

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
MUSIC

ARTIST:
FANA SORO



The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher’s discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:

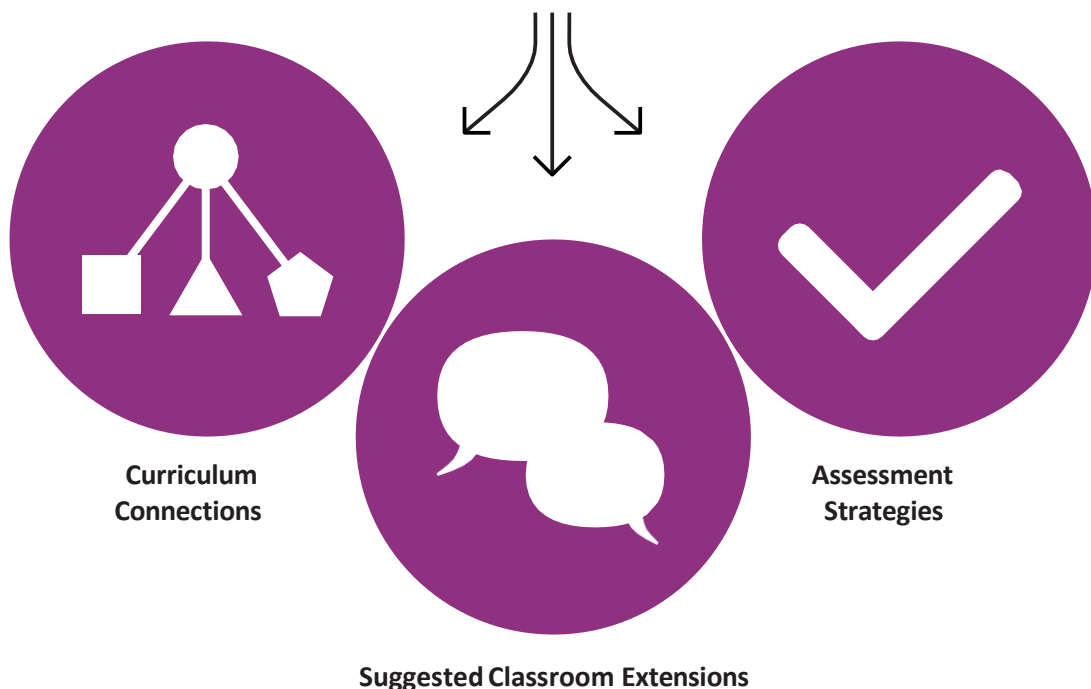


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STUDY GUIDE: MUSIC

WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING WORKSHOPS

Program Overview

Artist Name: Fana Soro

Artist Bio: Fana Soro, hereditary master of the balafon from the Senoufo tribe in Côte d'Ivoire, toured globally with the Ballet National. In 1990, he moved to Norway as an Artist in Residence and toured Northern Europe with Super Djembé Kan. Since 1997, he leads Masabo in Vancouver, specializing in West African music and dance. He has lived in Ottawa since 2010.

Program Description: Master percussionist Fana Soro introduces students to traditional playing techniques of the djembé, West Africa's most popular drum. Fana also shares call and response songs in his mother tongue of Senoufo.

Artistic Discipline: Music

Recommended Grade Levels: JK - 12

Session Logistics: In person only

Cultural Context: African Culture, Black Legacy

Vocab bank/glossary: [Click here](#)



WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING WORKSHOPS

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Demonstrate knowledge and skills gained through exposure to and engagement in drama, dance, music, and visual arts. (K)
- Strand A – Creating and Presenting/Performing
 - Apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music. (Grades 1-8)
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analysing
 - Demonstrate an understanding of how traditional, commercial, and art music reflect the society in which they were created and how they have affected communities or cultures. (Grades 9-12)
- Strand C: Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts / Foundations
 - Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of musical genres and styles from the past and present, and their social and/or community contexts. (Grades 1-8)
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the history of some musical forms and of characteristics of types of music from around the world. (Grades 9-12)

WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING WORKSHOPS

Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

JK-SK

Pre

- Have you ever played a drum? What did it sound like?
- What do you think a djembé looks or sounds like?

During

- What shapes and sounds do you notice from the drum?
- Can you copy the sound Fana makes?

Post

- What did you like most about the drumming?
- Did you try to sing or drum along? What was fun or tricky?
- Can you remember a word from Fana's language?

GRADES
1-3

Pre

- What do you know about drums from around the world?
- Why do people sing songs in different languages?

During

- What happens when Fana plays and you answer?
- Can you feel the beat in your hands or feet?

Post

- What new word or rhythm did you learn today?
- How is Fana's music different from music you usually hear?

GRADES
4-6

Pre

- What do you think is the role of drumming in community gatherings?
- Why might musicians teach music from their culture?
- What might "call and response" mean in music?

During

- How are rhythms repeated or changed throughout the activity?
- What emotions or energy do you feel when playing the djembé?

Post

- What surprised you about the djembé or the music?
- How can learning a traditional art form help us learn about other cultures?
- What would you like to learn more about: the music, the culture, or the language?

GRADES
7-8

Pre

- How can traditional music serve as a form of storytelling or communication?
- What do you know about West African percussion instruments like the djembé?

During

- What techniques did you notice in Fana's drumming?
- How does Fana incorporate language and rhythm together?
- How does the rhythm affect your focus and coordination?

Post

- How did it feel to be part of a musical dialogue (call and response)?
- What are the benefits of learning music from a different culture?
- How might music connect people across languages and geographies?

GRADES
9-12

Pre

- How can learning traditional instruments influence your understanding of culture and history?
- What role do master musicians like Fana play in preserving cultural heritage?
- How does communal music-making (like drumming circles) impact social and emotional learning?

During

- What are some of the challenges of learning traditional techniques in a short workshop?
- How is rhythm used to structure communication in this session?
- How do you interpret the cultural or historical significance of the songs shared?

Post

- What did you take away from learning a traditional West African musical form?
- How did this hands-on experience compare to studying music in a classroom setting?
- What connections can you make between music, language, and identity?

MUSIC OVERVIEW

Music is a universal form of expression that transcends language and culture, offering a deeply personal and collective means of connection, communication, and healing. It reflects cultural identity and promotes equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation by uplifting diverse musical traditions and community voices.

Music education builds skills in listening, creativity, collaboration, and self-expression. It supports students' health and well-being by offering a safe and accessible space to express emotions and ideas, while nurturing confidence and a sense of belonging. Whether composing, performing, or simply engaging in musical play, students develop confidence, perseverance, and a sense of belonging.

Through the **creative and critical analysis processes**, students explore, refine, and reflect on musical ideas, depending on their understanding of music's emotional and cultural impact. These frameworks align with MASC's values and empower students to become thoughtful learners through the lens of music. Music serves as both medium and method: a form of communication, identity exploration, and social connection.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Djembe:** A goblet-shaped West African drum played with bare hands.
- **Percussion:** Instruments that produce sound by being struck or shaken.
- **Senoufo:** An ethnic group from West Africa; Fana's mother tongue and heritage.
- **Call and Response:** A style of music where a leader sings or plays a phrase and the group responds.
- **Rhythm:** A pattern of beats or sounds in music.
- **Tradition:** Customs or beliefs passed down through generations.
- **Culture:** The language, music, beliefs, and traditions of a group of people.
- **Drumming Circle:** A group of people playing drums together in rhythm.
- **Oral Tradition:** Sharing knowledge, history, and culture by word of mouth, including music and stories

Student Health and Well-Being

How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a color to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
 - Share it with a partner or small group
 - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
 - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning