

**Class Title:**

Jazz Ensemble 1,2

**Grade Levels:**

9, 10, 11, 12

**UC Honors?**

No

**Course Overview**

Jazz Ensemble 1,2 teaches the musical concepts and technique of performing at a beginning level. In this course, students will learn how to produce controlled and accurate pitch and create a mature tone, as well as learn the basics of music notation and musical vocabulary. Students will be exposed to the major scale and diverse repertoire and will be asked to think deeply about the discipline of music from a number of perspectives, including style, genre, mood, and historical and cultural context. Additional topics of study include demonstrating appropriate performance etiquette, identifying musical contrasts, evaluating performances, and creating new music through compositions and improvisations.

**Pre-requisites**

None

## **UNIT 1: Music Foundations**

In this unit, students will focus on the Artistic Perception and Creative Expression categories of the California State Music Standards and the Perform category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will perform with basic-level instrumental technique, including instrument care and maintenance, how to prepare the body for playing, proper posture, instrument position, use of air, rudiments, all in the pursuit of a mature tone. Students will strive to match pitches and blend with others.

Students will study basic notation, including identification and description of measures, bar lines, double bar line, simple time signatures (2/4, 3/4, 4/4), rhythmic values (eighth, quarter, half, whole), articulations (staccato, legato, slurs, accents), pitches, and repeat signs.

Students will study the basic elements of music. They will be able to identify differences between pitches, tempos (fast/slow), tone, and basic compositional forms (eg. ABA, verse and chorus). Students will be able to define terms including tempo and basic dynamics terms (*forte*, *piano*, *mezzo forte*, and *mezzo piano*).

Students will study the notation of a major scale, specifically pitch patterns. Pitches will be arranged into different arrangements of rhythmic values, tempos, articulations, and dynamics. Scales will be performed using basic-level brass, woodwind, and percussion technique.

Key assignment: Students will individually perform one major scale in a key appropriate to their instrument. The assessment may be live or recorded, and will be evaluated by the teacher using a rubric that includes accuracy of pitch, consistency of rhythm/tempo, and quality of tone.

## **UNIT 2: Aural Skills**

In this unit, students will focus on the Artistic Perception category of the California State Music Standards and the Perform category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will study the difference between major and minor chords, and be able to identify them aurally. They will be able to correctly use terminology such as key, major, and minor.

Key assignment: Students will identify major or minor chords in aural examples on a written test. The responses will be compared to an answer key.

### **UNIT 3: Connection to Other Subject Areas**

In this unit, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Aesthetic Valuing categories of the California State Music Standards and the Respond and Connect categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will compare and contrast how artistic elements are used in music and one other art form (e.g. theatre, dance, visual art). Examples of artistic elements to cover may include tempo, dynamics (intensity), form, instrumentation (solo, duet, ensemble), performance etiquette, and audience expectations.

Key assignment: Students will explain how music is similar to or different from one other art form (e.g. theatre, dance, visual art) based on the elements of that art form. Students will be assessed individually or in small groups, and the task will be measured by depth and insightfulness of student response as determined by the teacher.

### **UNIT 4: Musical Form**

In this unit, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Aesthetic Valuing categories of the California State Music Standards and the Respond and Connect categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will identify contrasting themes or sections within a piece. If the piece is in a basic compositional form (e.g. ABA, verse/chorus, round), they can use their analysis of contrasting sections to identify the form.

Key assignment: Students will determine whether a theme or section of music is similar/repeated or different/varying in comparison to others. Where appropriate, students will also identify the name of the form. The responses will be compared to an answer key.

## **UNIT 5: Music Analysis**

In this unit, students will focus on the Historical and Cultural Context and Aesthetic Valuing categories of the California State Music Standards and the Respond and Connect categories of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will analyze the use of contrasting elements, styles, moods, musical periods, and forms (e.g. ABA, verse/chorus, round) in at least two basic-level pieces from a variety of cultures and historical periods.

Key assignment: After a period of study and/or listening, students will respond to two contrasting musical pieces, reflecting on context, style, and history, and describing how mood is created. The assignment will be based on a prompt, graphic organizer, or guided questions. The task will be measured by depth and insightfulness of student response as determined by the teacher.

