



Children's Chorus of Greater Dallas

Youth Concerts

A Composer's Toolbox



Teacher's Guide

© 2017 Children's Chorus of Greater Dallas

Table of Contents

Teacher Instructions	3
Children’s Chorus of Greater Dallas Bio.....	4
Word Search: Composer’s Toolbox.....	5
Word Search: Composer’s Toolbox Answer Key	6
Making Artistic Choices	7
Exploring The Composer’s Toolbox	9
The Importance Of Listening.....	11
Crossword Puzzle: Vocabulary Review	12
Crossword Puzzle: Vocabulary Review Answer Key	13

Teacher Instructions

Dear Educator,

Thank you for inviting the Children’s Chorus of Greater Dallas to present our youth concert at your school – we greatly look forward to performing for you and your students.

We have created this teacher’s guide to aid you in preparing your students for the concert. While completing these activities is completely optional, we believe the activities presented in this guide will enable your students to get the most out of the performance. Activities can be completed by both general classroom teachers and music teachers.

This guide includes a range of activities for students: some they can complete on their own while others require classroom participation and/or discussion. While it is at your discretion which activities to do, we recommend completing the activities in the order in which they appear in the guide. You should feel free to adapt activities in any ways that would better fit your classroom.

Activity #1: Word Search (“Composer’s Toolbox”)

- This activity will introduce students to the vocabulary used in subsequent activities and in the CCGD concert.

Activity #2: Making Artistic Choices

- This activity will require students to draw pictures and justify the decisions they make as they draw. This mirrors what a composer does: every decision s/he makes in using tools to create music is made for a specific reason.

Activity #3: Exploring the Composer’s Tools

- In this activity, students will use and explore pitch and rhythm, two main tools that composers use when creating music.

Activity #4: The Importance of Listening

- Here, students will understand and demonstrate good listening skills as they comprehend how lyrics help music tell stories. As part of this activity, students will also display proper audience etiquette.

Activity #5: Crossword Puzzle (Vocabulary Review)

- This individual activity will allow students to review important vocabulary one final time and can be completed either before or after the concert.

Children’s Chorus of Greater Dallas Bio



Now celebrating its 20th season, the Children’s Chorus of Greater Dallas (CCGD) is one of America’s largest and most prestigious youth choral programs, and serves as the official children’s chorus of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Cynthia Nott, CCGD is dedicated to providing Dallas-area young people with opportunities to study and perform choral music at the highest level of artistic excellence, in a group that reflects the region’s ethnic and economic diversity. CCGD’s eight choral ensembles serve more than 500 children and teens in grades 4–12, drawn from 53 communities throughout a 33-mile radius of downtown Dallas. Approximately 4,500 patrons annually attend CCGD’s Deloitte Concert Series, held at Dallas’ world-class Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. This season, through ancillary regional performances and community engagement initiatives, CCGD will extend the enrichment of choral music to up to 30,000 additional children, youth, and adults.

Auditions for CCGD take place in May. More information about registering for an audition is available on CCGD’s website, www.thechildrenschorus.org.

