

# Infusion of Daily Listening Activities

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## BUT... WHY?!

Listening to recorded music in a focused and routine fashion can expose kids to music they might not hear otherwise, and can be adapted for teaching many different musical concepts. Things that we work on include recognizing genres, instrument timbres, and form, as well as steady beat keeping and critical listening skills.

If a strict routine and procedure is employed, students get LOTS of practice listening to music silently and respectfully. I always tell my kids that we wouldn't talk while a musician is performing on stage, so we shouldn't talk during a recording either. Our kids are always extremely well-behaved at concerts - I can't take all the credit, but I know our listening routine has contributed to their success. Plus, the bit of time focused on silently listening provides a calm and predictable start to class.

## I GET THE "WHY" NOW... BUT HOW?

Ask students to find their seats silently while the music is playing – if so much as a peep is heard, have the students try it again. Of course, if it's the same kid having a tough time following the direction, you know what to do! Have students keep a beat silently while they listen, so that their hands have something to do. This can be mirroring beat patterns from you, conducting, touching fingertips to strong and weak beats – there's many possibilities. The key is to do it in a silent fashion.

I don't typically let a recording go for more than 2 minutes, and average listening examples are 30 seconds to 1 minute. I want it to be long enough for them to get in the door, sit down, and keep the beat for a bit. I occasionally replace the recording with a video if the visual part is important (marching bands, musicals, etc.), but only once they've heard that genre with a recording alone. I use this procedure daily for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and usually follow up with a word wall discussion. Your kids will get the hang of it in no time! Shoot me an email if you'd like more info.