MUSIC & GEOGRAPHY: Around the World

Age Range: Elementary
Learning Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding that artistic works are influenced by personal and cultural contexts.

ENGAGE students

PLAY. Play a game: Ask students to name a song, and then ask (or research) where it's from. Repeat several times. If examples seem to all be from a very specific time or place, encourage them to think of a song from someplace else. After a few rounds, students will begin to draw the connection that music is a cultural expression, and that music comes from everywhere.

EXPLORE sounds

EXPLAIN. Show students a blank map of the world like this one. Explain that you will visit various locations. During each “visit” you will learn about a particular style of music that originated in that area. You may choose to execute this lesson briefly during one class or more thoroughly over several class periods.

CHOOSE. Select locations/musical styles from the options below, or others of your own choosing. Once you select your places, mark the locations on a map. The styles, with corresponding location of origin, are:

- Traditional Ojibwe singing—Minnesota/the Dakotas/Canada
- Ragtime—St. Louis, MO
- Mariachi—Mexico
- Alpine yodeling—Switzerland/Austria
- Raga—India
- Tuvan throat singing—Mongolia
- Kwv Thxij—Southeast Asia
- Taiko—Japan

LEARN. Choose a country to “visit.” Start by listening to music in that style. Using the included printable worksheet, fill out a fact grid, so that students learn core characteristics of each style. You may present the material to students or have them do research on their own. Visit as many places as your time frame allows! Use our completed grids as a starting point for each culture.

EXTEND learning

Continue “visiting” countries/regions throughout the year. Customize the lesson by visiting a region that you or one of your students has lived in.