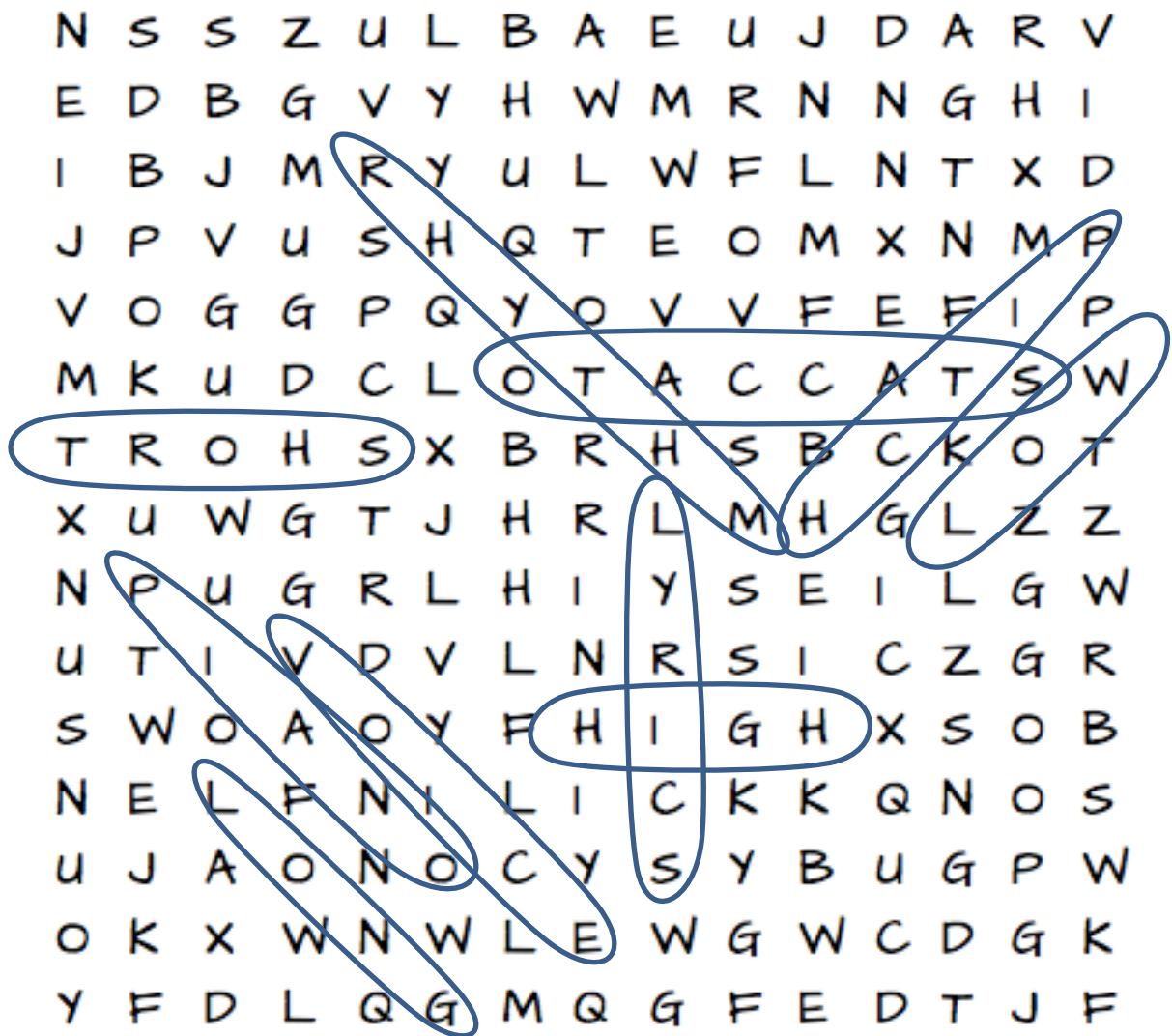
Word Search: Composer's Toolbox
(Independent Activity, 10 Minutes)

N S S Z U L B A E U J D A R V
E D B G V Y H W M R N N G H I
I B J M R Y U L W F L N T X D
J P V U S H Q T E O M X N M P
V O G G P Q Y O V V F E F I P
M K U D C L O T A C C A T S W
T R O H S X B R H S B C K O T
X U W G T J H R L M H G L Z Z
N P U G R L H I Y S E I L G W
U T I V D V L N R S I C Z G R
S W O A O Y F H I G H X S O B
N E L F N I L I C K K Q N O S
U J A O N O C Y S Y B U G P W
O K X W N W L E W G W C D G K
Y F D L Q G M Q G F E D T J F

Find the terms in bold below. Each one is related to a tool composers use to create music.

- The **pitch** of a musical note is defined by how **high** or **low** the note sounds.
- **Rhythm** in music is the pattern of **long** and **short** notes.
- Composers use the Italian word **staccato** to indicate a note that should be short and separated from surrounding notes.
- After composers write music, performers use instruments to perform that music for audience. Two of the most common instruments are **voice**, which is inside each person, and **piano**, which is played with your hands. You will hear both at the Children's Chorus of Greater Dallas concert.
- Music that uses the voice is meant to be sung and usually has **lyrics**, or words that help communicate the message of that song.

