

# Helpful Hints:

Recording students singing is the absolute best way to give relevant and targeted assessment and feedback. Getting quiet, individual recordings of students singing ... in my 2021 classroom? Not feasible to spend a whole class to record individually. But group recordings are much better than you think.

Modern noise-reduction technology works very well. If each student has their Chromebook in class recording, it will pick up some background accompaniment and other singers... but the vast majority of sound is the individual student. The audio quality may come back with striking similarity to a cell phone conversation in an airport... a bit noisy, but you can easily make out their voice.

How long does it take to sing through Rocky Mountain in class? Once you've taught this procedure and students get familiar, you can get recordings that take only as long as it takes to sing the song and upload the file.

With a quick assignment in Google Classroom (or in my case, a Quaver assessment) so students can upload their recording, you've got a snapshot of each student singing. But it only took as much class time as you use to open the chrome books, start recording, and sing the song once or twice.

With some clever stations-based work, you can keep other students busy while you help out individuals submit their work. Minimal class time intrusion for a high quality, useful assessment that even shy students will feel comfortable completing.

**Bonus tip:** If you played the accompaniment while recording, the tempo is steady. This means you could easily put all of these simultaneous recordings into GarageBand and BOOM... instant virtual choir.

# Lesson Plan:

## 1 1 1 2 1 1 5 - Slideshow Link

**Grade Level:** 4th-5th

**Objectives:** Familiarize students with the melody, rhythm, and lyrics of Good King Wenceslas independently

**Note:** I wrote this lesson because my students were struggling with this particular song in Orchestra. So my objectives are also to improve my students overall musical achievement.



If you can, listen in on a band and orchestra rehearsal before concert crunch time. We all know the students will play better if they can speak the text ... and that's where we can make the difference.

Students should be REGULARLY encouraged to transfer their knowledge from music to Orchestra and Band.

## Process

Show words and clap the rhythm of Good King Wenceslas

Ask students how many claps were before the first word; extend to 2nd, 3rd, 4th.

Point out how some of the sounds are longer than others, but also some have more syllables. Emphasize the length of the word fuel; it is what trips up the orchestra players most often. Three half notes on two alternating pitches for a single word! This is a fun spot to be a bit silly with the word “fuuUUUUUUuuuuuuuel”; however, the capital letters do represent the change of pitch, so they should be emphasized.

Have students clap rhythms and say words with you. (Slide 5-8). As you go, intermix repetitions where students internalize, or use “magic lips” where no sound comes out. Rehearse until confidently successful.

At this point, reveal slide 9 with more of the lyrics. Students may recognize the song at this point, but may not.

After clapped and spoken rhythms are confident, begin transitioning into pitch/melodic content. This may be a separate lesson, or done all in one.

The solfège and the images correspond, including melodic contour. Echo the patterns with words, numbers, solfeggio. Try variations such as “teacher sings all but sol/“out”, then switch and class sings all but sol/“out”. Slides 11-19 are each of the stanzas.

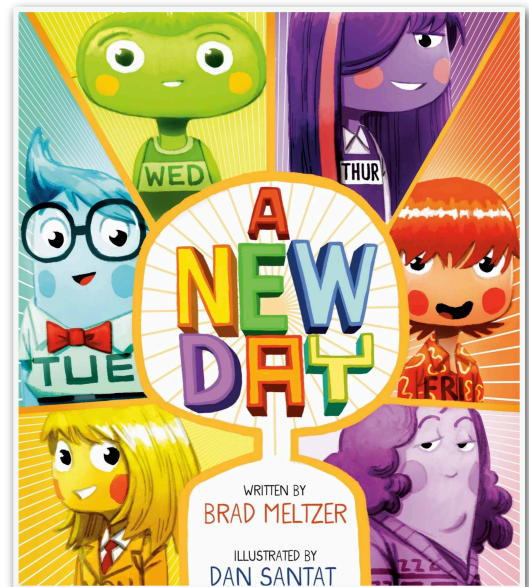
The final slides are a quick review of the concept of the Octave, High Do, and Low Sol.

At this point, you may choose to teach the song to students on Xylophone by mapping each icon to each bar. Or, you may choose to keep it as a singing lesson. It's Orff... take this and change it! Use it in ways I didn't plan for, or expect.

## Book Reviews:

A New Day - by Brad Meltzer

This fantastic book is just WAITING for a program to be written to it. Honestly, I almost don't want to share it so



that I can write the next blockbuster myself.

“Sunday quit. Just like that. She said she was tired of being a day.”

*“Do you know how much work it takes to give the world a beautiful, free day...  
To play, to pray, to sleep away, or even just to sway in a hammock while eating raspberry  
sorbet?”*

*And then I do it all over again, week after week, year after year... With no pay. With no pay!  
(Nice rhyme save.)*

*Everyone gets time for their own fun, or to catch a matinee. But no one says “How’re you?” Or  
even “You okay?”*

What do the rest of the days of the week do when Sunday up and quits her job? They do their best to find a replacement! But it turns out, a little bit of appreciation, consideration, and a quiet “thank you” that saves the day after all!

Honestly, just buy it right away. It’s a gem. It is a bit wordy, but the possibilities are endless.

## C is for Country - by Lil Nas X

This delightful little book by pop and country sensation Lil Nas X is a beautifully animated alphabet book. Several pages have extra little inspiring blurbs of text like “G is for Guitar, and music is for everybody”. It is delightful for Kindergarten and 1st Grade. It features beautiful messages of body and family positivity

