

Musical Ancestries: Poland Idea Board


Start Here

- Preview Radio Broadcast Story/Audio Recording, Script, and/or Prezi of educational resources Children's Radio Story/Audio Recording
- Play all or part of the Musical Ancestries: Poland Story/Audio Recording for the students
 1. Prep students for the story/audio recording by introducing select instruments and styles of music through the Prezi. Include vocabulary words/music words.
 2. As students listen to the story/audio recording, have them follow along with a Listening Map or create a listening map of their own.
 3. As students are listening to the audio story, project the script and have them follow along. You can also project photos from the Prezi of instruments and other images of note.
 4. After the listening exercise, ask students to write or talk about their choice of music, dance, instruments, or traditions incorporating some of the vocabulary words/ musical terms learned.

Prezi Educational Resources

MUSIC

1. Play samples of music from select styles and compare and contrast musical elements. What is the same and what is different?
2. Play "drop the needle" with music from the Prezi or audio recording. Have students try to identify the style based on the selected music samples. This could be across MA episodes as well.
3. Think of all the stringed instruments you know and compare their structure and function.
4. Find other musical instruments that are played in Polish folk music. [Here is a 13:18 YouTube video with 22 Polish musical instruments](#)
5. Identify and explore various string instruments throughout the world. Compare and contrast how they are played and how they sound in different music and traditions.
6. Play "drop the needle" with music from the Prezi or audio recording. This could be across other Musical Ancestries™ episodes as well. Have students try to identify the style, country, or region based on the selected music samples.
7. Have a SCAVENGER HUNT through this episode or across other Musical Ancestries™ episodes. Keep it simple, not too detailed. Let the students explore:
 - a. Find the string, wind, or percussion instruments
 - b. Find the dances or the festivals/celebrations
 - c. What other parts of the culture, in addition to music, do you see at festivals/celebrations?
8. Find Polish folk songs and teach one to the class.
9. Play "drop the needle" with the various Polish folk instruments. What characteristics make it easy to name one instrument over another? What is timbre, and how are instruments different from each other?

10. Find a folk story from Poland like this [Legend of the Christmas Spider](#). Improvise a *soundscape*, which is a musical tapestry of patterns and sounds to help tell a story. Use a drone, unpitched percussion, and small melodic patterns to help create the sound effects for any story or setting.
11. Write stories inspired by a piece of music. Tell students that music can tell a story without words. Ask them to close their eyes and listen to a piece of music like this:
 Chopin - Etude Op. 10 No. 4 (Torrent) . Ask them to think about this song as background music to a story and to jot down a few notes like::

- What setting do you picture?
- What are the feelings and emotions?
- What kind of character do you imagine in the story, and what are they doing?
- include details about sights, sounds, smells, even flavors and textures that are inspired by the music.

Now write it. Remind students to give their story a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Share with the class.

12. Go on a nature walk, and connect with nature by either singing, drawing, or journaling.
13. How are music and art related?

Elementary school music essential questions:

1. What is music?
2. How is this different from sound?
3. How is rhythm different from a beat?
4. Why do people listen to music?
5. Why is music so important to people?
6. Why is the human voice particularly powerful in music?
7. What symbols are used to represent different sounds or lack of sound?
8. What do those symbols mean (from #7)?
9. How are instruments different from each other?

Middle school music essential questions:

1. What techniques are needed to perform at a high level with a particular instrument?
2. To what extent is musical performance an act of communication?
3. Why is consistent practice so important for music performance?
4. Why is the context of the performance important?
5. Why are some composers valued more than others?
6. How do culture and music interact?
7. Why is listening to a lot of different genres of music valuable for a composer?

High school music essential questions:

1. How do the other arts, other disciplines, contexts, and daily life inform creating, performing, and responding to music?
2. How does music transcend language?
3. Why is the context of the performance important?
4. Why are some composers valued more than others?
5. How do culture and music interact?
6. Why is listening to a lot of different genres of music valuable for a composer?
7. How do composers make choices on how they wish to express an idea using music?

DANCE

1. Watch the dances from each country. Can you notice when the sections change? Can you hear the different melodies for the different sections?
2. Can you find the history and origin of each of the five national dances of Poland?
3. What are the dance steps used in Poland's national dances? Try it: divide students into small groups and ask them to choreograph an eight-count dance phrase using two of those steps.

ART AND HISTORY

1. Choose either a Polish historical legend or any other short historical story of interest. Read it out loud to the students then ask them to make a painting or drawing depicting their interpretation event. Share the images. How are they different and how are they the same? Discuss ways art and history are related.
Some story ideas: [The Mermaid of Warsaw](#), or any of the stories in Richard Monte's *The Dragon of Krakow and Other Stories*.