Word Search: Composer's Toolbox Answer Key

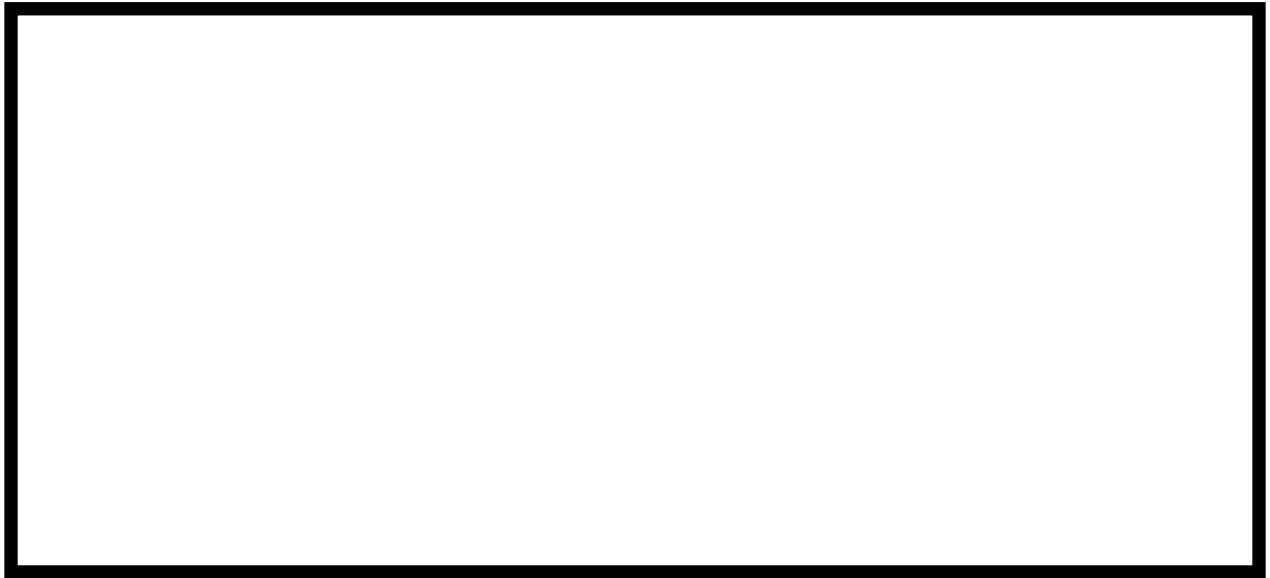


Making Artistic Choices
(Classroom Activity, 30 Minutes)

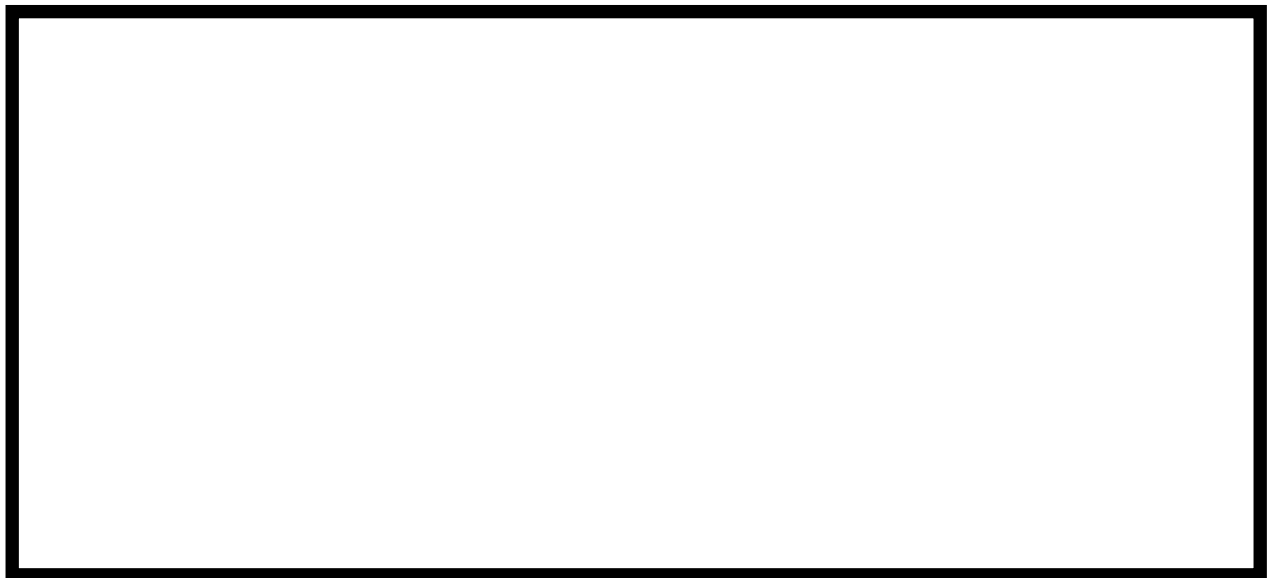
Part 1: Give students 20 minutes to complete.

In the boxes below, follow the instructions to draw two different pictures. You may use crayons, coloring pencils, and/or pencils.

