

This Land Is Your Land:
A Musical Approach to the Grant-Kohrs Experience

Frank Spring and Gary Sturm

“A lot of poets and musicians are taken in by the landscapes and people of America. Their love of what they have seen and heard is often translated into music.”

Gary Sturm

Focus: At the end of the lesson the students will:

- Make connections between several songs and the experience at Grant Kohrs Ranch.
- Have created their own lyrics which put the sights and sounds of Grant-Kohrs Ranch and the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest to music.
- Developed respect for their environment and how to articulate it through music.
- Create songs about the historical people or the people who work on the Grant-Kohrs ranch.
- See how songs bring out the “warmth” and beauty which accompanies western life.

Summary: Students should develop and demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the cultural landscape of Grant-Kohrs Ranch. Their lyrics and music will be a reflection and rendering of what they have learned and understood.

Exploration and Anticipatory Set:

Teacher: After touring Grant-Kohrs ranch, have students listen to the following songs: “Montana (State Song),” “This Land is Your Land,” “Rocky Mountain High,” “Old Chisholm Trail,” and others. If the teacher can play them on his own or her own, that would be the most beneficial anticipatory set.

- What words or phrases are your favorite in the songs?
- Could you draw/paint a picture of the sights and events described in the songs?
- What do you notice about the vocabulary use in these songs? Is it complex or “simple”? Why?
- Could the lyrics in these songs be applied to your experience at Grant-Kohrs ranch?

Materials Needed:

Pen/Pencil and Paper (Preferably a notebook or journal)

Internet Access to the Grant-Kohrs website or a field trip to the Grant Kohrs ranch

Procedure:

After a fieldtrip to the Grant-Kohrs Ranch or a virtual fieldtrip of the Grant-Kohrs website, students will return to their classrooms, and discuss and/or journal about their experiences.

The fieldtrip should have the following components:

- Blacksmith shop
- Chuck wagon
- Beaver Viewing

Grant-Kohrs House
Carriage Barn
Upland Grasses
Irrigation Fields
Corrals

Once students have had a chance to reflect on and discuss their field trip, they will be asked to create their songs.

Student Application:

Students will create one-two songs of approximately fifteen-twenty lines each. The songs must be about the Grant-Kohrs Ranch and/or the Beaverhead-Deerlodge national forest. They should imitate the vocabulary use present in the songs used in the anticipatory set. After completing their lyrics, the students may write their own accompanying music and perform their songs to the class. (Students who are uncomfortable performing their music should at least have the music “reviewed” by other students, and may be graded as the instructor sees fit.)

Assessment:

Students will be graded on the quality of their lyrics, the music which accompanies the lyrics, and the structure and composition of their songs. The students’ songs must demonstrate that they have a solid understanding of folk songs and the Grant-Kohrs cultural landscape.

Montana Standards:

Music: 1,2,5

Social Studies: 1,2,5

English: 1,2,3,4,5