## **UNIT 6: Composition**

In this unit, students will focus on the Creative Expression and Artistic Perception categories of the California State Music Standards and the Create category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will have the opportunity to create their own music. Students will use their knowledge of notation, such as their ability to place simple rhythms and rests within a meter and subsequently add dynamics, articulations, and/or pre-defined pitches.

Key assignment: Students will create a brief composition of at least four measures, incorporating rhythms and rests into a given meter and adding pitches and dynamics from a list of choices. The composition will be assessed through a checklist of musical elements used and whether they were used appropriately. Students will then modify their composition based on the feedback from a variety of sources, including the provided checklist, self-evaluation, peer feedback, and/or teacher feedback. Students will share their composition or arrangement with a peer at least once during the process.

## **UNIT 7: Improvisation**

In this unit, students will focus on the Creative Expression and Artistic Perception categories of the California State Music Standards and the Create category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will explore basic-level improvisation by making personal choices about dynamics, simple rhythm/rest values (eighth, quarter, half, whole), pre-defined pitches, or four basic articulations (legato, staccato, slurred, accented).

Key assignment: Students will create a brief improvisation by making spontaneous choices to change or modify dynamics, rhythms, pitches, and/or articulations using an existing composition as a basis. The improvisation will be assessed by determining whether the students have made a creative choice while remaining within the parameters of the assignment. Students will evaluate their own improvisation using a checklist of more complex musical elements to identify whether they met the parameters of the assignment. Students will have multiple opportunities to improvise using the same existing composition in order to refine their improvisation, and will share their improvisation with at least one other person.

## **UNIT 8: Music Selection**

In this unit, students will focus on the Aesthetic Valuing category of the California State Music Standards and the Perform category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will think critically about music choice and repertoire selection. They will consider the level of difficulty, new knowledge that would be needed to perform a given piece, and think about the possible musical challenges.

Key assignment: Students will choose a piece of music that is appropriate to the level of an ensemble or individual (self), possibly from a provided list of available options or resources. Students will give a presentation addressing why they chose their piece, paying specific attention to musical characteristics. They will analyze level of difficulty, musical elements to be introduced, and/or challenges based on the skills of the ensemble or individual. The task will be measured by a checklist of criteria as well as depth and insightfulness of student response as determined by the teacher using a rubric.

## **UNIT 9: Performance**

In this unit, students will focus on the Artistic Perception and Creative Expression categories of the California State Music Standards and the Perform category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will demonstrate basic rehearsal and performance etiquette, including posture, stage etiquette, and memorization (as needed). Students will play basic-level pieces from a variety of cultures and historical periods, and with contrasting elements, styles, moods, musical periods, and forms (e.g. ABA, verse/chorus, round). Sample repertoire includes:

- Round Midnight (Victor Lopez)
- 125 Street Blues (Dave Mills)
- Across the Track Blues (Duke Ellington)

Key assignment: Students will present a formal performance, either live or recorded, performed by the individual, a small group, and/or the entire ensemble. The performance will include at least two contrasting pieces demonstrating proficiency of Jazz Ensemble 1,2 musical skills and techniques.

## **UNIT 10: Performance Evaluation and Critique**

In this unit, students will focus on the Aesthetic Valuing categories of the California State Music Standards and the Respond category of the National Core Arts Standards.

Students will critically assess and evaluate musical performances. They will identify broad categories and specific criteria upon which a performance can be judged, and explain how the evaluation can change based on the musical characteristics and the understanding of context. Students will provide feedback on their own performances and those of others.

Key assignment: Students will list criteria that could be used to evaluate a variety of types of performances, determine the best criteria for a performance of a specific type, and identify guiding questions for the assessment of a musical performance (e.g. creating a rubric of their own design). As part of the development of the criteria, students will analyze and discuss how the evaluation would be different based on the musical characteristics or context. Then students will use their evaluation form or an adjudication rubric from another source to describe the strengths and weaknesses of a performance, either live or recorded, of an individual (self or other) or ensemble. This task will be assessed by determining whether the students have made valid judgments of the performance and provided commentary, feedback, or evidence that defends their opinion.