

Students will explore folk music traditions using The U.S. Army Band “Pershing’s Own” recording of Percy Grainger’s *Lincolnshire Posy*. Students will examine how folk music preserves stories and cultural traditions through oral history. Students will investigate Grainger’s 1905 journey collecting recordings from folk singers across the English countryside on his phonograph and learn how he compiled them into a musical “posy” (a small bouquet). After listening to excerpts from *Lincolnshire Posy*, students will identify storytelling elements in the music. Drawing inspiration from Grainger’s work, students will then use recording devices to create their own “posy” of folk songs from their family traditions, incorporating personal stories on the provided “Flower Worksheet.”



SETTING

General Music (Grades 4-6+, middle school)

AREA OF FOCUS

Folk Music and Oral History

NATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED

Responding

Anchor Standard #7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard #8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard #10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standard #11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Performing/Presenting/Producing

Anchor Standard #6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

PRIOR UNDERSTANDING NECESSARY

Students should have prior experience performing a wide variety of folk songs in class. Students familiar with using recording devices (whether that be handheld digital recorders, cellphone recording apps, or school-provided smart devices). Students should also have some basic experience singing solo and should be comfortable recording themselves performing.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Knowledge/Skill

Students will **investigate** what folk music is and how it connects to oral history traditions.

Students will **identify** storytelling elements in *Lincolnshire Posy*.

Contextual Understanding

Students will **locate** Lincolnshire, England on a map and **trace** Percy Grainger's 1905 journey collecting folk songs.

Students will **analyze** how this collection of folk music influenced *Lincolnshire Posy* and Grainger's work more broadly.

Artistic Expression

Students will **create** their own musical "posy" by recording folk songs from their personal and family traditions.

Students will **connect** with oral tradition by incorporating personal stories into their collected folk songs using the provided "Flower Worksheets."

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Projector screen and sound system
- Whiteboard/Chalkboard
- Army Band recording of *Lincolnshire Posy*: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiJU77zNKKWTNbvytXRD6xFwUn7stGp03&s=i=k0R9O-i_Ze95oJ7Q
- Photos of Percy Grainger and the phonograph
- World map (or map of Europe/U.K.)
- Handheld digital audio recorders OR personal/school-provided smart devices with recording function
- "Flower Worksheets" https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ADbmh9zBeN3-LShM0SacmQfCo4t5uoJB/view?usp=share_link
- Paper and writing/drawing materials



PROCEDURES

PART I: Introduction

1. Play or sing a short, recognizable folk song snippet that is personally significant to the teacher (for younger students, a simple children's song like "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" or a familiar traditional tune like "Frère Jacques," "Greensleeves," or "Shenandoah" for older students.) Provide song lyrics on the projector screen as it plays. Teacher may choose to have students sing along.
2. Ask students to write answers to the following questions:
 - "What story is this song telling?"
 - "How do you think this song came to exist?"
3. Collect written responses. Ask for a few volunteers to share answers.
4. Explain that *folk music* is music passed down through generations, often by word of mouth, and serves as a way to share stories through *oral tradition*.

PART II: Context

5. Introduce *Percy Grainger*. Display a picture of Grainger on the projector and give students a brief biography, following his life journey on a world map. Optional: have 2-3 student volunteers read the biography in chunks:

"Percy Grainger was an Australian composer born in 1882. As a teenager, he moved to Germany to attend music school and later began his career in London. While in England, he became fascinated with English folk music, which inspired much of his work. In 1914, he moved to the United States and later served as a bandsman in the U.S. Army during World War I. He died in 1961 and is best known today for his piano and wind band music, with *Lincolnshire Posy* being one of his most famous pieces."
6. Explain that in 1905, Grainger traveled across the English countryside recording folk singers on a phonograph, which was an early mechanical recording device, capturing stories through their songs. If time allows, teacher may choose to explain how the phonograph works - a tiny needle etching vibrations onto a wax cylinder that can then be read and replayed by another needle.
7. Zoom in on the U.K. on the map displayed and highlight Lincolnshire. Ask students why he might have chosen rural areas for his research.
8. Further the discussion: "Why do you think Grainger wanted to record these songs? What might be lost if he didn't preserve them?"

PART III: Listening and Storytelling

9. Introduce *Lincolnshire Posy* - an influential piece for windband that features several of the folk songs Grainger collected from his journey across Lincolnshire. Grainger composed the piece while listening back to the recordings he collected on his phonograph for inspiration. The title comes from older English word "posy," meaning "a small bunch of flowers."
10. Tell students that they will listen to *Lincolnshire Posy* to identify storytelling in the music.
11. Play Excerpts: Play 2-3 contrasting excerpts from *Lincolnshire Posy*, pausing after each (teachers are encouraged to choose excerpts that are appropriate and adaptable to their own specific classroom).
12. Have students write down answers to the following guided questions as they listen:
 - "What feelings or images does the music create?"
 - "What story do you think this song is telling?"
 - "What musical choices (rhythm, melody, dynamics, instrumentation) help tell the story?"
13. After listening, facilitate a class discussion comparing students' interpretations. Highlight that Grainger carefully preserved these songs to keep the original stories and emotions intact. Teacher may or may not choose to reveal the true stories of the folk songs for each movement of the piece.
14. Collect written answers following class discussion.

PART IV: Creating a Personal Posy

(The remainder of this lesson plan will be most effective spread out over multiple days)

15. Set up recording devices: either digital audio recorders that students take turns sharing or school-provided/personal devices (phones, tablets, laptops).
16. Students will collect recordings of 3 folk songs from their family or personal experiences, just like Grainger collected songs from villagers. Students can use their own or others' voices, found sounds, instruments, recordings of another existing recording, or a combination of sounds.
17. Pass out provided "Flower Worksheet."
18. On the corresponding "Flower Worksheet," students will write the title of each song and a few words or drawings that help them connect to its story emotionally or culturally.
19. Model the project for students. Record the chosen song from Procedure #1 and play it back for the class as an example. Based on the chosen song, draw or write on the "Flower Worksheet" representing the song's story and personal connection. Encourage creativity. Remind students they can include any song that tells a meaningful story - even a favorite pop song or original composition.

OPTIONAL: Instead of using the provided worksheet, the teacher may elect to have students draw their own flowers to represent each song for an additional layer of creativity.

PART V: Sharing

20. Over the course of the semester, have students share their "Posy" Project with the class, playing the recordings out loud and displaying their "Flower Worksheet" on the projector screen. Have students describe why they chose each song and what the words/drawings on their worksheet represent.
21. Emphasize that, like Grainger, students are participating in a tradition of preserving stories through music. Highlight how each student's collection contributes to cultural memory.

DIFFERENTIATION

- For advanced students: provide students opportunities to analyze additional excerpts of *Lincolnshire Posy*, research another folk song collector, or expand their musical "posy" with added reflection and creative elements.
- For students needing additional support: provide scaffolded instruction, flexible response opinions (orals, visual, or written), and modified pacing to ensure access to listening, discussion, and creative activities throughout the lesson. Some students may need a quiet room with headphones for the listening segment.

ASSESSMENT

Formal

Teacher will collect student written responses for Procedure #2-3.

Informal

Teacher will listen to student verbal responses for Procedure #7-8.

Formal

Teacher will collect student written responses for Procedure #12.

Informal

Teacher will listen to student verbal responses for Procedure #13.

Formal

Teacher will assess student presentations and collect "Flower Worksheets" for Procedure #20.

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Band Together 2026: Lincolnshire Posy