

INFORMATIVE SPEECH: TALK ABOUT BLUEGRASS

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Grade Level: 9-10

Subject area focus: Language Arts: Public Speaking

Brief Summary:

This unit teaches informative speech presentation for use in a public speaking class. It can be modified to be a unit about research papers using bluegrass topics as the elements of study.

Lesson Plan Outline: Talk About Bluegrass

This plan describes an informative speech assignment for a 9th grade high school public speech class. I would expect this unit to take 10 days for researching, writing and preparation. Speech delivery days would depend upon the number of students in each class. I would expect items 1-7 to be done in one 74-minute class period. Library research time would take three or four days. Writing, creating appropriate visuals and audio clips, practicing and revising would take the rest of the allotted days with students accomplishing most of the preparation work during class time.

Objectives:

1. Students will define informative speech.
2. Students will choose an informative speech topic related to bluegrass music and/or culture.
3. Students will choose an informative speech topic using a variety of sources such as the Internet, books, magazine articles, encyclopedias and/or the *Discover Bluegrass* DVD.
4. Students will take appropriate notes from their sources.
5. Students will write a formal outline of their informative speech clearly identifying their introduction format (e.g. question, anecdote, starting statement, etc.); thesis; main points; supporting evidence and conclusion.
6. Students will write, revise and deliver a 5-7 minute (at least 5 typed pages, double spaced) informative speech that demonstrates the following:
 - A clear understanding of the topic presented in a logical sequence
 - A support for the controlling idea/theses with an appropriate amount of well-chosen and relevant facts, details, example, quotations, statistics, stories and anecdote
 - A clear and effective introduction
 - A clearly organized body
 - A clear and effective conclusion.
7. Students will use appropriate visual and /or audio materials to enhance the presentation.
8. Students will write a Works Cited page using appropriate MLA citation format.

9. Students will deliver the presentation within the allotted time constraints.
10. Students will demonstrate appropriate formal presentation skill related to verbal and nonverbal communication.

Materials used:

- Bluegrass topic list (developed with students in each class, a sample is attached) Library/computer lab
- *Ultimate Bluegrass Hits* CD (Item # SLT-2-55042 Direct Source Special Products Inc.)
- *Discover Bluegrass: Exploring American Roots Music DVD* (International Bluegrass Music Association)
- Bluegrass web resources list

Prior Knowledge and Experiences/Curriculum Content:

Students will have already written, practiced and delivered an autobiographical speech. The same assignment assessment sheet will be used. Students will also have watched video clips of other students delivering informative speeches.

Procedure:

1. Pull world map down and take a geographical census of the class. Where is your family from? Place a small sticky note on a number of the countries.
2. Discuss what brought different families to America. Make a list of things that could be easily brought from one country to the next. (Make sure music makes it on the list.) How do we do that today? How was it done 100, 200, 300 years ago?
3. Introduce informative speeches. Ask students what informative speeches are. Develop a good definition and purpose for informative speeches. A good informative speech teaches the audience something they may not have known before. Tell students that informative speeches can be on any topic about which they want to convey some information. Choose “music” from the list generated.
4. Play one or two songs or sections of songs from bluegrass CDs. Suggested songs from *Ultimate Bluegrass Hits*: “I’m a Man of Constant Sorrow” (The Stanley Brothers), “Dueling Banjos” (Roy McGinnis & The Sunnysiders), “Rocky Top” (The RFD Boys), and “Blue Moon of Kentucky” (Bill Monroe). Connect audio with students’ prior knowledge (e.g. *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* etc.).
5. Play “The Roots of Bluegrass” unit from the *Discover Bluegrass DVD*.
6. Develop a list of possible informative speech topics related to bluegrass.
7. Give students the list of web resources and head to the library for some preliminary research.
8. After preliminary research, have students sign up for specific speech topics. Speech topics should not be duplicated.
9. Students research and take notes on their topics, making sure to note proper bibliographic citation information for each source used.