Box #1: Draw a picture of a farm on a beautiful spring day. Your picture must include clouds, trees, a barn, and animals.



Box #2: Draw a picture of a farm during a thunderstorm. Your picture must include clouds, trees, a barn, and animals.



Part 2: Discussion (10 minutes)

Ask individual students to share their pictures with the class. Depending on the content of individual pictures, you may use questions such as the following to guide classroom discussion.

- What is one difference between your two pictures? Why did you make that difference?
- What is one thing you kept the same between your two pictures? Why did you make that choice?
- Why did you choose to make your (clouds/barn/etc.) that color/size/shape?
- Why is the color of your (clouds/barn/etc.) different between the two pictures?
- Why did you choose to have different animals in the two pictures?
- Are the animals doing different things in your two pictures? Why?
- Why do the trees look different in your two pictures?
- Why didn't you draw white, fluffy clouds in the second picture?
- Why do the animals look happier in the first picture?

Close by making the following points.

- **When you were drawing your pictures, you made specific choices for specific reasons. In your case, your choices told two different stories.**
- **A composer is a person who writes music. Composers do the same thing when they write music; every choice they make with their tools shapes the music. If a composer changes his/her mind about the way s/he uses tools, the music would change. This is just like changing your choices would change your pictures and your stories.**

Exploring The Composer's Toolbox (Classroom Activity, 20-25 Minutes)

- Introduction: “To get ready for the upcoming concert with the Children’s Chorus of Greater Dallas, we are going to explore several tools used to create music. These tools are used by **composers**, the people who write music. First, let’s explore **pitch**.”
- Explain to students that **pitch** is how **high** or **low** a sound is. It is helpful to speak in a high voice (like Mickey Mouse) for the word high and a low voice (like Eeyore or Patrick Star) for the word low. Invite them to imitate the changing pitch of your voice as you say these words.
- Give students examples of a high sound (e.g., a whistle) and a low sound (e.g., a foghorn). Then, elicit further examples of high and low sounds they have heard. It is common for students to confuse high and low pitch with loud and soft volume, so make sure to correct students if this happens.
- If possible, watch one or both of these brief cartoons with students. Contrast characters with high voices and those with low voices.
 - Spongebob and Patrick Star: <https://youtu.be/FPq165j9DgY?t=6s>
 - Winnie the Pooh and Eeyore: https://youtu.be/pHkZ_6V_J_o
- As a class, sing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”
 - The first time through, just sing the song to remind students how it goes.
 - Before singing it again, instruct students to use their hand in the air to trace the notes of the song. As the notes go higher, their hand should go up; as the notes go lower, their hand should go down.
 - Sing the song 2-3 more times so that students can practice tracing the changing pitch.
- Ask students to watch and listen as you sing the lyrics of the first line of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” to the opening melody of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” Trace the pitch in the air while you sing.
 - Ask if your performance sounds and looks (with pitches and tracing in the air) like their performances of the original version of “Twinkle.” Discuss why it did not: low and high notes happened in different places in your performance.
 - Point out that this completely changes the way the song sounds. Ask if any students recognize what song fits the new pitches you’re singing. If no one recognizes the pitches, sing the opening of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” with the correct lyrics.
 - **Make the point that this is why composers are very specific when they choose pitches for their music; changing the pitches a composer chooses can completely change the way a song sounds and feels.**

- Explain to students that **rhythm** is another important tool that composers use. Rhythm is a pattern of **long** and **short** notes. Demonstrate by singing “Twinkle” again, but this time, instead of using the lyrics, substitute the words “long” and “short” to indicate the lengths of different notes, as follows:
 - Short short short short short short long (Twinkle, twinkle little star)
 - Short short short short short short long (How I wonder what you are)
 - Short short short short short short long (Up above the world so high)
 - Short short short short short short long (Like a diamond in the sky)
 - Short short short short short short long (Twinkle, twinkle little star)
 - Short short short short short short long (How I wonder what you are)

