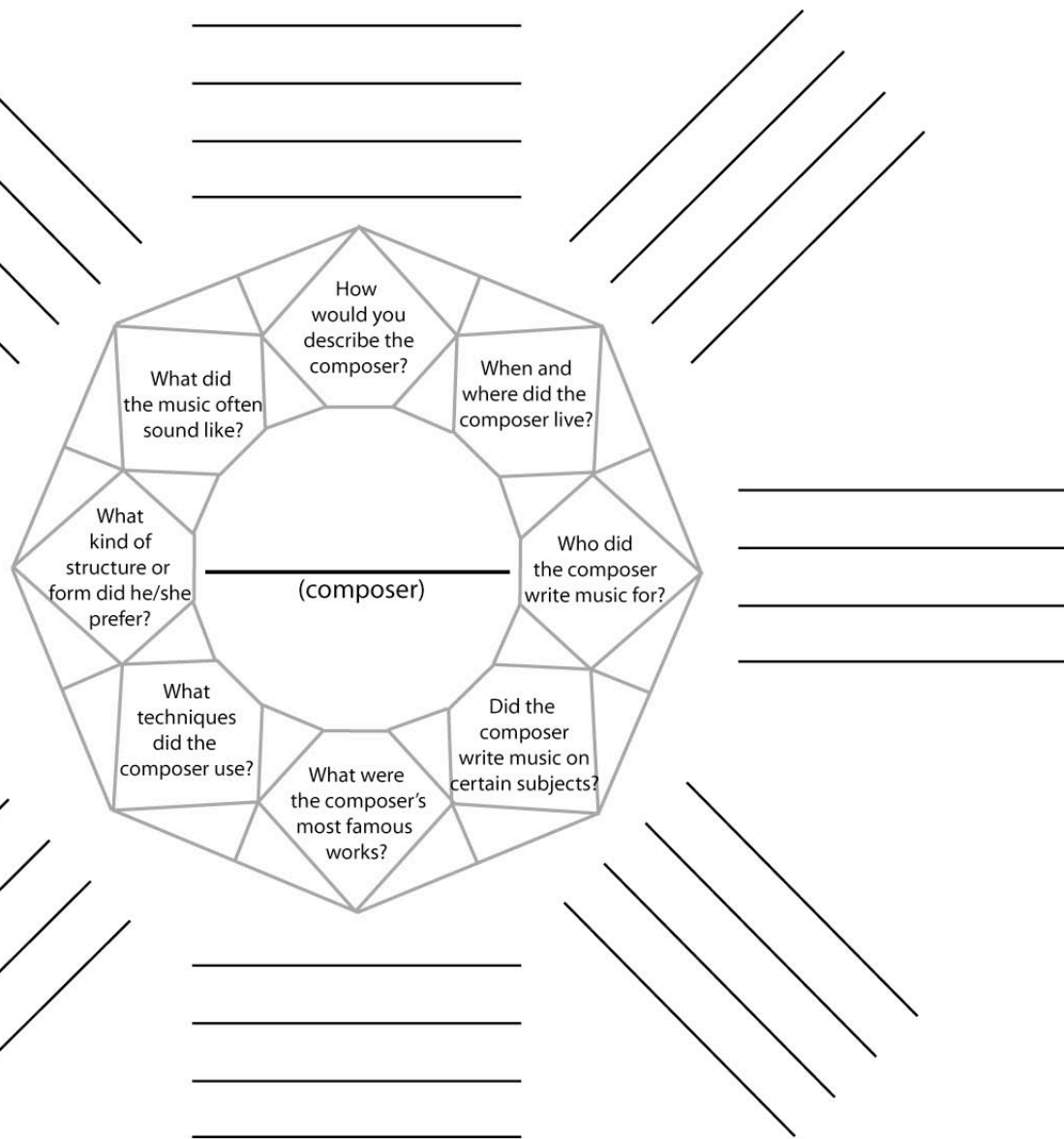**Name:** _____

Date: _____

Hour: _____

Directions:

1) Review all the information you've collected.

2) Use the information to answer the questions in each diamond.

3) Briefly, describe your reaction to the composer. Did you find his or her music appealing or interesting? Why or why not?

How would you describe the composer?

When and where did the composer live?

What did the music often sound like?

What kind of structure or form did he/she prefer?

(composer)

Who did the composer write music for?

What techniques did the composer use?

What were the composer's most famous works?

Did the composer write music on certain subjects?