

IDEAS 66

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 66th INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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MUSIC AS THE LANGUAGE OF THE SOUL

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It has always been said that music is the language of the soul. I completely agree with this statement for myriads of reasons. Those reasons are even worth stringing into a full song, but a lyricist I am definitely not so I'd rather do everything as I'm wont to do: write about it.

Many songs and pieces of music have been inspired by their composers' specific feelings and aspirations at the time of their crafting. Much like writing itself, music composition takes some sort of inspiration or motivation in order to come out as expected. Looking at it another way, many have proven just how effective music can be at inspiring written thought and ideas. There's simply something about classical music that allows ideas to flow freely. I guess the cadence and rhythm that classical music inherently possesses enable the mind to be at ease for creating. Contrast this with rock and roll music, which seems to crash thoughts into useless smithereens.

One of my kids reviews her lessons while listening to popular music. Although I find much to be desired in many popular music pieces, I don't exactly know what my child finds so motivating in them. It eludes me how she can manage to put ideas together with the distracting tunes she often plays on her cellular phone or iPod. I asked her once about it. Her reply? She finds that listening to the "distracting" music is way better than having to review with the entire ruckus that the road beside the house often creates. I could see her point: the angry and reverberating sound of motorcycles and souped up cars that use the road near the house can be really noisy. I often have had to catch myself from screaming at the inconsiderate drivers who speed by at unholy hours of the night and scare the bejesus out of me. Imagine waking up from a bad dream with those noisy engines ringing in your ears!

Although it has never been proven, music has been thought to stimulate a baby's brain in untold ways. Having a baby still in the womb listen to classical music could be one way of soothing it, but doing so could also have wonderful effects on his intelligence. Like I have said, no scientific evidence suggests this could be true, but there's no harm in having an unborn baby listen to classical music. You never know what that could do.

Whether or not you love listening to music, there's no doubt in it being able to bring out both positive and negative feelings in people. Let's just hope it's the right kind of music we always listen to, not useless, mindless, uninspiring noise. Goodness knows we already have too much of that in this world!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What type of music do you like listening to? Why do you like that type of music?
2. Why is music the language of the soul, in your opinion?
3. What do you think the benefits of listening to music while working or studying are?
4. What type of music do you find most distracting? Why?
5. If you were a composer, what type of music would you compose? What makes this type of music special to you?



MUSIC THEN AND MUSIC NOW

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I miss those days in elementary and high school when we'd have weekly music classes. I remember joining the entire class at singing lessons every week with the father of one from our batch, who was a pianist, accompanying our entire class (all four sections) on the school's trusty piano. We enjoyed going through numerous round songs, popular ditties and other English songs meant for school singing. I remember singing Maria Went to Town, Sunrise, Sunset, Hot Cross Buns, Edelweiss, etc. with all the eagerness and enthusiasm of the entire class getting to the refrain. The school had a collection of such songs printed in a songbook which we'd all religiously bring for those once-a-week music sessions. We'd all finish those sessions eager for the next one.

In high school, we also had music classes but on a more, well, restrained manner. We had studied full notes, half notes and quarter notes as early as our elementary years and the lessons got more advanced in high school. I could never read a music sheet not even if my life depended on it, so I guess my lessons on notes and rests and staves amounted to nothing. But being part of the school choir and singing at 9AM mass were really exciting parts of my growing up years. I liked practicing with the school choir an hour before mass, studying new songs and learning to have my voice blend with the others'.

Nowadays, my kids don't seem to have weekly music sessions like we used to in our days. They study notes and rests and staff. In fact, I've often had to brush up on such topics to help my children with their lessons. But these are the days of downloads and online synthesizers and mixers. Just today, I have had to ask my daughter to delete an application she downloaded on the computer for mixing music; it was taking up way too much of the computer's memory and was slowing down the PC considerably. Things can be so much easier to do on music today, but they also pose challenges and complications to non-techies such as myself.

Our children get their music fix from non-traditional concepts. They have all manner of thingamajigs and gadgets that allow them to share music, listen to it, and compose if they have the inclination. But one thing remains unchanged: music will always be a universal language that most everyone can speak or learn to speak. Whether we listen to old-school music or find our rhythm to more contemporary tunes, as long as music defines our very emotions and feelings, our soul, then we are free to explore its boundaries and parameters without fear or prejudice. Ideally.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Differentiate today's modern music from music of old. Cite specific aspects of comparison, as needed.
2. Why do you think older people find contemporary music reprehensible?
3. What is your opinion of classical music?
4. Why can't we find composers with the genius of Beethoven, Mozart or Chopin anymore? Give your thoughts on this topic.
5. If you were to compose a song, what would you highlight in that song? How would you go about the process?



