

Call and Response: Classroom Activity

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Students will listen to a *call and response* music excerpt and will identify *call and response* examples in everyday activities. Students will create a classroom *call and response*, using a spoken phrase or a clapping rhythm.



STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO

- ✓ participate in call and response (*CA VAPA Music 2.0 Creative Expression*)
- ✓ follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (*CACCSS SL 1.1*) (*CACCSS SL 2.1*)
- ✓ describe key ideas from information presented orally (*CACCSS SL 2*)



VOCABULARY

Call and Response: A musical or vocal “question and answer” where one person plays music or speaks, and others answer with a special response



STEPS

Listening

Have students listen to the 1-minute music selection below, featuring the English horn and the oboe. The music is called “Scene in the Countryside” by the composer Hector Berlioz. As a listening prompt, tell students:

Imagine you are in a countryside of green fields and rolling hills. You are on one hill, and your friend is far away on another one, on the other side of the field. It's too far to speak with words, so instead you have a conversation with music. Hear the English horn and the oboe call out to each other in their musical conversation.



▶ [Hector Berlioz - Scene in the Countryside - featuring English horn and oboe](#)

Class Discussion

Have the class discuss what they heard. Ask the students: What do you think the English horn and oboe were “saying” to each other with their musical statements? Can you imagine the English horn asking a question or making a statement that the oboe answers with a response?

Tell students the “musical conversation” was in the form of a *call and response*.

Define *call and response* for the students: *A musical or vocal “question and answer” where one person plays music or speaks, and others answer with a special response.*

Call and Response in the Classroom

1. Begin a discussion about examples of *call and response* that can be found around the school. Often it is used as a signal for students to be quiet or to draw their attention to an announcement. For example: *criss-cross applesauce*—the teacher makes the call and the students respond by sitting with their legs crossed or with a verbal response.
2. Ask the students to think of other examples of *call and response* in the school. Are there signals that students use in response to a teacher’s request to be quiet? For example: *Quiet coyote* or *1, 2, 3, eyes on me*. What do these examples of *call and response* tell you?
3. Ask the students to listen carefully as you give instructions and have them respond with the same thing you are doing. Please add your own ideas as well.

Call: Place your hands on your head.

Response: Place hands on head.

Call: Place your hand on your nose.

Response: Place hand on nose.

Call: Place your hands on your ears.

Response: Place hands on ears.

Call: If you can hear me, say "hello!"

Response: Hello!

4. Introduce these other examples of *call and response* to the students.

Call: One, two, three, eyes on me

Response: One, two, eyes on you!

Call: Macaroni and cheese

Response: Everyone freeze

Call: Waterfall

Response: Shhh....

Call: Hot fudge

Response: Sundae

5. Ask the students to work in small groups to brainstorm ideas for a new *call and response* for the classroom. They can use words, sounds, or rhythms, and be as creative as they want.
6. Have the students teach their *call and response* to the classroom. The students should vote for their favorite *call and response*. The winner can be used by the teacher to draw attention for the remainder of the school year.
7. Close the activity by reminding students that *call and response* is a form of communication that is used every day, and heard in music!