

LISTENING: TEN TIMES TWO

A routine for observing and describing music

1. Listen to a piece of music quietly. Let your ears wander and take in as much as possible.
2. List 10 words or phrases about any aspect of what you hear.
3. Repeat Steps 1 & 2: Listen again and try to list 10 more words or phrases to your list.

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

The routine helps students slow down and make careful observations about music. It asks students to think about words or phrases to describe the work and encourages students to push beyond first listen or basic description.

When and where can I use it?

The routine will work with any kind of music. Use Ten times Two when you introduce a new piece of music to get students thinking carefully about it before having a discussion or using another routine. You can also use the Ten times Two routine after an in depth discussion about a piece of music to both push forward and summarize some of the ideas and observations that were made during the conversation.

The routine is useful before a writing activity. It gets students thinking about descriptive language and helps students make observations about the music.

What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Give students time to listen to the music multiple times, with an effort on hearing something new each time. If possible, keep the music playing at a softer volume while students develop their lists.

Students can work as a whole class, in small groups or individually. Students should try to write their ideas down, or in a whole class discussion the teacher could write students' comments on the board. Make sure that the descriptive words and phrases generated are made visible for the whole group at some point in the discussion. Add to the list as necessary during any follow up conversations.

A natural follow up to Ten times Two would be another routine that get students talking about their interpretations, for example the What makes you say that? routine or Claim Support Question.

*Here are some options for pieces of music, but feel free to use any piece that you may have or one that connects to current topics you are studying.

- Tchaikovsky, Symphony No. 5 in E minor, op. 64 (a symphony, 1878)
- John Phillip Souza, Washington Post March (a concert band march, 1889)
- William Christopher Handy, St. Louis Blues, (ragtime blues, 1914)
- George and Ira Gershwin, Summertime (from "Porgy and Bess" opera, 1935)