MUSIC TO CROON AND SLEEP BY

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I have always made it a point to take afternoon naps since my health scare last January. Around a half-hour into my nap, on the dot, a passenger motorcycle parks outside. The house is conveniently located at a crossroads so many tricycles that take passengers use the road sides at three corners as a transportation terminal. We don't mind the noise that the drivers do make, since we feel relatively safer with them around and being able to see who comes and goes into the house. Many of them have become our friends, too. But I digress, sorry.

Anyway, the particular tricycle driver I had been talking about has a boom box in his vehicle. He plays slow rock and several old tunes. I often find sentimental old me not just listening to the music he plays, which has been more my time, but keeping rhythm to the tunes, too. Once, I remarked to my children that that was the kind of music they should be listening to instead of the crazy, discordant music they have on their gadgets.

I like the kind of music that bands like Coldplay and Creed have given to the music world. But then again, there are only selected kinds of such music that I particularly enjoy, not all. It's a strange sort of harmony between the melody and the lyrics. If the melody is decent but the lyrics do not incite or evoke a profound feeling or emotion in me, then I would never bother to spend a second of my time listening to the music.

I had my boy band days, you know, those days when Irish boy bands and such were the craze. I still love the songs from Westlife, Il Divo, From Boys to Men, N'Sync, 98 Degrees, The Backstreet Boys, and New Kids on the Block. Several of those boy groups had good-looking members, which added to the charm their groups carried. But what they were blest with were not only in the looks department. Their songs spoke from the heart, and ladies then would have been hard pressed not fall in love with the songs they spewed, or sang.

There was also a time when I was fascinated with the likes of Adam Lambert, Carrie Underwood, Kris Allen and the WGWG (White Guy With Guitar) brood of singers at American Idol. The relative success that many of them have been able to reap is commendable. Hopefully, the ability to sustain their achievements and successes will always be there.

Yes, the world has gone a long way from its simple appreciation of fine music to the contemporary beats we have today. We sing our hearts out to the tunes we like, play them on our boom boxes and air waves repeatedly. Hopefully, we will always find inspiration from hearing them over and over, even in our sleep.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What particular local boy band/s do you enjoy listening to? What about foreign acts?
2. What particular kind of music do you love listening to the most? Why?
3. What can you say about music or singing contests like American Idol? Do you think they enable the discovery of real talent? How do they contribute to the discovery of real talent?
4. Have you ever sang in a choir or joined a singing contest? Do you have dreams of becoming a famous singer or musician? Which singer/musician would you like to emulate?
5. In your opinion, who is the greatest musician of this century? Why do you think so?



The impact of Music in today's society

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Music has been a defining trademark in human history. It has been a major part in rituals, communication and in education. Major wars have been won because of inspirational battle cries and musical slogans. Governments have been built and rebuilt through the perseverance of the public and their hypnotic chants. Most of the key moments in history have been made both with unity and with music. Society today will not be as imaginative if there is no music involved.

Music has made an impact in both the youth and with adults. At an early age, children are exposed to music which is not only shared by schools but also in movies and television shows. Famous children shows, such as Sesame Street and Dora the Explorer, are often based on song and dance. In fact, the first type of lessons that we learn from school are often based on music and repetitive messages. In the world of adults, however, music also plays an important part. Various sounds help adults remember their past. That is why most old tunes played today will leave adult listeners with awe and in tears.

Everywhere there is the shadow of music. Churches play psalms and hymns in order to praise the glory of God. Government institutions and public areas also play the national anthem before and after work. Playing the national anthem is not only a sign of nationalism but also as a unifying factor used to inspire the public into one vision. Along with the national anthem, most companies also inspire their employees through creating their own corporate anthems. Their corporate anthems also has inspires employees and unifies them into one goal.

Media slogans have also been based not only in message but also in music. Advertisements are created together with catchy tunes in order to attract the attention of the public. In every movie and in every commercial we often hear music and attractive messages which are made in rhythmic tones. Teenagers often define their identity through the music that they listen to and that is why there are various types of groups which are purely based on music based interests.

In dating, relationships and even in death there is music. Young couples often have specific odes which they both enjoy. That song will most likely be played during their wedding. During weddings, tracks of romantic music are played. After a couple of years, such couples will still remember the songs that were played during their romantic moments. Special events are often based on ballads and praises. Even in death, there is a requiem for the departed. Yes, every event in life and even in death can be mapped through music.

Questions:

- 1) What has been a defining trademark in human history?
- 2) Why do we sing national anthems?
- 3) What is created with catch tunes in order to attract the public's attention?
- 4) What television shows depict music for children?
- 5) What do we call the song for the departed?



MUSIC - A COMMUNICATIVE MEDIUM

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In a person's life, we need to express ourselves and put our feelings into action or most probably let others know what's inside us through music, which we can make use of as a communicative medium. Music as a communicative medium can have a lot of forms. An individual may use it as an expression of his emotions like love, happiness, hatred or even fear. Others simply use it as an expression of their inner feelings or maybe their sentiments. There are times too when music is not just considered solely as an expressed feeling but it is used too for us to be able to communicate with our emotions. In general, everyone uses it for a thousand and one reasons.

