

# National Music Standards

## GRADES 5-8

Except as noted, the standards in this section describe the cumulative skills and knowledge expected of all students upon exiting grade 8. Students in grades 5-7 should engage in developmentally appropriate learning experiences to prepare them to achieve these standards at grade 8. These standards presume that the students have achieved the standards specified for grades K-4; they assume that the students will demonstrate higher levels of the expected skills and knowledge, will deal with increasingly complex music, and will provide more sophisticated responses to works of music. Every course in music, including performance courses, should provide instruction in creating, performing, listening to, and analyzing music, in addition to focusing on its specific subject matter. Determining the curriculum and the specific instructional activities necessary to achieve the standards is the responsibility of states, local school districts, and individual teachers.

### **1. Content Standard:** Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Achievement Standard:

- a. sing accurately and with good breath control throughout their singing ranges, alone and in small and large ensembles
- b. sing with expression and technical accuracy a repertoire of vocal literature with a level of difficulty of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6, including some songs performed from memory
- c. sing music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed
- d. sing music written in two and three parts Students who participate in a choral ensemble
- e. sing with expression and technical accuracy a varied repertoire of vocal literature with a level of difficulty of 3, on a scale of 1 to 6, including some songs performed from memory

### **2. Content Standard:** Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

Achievement Standard:

- a. perform on at least one instrument *1* accurately and independently, alone and in small and large ensembles, with good posture, good playing position, and good breath, bow, or stick control
- b. perform with expression and technical accuracy on at least one string, wind, percussion, or classroom instrument a repertoire of instrumental literature with a level of difficulty of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6
- c. perform music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed
- d. play by ear simple melodies on a melodic instrument and simple accompaniments on a harmonic instrument
- e. Students who participate in an instrumental ensemble or class perform with expression and technical accuracy a varied repertoire of instrumental literature with a level of difficulty of 3, on a scale of 1 to 6, including some solos performed from memory

### **3. Content Standard:** Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments

Achievement Standard:

- a. improvise simple harmonic accompaniments
- b. improvise melodic embellishments and simple rhythmic and melodic variations on given pentatonic melodies and melodies in major keys
- c. improvise short melodies, unaccompanied and over given rhythmic accompaniments, each in a consistent style, meter, and tonality

**4. Content Standard:** Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines

Achievement Standard:

- a. compose short pieces within specified guidelines, 2 demonstrating how the elements of music are used to achieve unity and variety, tension and release, and balance
- b. arrange simple pieces for voices or instruments other than those for which the pieces were written
- c. use a variety of traditional and nontraditional sound sources and electronic media when composing and arranging

**5. Content Standard:** Reading and notating music

Achievement Standard:

- a. read whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, and dotted notes and rests in 2/4 , 3/4 , 4/4 , 6/8 , 3/8 , and alla breve meter signatures
- b. read at sight simple melodies in both the treble and bass clefs
- c. identify and define standard notation symbols for pitch, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, articulation, and expression
- d. use standard notation to record their musical ideas and the musical ideas of others
- e. Students who participate in a choral or instrumental ensemble or class sightread, accurately and expressively, music with a level of difficulty of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6

**6. Content Standard:** Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

Achievement Standard:

- a. describe specific music events 3 in a given aural example, using appropriate terminology
- b. analyze the uses of elements of music in aural examples representing diverse genres and cultures
- c. demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of meter, rhythm, tonality, intervals, chords, and harmonic progressions in their analyses of music

**7. Content Standard:** Evaluating music and music performances

Achievement Standard:

- a. develop criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of music performances and compositions and apply the criteria in their personal listening and performing
- b. evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their own and others' performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations by applying specific criteria appropriate for the style of the music and offer constructive suggestions for improvement

**8. Content Standard:** Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts

Achievement Standard:

- a. compare in two or more arts how the characteristic materials of each art 4 can be used to transform similar events, scenes, emotions, or ideas into works of art
- b. describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with those of music 5

**9. Content Standard:** Understanding music in relation to history and culture

**Achievement Standard:**

- a. describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures  
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- b. classify by genre and style (and, if applicable, by historical period, composer, and title) a varied body of exemplary (that is, high-quality and characteristic) musical works and explain the characteristics that cause each work to be considered exemplary
- c. compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, 7 and conditions under which music is typically performed

**Notes:**

1. E.g., band or orchestra instrument, keyboard instrument, fretted instrument, electronic instrument
2. E.g., a particular style, form, instrumentation, compositional technique
3. E.g., entry of oboe, change of meter, return of refrain
4. E.g., sound in music, visual stimuli in visual arts, movement in dance, human interrelationships in theatre
5. E.g., language arts: issues to be considered in setting texts to music; mathematics: frequency ratios of intervals, sciences: the human hearing process and hazards to hearing; social studies: historical and social events and movements chronicled in or influenced by musical works
6. E.g., jazz, mariachi, gamelan
7. E.g., lead guitarist in a rock band, composer of jingles for commercials, singer in Peking opera