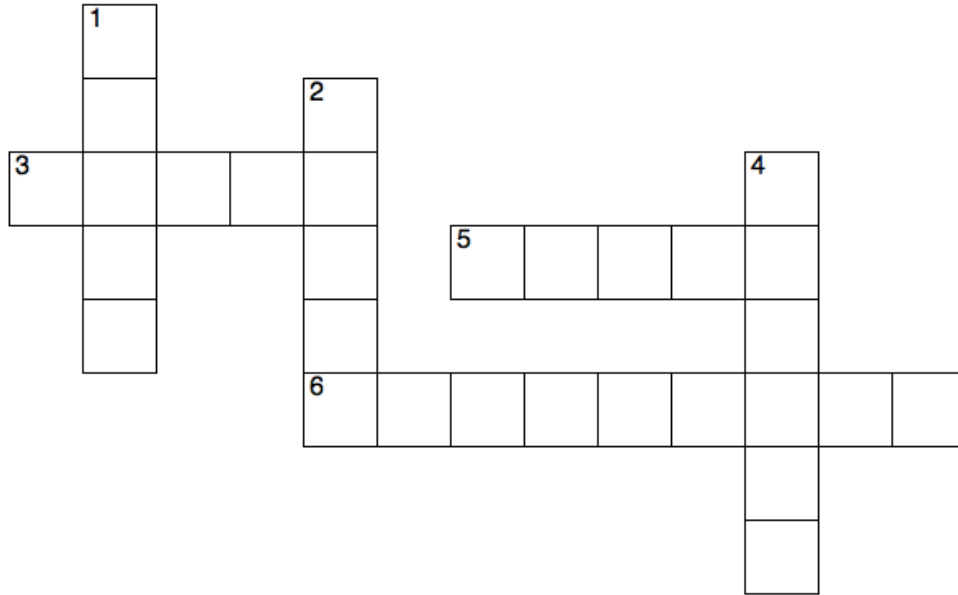
- Invite students to sing through the song with you this way 2-3 times. Then, ask them to listen as you sing through it by yourself with the original lyrics but changing the patterns of shorts and longs in any way you want.
 - Example: Twinkle twinkle little star (sung in this pattern: short short long long short long short)
 - Ask students if the song sounds the same. Point out how changing the patterns of shorts and longs disrupts the flow of the song and makes it trickier to sing.
 - **Make the point that, as with pitch, composers are very specific when they choose rhythms; changing a composer’s rhythms can completely change the way a song sounds and feels.**

The Importance Of Listening

(Classroom Activity, 20 Minutes)

- Hum the tune for “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” Ask students what melody you are humming. There are at least two possible answers here, “Twinkle” and “The Alphabet Song.” Elicit both answers, and ask students to vote on which one they think you are humming.
- Ask students how they can be sure which one you’re humming. The answer: **they need the words in order to be sure, since both songs use the same pitches in the same order.** The words to a song are called **lyrics**, or “the text,” and they are necessary to communicate the message of a song.
- As a class, sing through both sets of lyrics, “Twinkle” and “Alphabet.” Point out the different purposes of the two sets: “Twinkle” tells a story about looking up at the night sky, while “Alphabet” is meant to teach us the letters of the alphabet in order.
- Tell the students that they will hear many songs at the CCGD concert, and they will need to listen carefully to the texts of each song in order to fully understand the message of that song. The first step in listening well is developing **proper audience etiquette**. Elicit from the students what makes a good audience. Possible answers include the following.
 - Sitting silently while the chorus is singing
 - Looking at the performers
 - Keeping hands and feet to oneself
 - Noticing the musical tools being used, such as texts, pitch, and rhythm
 - Applauding at the end of each song, when the **conductor** (person leading the chorus) puts her hands down and turns around
- Ask students to display good audience behavior as they watch “The Wheels on the Bus” (https://youtu.be/Fh_aD5EswXk?t=7s). Alternatively, you can sing the song for the students.
 - Either after the song is finished or at several points along the way, ask the students questions to test their comprehension of the lyrics. Examples are below.
 - What are the people on the bus doing?
 - What on the bus goes round and round?
 - What sounds do the seatbelts on the bus make?
 - Continue to reinforce good audience behavior throughout. You may repeat the activity with a different video/song, if you wish.
- Thank students who demonstrated proper audience etiquette and gave correct answers to your questions. Emphasize that **proper etiquette and excellent listening skills will be very important in understanding and enjoying the CCGD concert.**

Crossword Puzzle: Vocabulary Review
(Individual Activity, 5-10 Minutes)



Use the clues below to help you fill in the crossword puzzle.
If you need help, refer to the Word Search you completed earlier.

ACROSS

- 3. A common musical instrument that you play with your hands
- 5. How high or low a note sounds
- 6. Composers use the Italian word staccato to indicate a note that should be short and _____ from surrounding notes.

DOWN

- 1. A common musical instrument that is inside you
- 2. The lyrics of a song are the _____ that help communicate the message of that song.
- 4. The pattern of long and short notes

Crossword Puzzle: Vocabulary Review Answer Key
 (Individual Activity, 5-10 Minutes)