10. Students will write a rough draft of their speeches.
11. Students will develop appropriate visual and audio portions of their presentations.
12. Students will write a formal outline of their speech, making sure to test the organizational structure of the speech to be sure it will accomplish the overall objective of clearly teaching the class something relevant about the topic.
13. Students will practice the speech out loud with timers in small peer groups and revise the speech as necessary.
14. Students will deliver the speech to the entire class.

Indicators of success:

- Successful completion of speech preparation elements (research notes, formal outline, speech drafts and revisions, peer presentation critique).
- Successful delivery of clear informative speech within the allotted time limits.

Talk About Bluegrass Informative Speech Topic Suggestions

History of bluegrass music

Bluegrass artists (biographic speeches):

Bill Monroe

Jimmie Rodgers

The Carter Family

Alison Krauss and Union Station

The Stanley Brothers

Lester Flatt

Earl Scruggs

Ricky Skaggs

Rhonda Vincent

Sam Bush

Bella Fleck

Jerry Douglas

Josh Williams

Nickel Creek

Sierra Hull

Ryan Holiday

Investigate the history of traditional bluegrass instruments:

Guitar

Banjo

Fiddle

Mandolin

Bass fiddle

Dobro

Investigate the Grand Ole Opry show and its relevance and importance to bluegrass music.

Investigate the National Barn Dance radio program and show, and their relevance and importance to bluegrass music.

Challenge topics:

Investigate the roots of a particular song. For example, the *Discover Bluegrass* DVD tells us that "House Carpenter" is over 300 years old. A quick look at the iTunes store show us that there are over 35 different artists who have recorded the song including Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Pete Seeger, as well as Nickel Creek. Where did the song come from? Who wrote it? How did it get here? Does it have any political or social relevance?

Compare and contrast bluegrass with another American music such as blues. How are they similar? How are they different? Which has had more influence on our American Culture? here in Mason? Why? (This may involve some persuasive speech skills.)

Investigate "the politics" of bluegrass music. Are there common social or political themes that run through the music? What do the songs say about the time periods in which they are written?

Develop your own informative speech topic related to bluegrass.

Bluegrass Internet Resources:

<http://www.ibma.org/>

<http://www.ibma.org/events.programs/schools/manual/index.asp>

<http://www.discoverbluegrass.com>

<http://www.bluegrassworld.com>

<http://www.thebluegrassblog.com/>

<http://www.bluegrassworks.com>

<http://www.bluegrass-museum.org>

<http://www.roughstock.com/history/bgrass.html>

<http://www.thespps.org>

http://www.foridamemoery.com/Collections/folklife/folklife_cd.cfm

<http://www.sugarhillrecords.com>

<http://www.rounder.com>

<http://www.themonroebrothersfoundation.org/index.html>

<http://www.bluegrassmusic.com>

<http://www.bluegrassnow.com>

<http://www.bluegrassworks.com>

<http://www.bluegrassmusicprofiles.com>

Talk About Bluegrass Assignment Assessment Sheet

Speech Preparation Work

1. Research Notes (20) _____
Clear demonstration that you have conducted relevant research.
2. Speech drafts (50) _____
At least five pages long, typed, double-spaced
3. Formal outline (20) _____
Formal Roman numeral format
4. Works Cited page (10) _____
MLA format

TOTAL: _____

Speech Presentation

1. Projection (10) _____
No mumbling, no straining to hear
2. Enunciation (10) _____
Clear speaking voice, limited vocal pauses
3. Eye contact (10) _____
Effective and inclusive
4. Posture/gestures/body language (10) _____
5. Attire (10) _____
Formal, well-groomed

Speech Content

1. Introduction (10) _____
Clear, dynamic, includes thesis
2. Body (20) _____
Clearly organized, appropriate and relevant supporting evidence
3. Conclusion (10) _____
Clear, dynamic, sense of closure

Time

1. Time (10) _____
Actual delivered time

TOTAL: _____

