



## PERSPECTIVES

Learning about the importance of music through the philosophical work of  
Theodor Adorno

<b>Learning Objectives</b>	The primary learning objective of this lesson plan is to help students articulate their musical preferences and engage in discussions about the various types of music they enjoy. In addition, students will explore the significance of music in our lives and its profound impact on individuals. Lastly, students will develop the ability to differentiate between music purely for pleasure and music that serves as a catalyst for personal realization and a deeper understanding of truths.
<b>Subjects</b>	Music, Psychology, Art
<b>Recommended Age (10-12 or 12-14)</b>	12-14
<b>Number of students involved</b>	15-20 students
<b>Duration</b>	90 minutes
<b>Skills Developed</b>	Teamwork, critical thinking, communication, empathy and creativity.
<b>Material Needed</b>	Paper, pens, music player or tablet/laptop with internet access.
<b>Inclusion Best Practices</b>	This lesson plan focuses on collaborative and reflective teaching methods, with the primary goal of promoting inclusivity. You should aim to create a safe learning environment, where every student feels encouraged to actively participate and freely express their thoughts. An essential aspect of this approach is to ensure that each student's voice is valued and heard, fostering an inclusive and equitable educational experience for all.



## Instructions for implementing the lesson plan

This lesson plan aims to introduce students to the ideas of Theodor Adorno, and more particularly to his aesthetics and the importance of culture and art in regarding what constitutes a work of art. Students will be engaged in the process of observing various works of art to discuss Danto's definition of art, which states that something is considered to be a work of art when it refers to something and possesses its own distinct meaning. By exploring different artworks and understanding Danto's perspective, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities of artistic expression and the diverse ways in which art can be interpreted.

### Step 1: Introduction to the philosophical topic (15 minutes)

The first part of the lesson plan is an introduction to Theodor Adorno's philosophical work and to his basic ideas on aesthetics, art and music. Adorno has argued for the autonomy of art, as he believed that all forms of art, including music, have a unique value and should not be treated as a tool for social and economic purposes. Furthermore, he characterized art as a powerful mode of expression that ought to actively engage its audience, stimulating emotions and prompting critical contemplation. To introduce students to these topics, you can refer to the Little Philosophers e-book on Adorno: <https://littlephilosophers.eu/r2-e-books-and-augmented-reality-books/>.

This lesson plan will focus on the role of art, and particularly music, in society.

### Step 2: A discussion about art and music (15 minutes)

At this step, you should divide your students into groups of 3 to 4 students and give them some questions to think about. These questions aim to help students realise the interplay between art and society. Students will familiarize with Adorno's philosophical ideas and help them explore how music and art are not just forms of entertainment but also powerful tools for expressing and shaping our thoughts, emotions, and society as a whole.



It's vital to emphasize that these questions do not have definitive right or wrong answers, and it's crucial to foster an inclusive, non-judgmental environment where all students feel encouraged to participate in the discussion.

### **Suggested questions:**

- ❖ How does music make you feel? Can you think of a time when a song or a piece of music made you feel a strong emotion?
- ❖ Have you ever noticed that different types of music are popular at different times and in different places? Why do you think this is?
- ❖ Adorno believed that art, including music, should challenge the way we think and feel. Can you think of a song or piece of music that made you see the world differently or made you think about something in a new way?

### **Step 3: Students create their own song (45 minutes)**

Students will continue to work in their groups. They will select a social issue and collaborate to compose a song that raises awareness and conveys their emotions effectively.

Within their groups, the students can brainstorm, engage in brainstorming sessions, draw inspiration from existing songs and artworks they admire and work to create a result that would express all the team members. They can create lyrics, melodies or even drawings to accommodate their songs.

### **Step 4: Reflection and group presentations (15 minutes)**

In the final phase of this activity, each group will present the song they've created. Following the group presentations, gather all students together for a collective discussion. Encourage them to reflect on the emotions they experienced during the creative process and the subsequent presentations. Encourage your students to analyse how the music and the lyrics of each song communicate their ideas and thoughts on their chosen topic.

You should also allocate time for addressing any remaining questions that your students might have.



You could also extend this lesson plan into a year-long project that students work on progressively. As a culminating event at the end of the academic year, consider organizing a school concert or exhibition where students can showcase the songs or artistic creations they've developed over the course of the year. This project can provide a platform for students to share their artistic expressions related to various social issues, connecting back to the themes of art, society, and the philosophical concepts explored throughout the year.

### References:

Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of modern music*, Bloomsbury, 2016.

Little Philosophers EU project, <https://littlephilosophers.eu/>.