



See it in a Song

Introduction

Objective:

The actors in the play, *Charlotte's Web*, used songs to allow the audience to get a feel for the characters. In exploring the language in the lyrics, students will get to know the characters better and create their own songs to expand upon that characterization.

Academic Content Standards:

✦ National Standard 3

- Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate text.

✦ Ohio Standard

- Reading Applications: Literary Text

Students enhance their understanding of the human story by reading literary texts that represent a variety of authors, cultures and eras. They learn to apply the reading process to the various genres of literature, including fables, folk tales, short stories, novels, poetry and drama. They demonstrate their comprehension by describing and discussing the elements of literature (e.g., setting, character and plot), analyzing the author's use of language (e.g., word choice and figurative language), comparing and contrasting texts, inferring theme and meaning and responding to text in critical and creative ways. Strategic readers learn to explain, analyze and critique literary text to achieve deep understanding.

- **Benchmark A:** Use supporting details to identify and describe main ideas, characters and setting.
- *Grade 3 Indicator 7* Describe methods the author used to influence readers' feelings and attitudes (e.g., appeal of characters, use of figurative language).

Getting Started

Materials:

- Lyrics to three songs from the play:
 - “I Have To Look After Me”
 - “I’m Just a Spider”
 - “Humble”

Vocabulary:

- Synonyms
- Radiant
- Humble

Lesson

Orientation Activity:

In groups, have students highlight any words in the three songs that provide the most vivid description of a character in *Charlotte's Web*. Then ask students to circle the line in each song that they feel is most important in the characterization. Discuss their results and compare answers.

Ask:

- Why didn't the author just put these ideas within the dialogue?
- Why did the author choose to enhance the audience's understanding of the characters through song?

Learning Activity:

Students should choose one of the three songs. Next, students should create a list of words that describes the characters (Charlotte, Wilbur, Templeton) in-depth. Students can use synonyms of the words that were used in the songs themselves by using a thesaurus or a dictionary. For example, they can use another meaning for humble such as "not proud." Students can write down words that describe the character's feelings, attitudes and outside appearance.

Next, the students can use these words to create a second verse for the song. In extending the lesson, students could be encouraged to write the song in the same rhyme formation as the previous verse. Example below:

<u>Words</u>	<u>Second Verse of "Radiant"</u>
happy	Some Pig
sunshine	Radiant and Glowing
Well fed	Some Pig
Satisfaction	His Satisfaction is Showing
Friendly	A chunky ol' pig, he's certainly well fed
Special	But love is in his heart and sunshine is in his head
Comrade	All of his friends yell, "Hooray!"
Cordial	For their loyal friend could win today
Upbeat	Over that Uncle Pig
Loyal	For their loyal friend could win today!
Chunky	

Students do not have to use every word, but they should try to use as many as possible.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

Assessment Tools and Methods:

- Second verse of the poem.
- Students can share the results of their song verses.
- Use Ohio Proficiency Test Rubric to evaluate their writing.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Math: Students can write descriptive rhyming poems about multiplication or division. Especially, considering certain facts that are usually hard to remember, such as $7 \times 8 = 56$. Challenge

students to come up with as many descriptive words as possible to describe this one simple fact.

Social Studies: Use a “boring” excerpt in the textbook about a subject that your class is currently studying and challenge the students to rewrite it using a thesaurus or dictionary to change the words and make it more exciting to read. They could also try to rewrite the information as a song.



Lyrics to Songs in *Charlotte's Web*

I Have To Look After Me

Verse 1:

I have to look after me
I've learned that there's no lunch for free
You may call me a rat
But I'm used to that
At least you know how it will be
Let everyone get something straight
When we first come out of the gate
I may be the worst
But I will be the first
It's an old family trait

I'm Just a Spider

Verse 1:

I like to weave and spin
My legs are quite spindly and thin
I'm just a spider, my world is no wider
Than this space where I'm standing in
Lately my life has been tame
It's time to get back in the game
I'm just an old gal
Who wants a good pal
I just want a friend, not a flame.

Humble

Verse 1:

Some Pig
We really shouldn't say it
Some Pig
He's too humble to display it
He's not low down, he's just low to the ground
He'll never boast, but he's the toast of the town
Step right up folks and give him a cheer
He's the humblest pig around here
I'm even kosher
He's even kosher
He's terrific, he's radiant, he's humble, and big
Wilbur's really some pig