Music can serve as a communicative medium especially for those people of few words or maybe the very conservative ones because they can put into words their intense feeling or ardent desire through music. Some music lovers can even be composers simply because music is said to be an expressed form of art too. They can verbalize different kinds of emotions that they personally feel and even how other people may feel. It can serve as a vehicle of human emotions so as to be externalized. More importantly, it can be an expression of freedom and your sensitivity when an individual is most vulnerable to a lot of things.

Music is a genre that never goes out of style or out of touch. It caters to the human soul and our whole being as a person. It has no limitations and can be considered infinite. It reaches out not only to the depths of our mind but to the inner depths of our soul as well. It can be diversified, intensified, internalized and can be an expression of our faith as well. In its complexity and intricacy, it can also be parallel to perplexity.

Music can be a communicative medium for it shows our culture, beliefs and it serves as a means to communicate not only our human emotions but what we perceive and what our minds conceive too. Like language, music can also appear to be a universal human capacity. It is a human perspective that everyone is engaged into, be it a child, teenager or the adults. It is an interactive, participatory medium that is readily understood universally. Aside from the fact that language and gesture provide a media for communication of emotion, as humans we have an access to the third medium, which is music which now seems to appear redundant.

Music fulfills a wide range of functions in different societies, in entertainment, rituals and healings too. It performs a huge array of functions across different cultures but one distinct feature that it shares is the management of social relationships, particularly in situations of social uncertainty. We can discuss a lot more about music endlessly but one thing is sure it serves to be an outlet of humanity. When people use music as a communicative medium, most often than not, they tend to be a revelation of what they are and who they really are as a person and a unique one for that matter. As a whole, we can say that through music, we can even demonstrate the best of ourselves for it can be a very effective communicative medium.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can you express your kind of music? Elaborate on your answer.
2. Do you really think that music can be a very effective medium? Why or why not?
3. How can music serve as an inner desire within you waiting to be tapped? Explain your answer.
4. Do you express yourself through music? How do you do it?
5. How do you actually view music and how does it affect your innermost being?



MUSIC - A POWERFUL TOOL

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Music is a powerful tool of expression and this idea has already been a fact. Music is known to all people, whatever race they maybe or from wherever place they come from. It is definitely one of the best ways to express one's feelings or emotions. Some people have used it as one of their favorite pastime or simply just a hobby maybe. It is not only a tool but has now been a prevailing profession, what with a lot of people being more and more musically inclined. When we speak of education, music is the more powerful domain of all.

Music dates back since ancient times. It has been a tool for enjoyment, relaxation and healing as well, not to speak of communication being the top one. We can even say that it has that great ability to improve one's nature. With an individual's great passion for music, their lives have proven to be more organized too. This is very true and applicable for music can serve as inspiration and encouragement to a dwindling soul.

Apparently, music has always been there with us even when we were still growing in our mother's womb. It is our heartbeat that serves as music to the mother's ears and it's the source of music until that time when we are lullabied by our mom just to comfort us. It has made us more relaxed and we feel so alive and rejuvenated. Humming a song or a rhythm helps and makes us closer to music. It also brings out and leads us to have that force of having profound emotions that makes us a more sensitive person.

Music has been a powerful tool in music education for it brings out the best in us too. This is so for it has been efficient in instilling qualities like leadership, self-esteem, creativity skills of studying, imagination. Moreover, it makes us have that calmer attitude and so many more that we can think of. We can mainstream and forward our ideals and ideas to the youth or the younger generation for that matter. In the cultural aspect, it actually represents our very rich cultural heritage. It has been a panacea too.

Yes, music is a powerful tool that bridges the gap or difference between the bygone generations and the coming legions. It even makes us compassionate individuals and brings empathy to many. It also gives us a glimpse of the unknown cultures and the world. As a child, we have our music lesson that serves and gives us a great foundation of shaping us towards a great future. This is the reason why we should give music a far greater importance just like the other subjects too in school.

We can be assured of growth when we use music as a powerful tool for it can provide that opportunity of an over-all growth to a child wherein we can see the varied results of having that right attitude towards life. Yes, I believe that it can be used to rebalance the body and help a person to function more productively. Music then has been a powerful tool ever since mankind's existence and will keep on existing as life goes on and on and on.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can you consider music as a powerful tool? Explain your answer.
2. Have you used music not only as a medium but a powerful tool? How?
3. What is the role of music in your life? Elaborate on your answer.
4. Do you agree that music paved the way to the development of an individual which led the road to success? Why or why not?
5. What is the real meaning of music to your life as a person?





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