

Using Music as a Common Language to Fight Racism

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Synopsis

By creating this unit, I want to instill in my students that music is more than just words/notes on a page. I want them to understand that music can be used in various ways to display feelings and emotions, instead of turning to violence. In this unit, students will examine lyrics of certain protest songs and confer with one another about how songs can fight social injustices. Most songs used in this unit were recorded during the Civil Rights Movement. We will be looking at images, reading passages, and watching video clips from the CRM. Students will also compose a protest song about an injustice they are passionate about. This will improve their musical skills such as composing and performing. The examining of lyrics will also help to improve their reading comprehension and fluency skills.

Although this unit was created for the Occupational Course of Study 9th grade, it can be adapted and used in the Middle School classroom. It was also created for the General Music classroom, but could also be used in a U.S. History course, where slavery and the Civil Rights Movement are discussed.