ELA (English Language Arts) Discussion/Journaling Points

1. Have you ever had difficulty communicating with someone due to a language barrier? What are some ways that you can communicate without using words?
2. Polish folk tales explore universal themes like love, sadness, and the struggle for freedom, making them relatable to people of all ages. These stories, rooted in oral tradition, represent the earliest form of literature in Poland, passed down through generations by everyday folks. Rich in customs, beliefs, and traditions of the peasant class, Polish folklore shares common ground with German fairy tales and Celtic ballads. Find a Polish folktale or fairy tale online. After reading, use the following for discussion or journaling: a.) What story elements do you find in this and other folktales? b.) Does this folktale remind you of any other folktale you may know? c.) How do you feel about the role of the female in a folktale? Is she always the "damsel in distress?" Why or why not? d.) What do folktales tell you about the society in which they were created? e.) Find a German folktale or Celtic ballad and compare/contrast it with your Polish folktale.

GEOGRAPHY

1. On what continent will you find this country?

2. Where is this country/region in relation to the USA?
3. Poland's Białowieża Forest is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Tell students that means this forest has "a cultural or natural heritage considered to be of outstanding value to humanity." Have a Białowieża Forest Scavenger Hunt to discover:
 - a. What is the biggest mammal that lives there? The smallest?
 - b. What is at least one tree that has a name? How big is it?
 - c. https://kids.kiddle.co/Bia%C5%82owie%C5%BCa_Forest
 - d. [Watch this YouTube video about the forest](#)
4. Compare the climate or seasons in this country or region with a similar climate/season in the U.S.
5. Does a country's position on the globe impact its climate or seasons?

THE FUTURE

1. Research opportunities to find colleges that offer classes in the music of Poland or any other culture of interest.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Fiction

- *The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly – A historical novel set in 15th-century Poland, filled with adventure and Polish history. A 1929 Newberry Award winner. Ages 8-12.
- *Mirette and Bellini Cross Niagara Falls* by Emily Arnold McCully – Story of two tightrope walkers at Niagara Falls who befriend a Polish orphan. Ages 4-8.
- *King Matthew the First* by Janusz Korczak – A 1922 Polish tale about the adventures of a ten-year-old prince who suddenly inherits the throne from his father. Ages 7-12.

Historical Fiction

- *The Trumpeter of Krakow* by Eric P. Kelly – A Newbery Award winning novel first published in 1928. It is set in medieval Kraków and is a story filled with adventure, mystery, and Polish history. Ages 8-12.
- *The Silver Sword* (also published as *Escape from Warsaw*) by Ian Serraillier – A moving story about three Polish siblings surviving and reuniting after WWII. Ages 9-12.
- *Manya's Dream: A Story of Marie Curie* by Frieda Wishinsky – A picture book biography of the famous Polish scientist who was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize. Ages 8-11.
- *Casimir Pulaski: Soldier on Horseback* by David R. Collins – A biography of the famous Polish nobleman and knight who fought in the American Revolution. Ages 4-11.
- *The Trumpet of the Swan* by E.B. White – It is not set in Poland but references Kraków and the famous legend of the trumpeter. Ages 7-10.

Folktales & Legends

- *The Dragon of Krakow: And Other Polish Stories* by Richard Monte – A collection of Polish myths and legends, including the famous Wawel Dragon. Ages 8-11.
- *Polish Fairy Tales* by A.J. Glinski – Traditional Polish folk tales featuring knights, kings, and medieval life. Ages 11+.

General Nonfiction

- *Oh Boy Love It Poland: Learn fun facts about Poland* by Mav Hryc - This is an overview of Poland, covering its interesting culture, geography, and general trivia for children. Ages 6-12.
- *Poland (Enchantment of the World series)* by Walter Simmons – A kid-friendly introduction to Poland's history, geography, and culture. Ages 9-12.
- *A Kid's Guide to Poland* by Jack Roberts – Fun facts, history, and activities to help kids learn about Poland. Ages 5+.
- *National Geographic Countries of the World: Poland* by Charles Phillips – Beautiful photos and engaging facts about Poland's landscapes, history, and people. Ages 10-14.
- *DK Eyewitness Books: World War II* – Includes sections on Poland's role in WWII, including the invasion of Poland and the Warsaw Uprising. Ages 9-12.

Biographies

World War II & Resistance Heroes

- *Irena Sendler and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto* by Susan Goldman Rubin – Story of a Polish social worker who helped nearly four hundred Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto and into hiding during World War II. Ages 6-9.
- *Janusz Korczak's Children* by Gloria Spielman – A chapter book biography of the Polish doctor and educator who protected orphans during the Holocaust. Ages 7-10.
- *Raoul Wallenberg: The Man Who Stopped Death* by Sharon Linnea – A Swedish diplomat who helped Poland's Jewish population. Ages 14+.

Scientists & Inventors

- *Marie Curie for Kids: Her Life and Scientific Discoveries, with 21 Activities and Experiments* by Amy M. O'Quinn – A biography of the groundbreaking Polish scientist with hands-on activities. Ages 9+.
- *Manya's Dream: A Story of Marie Curie* by Frieda Wishinsky – A simplified biography of Curie's life and her discoveries. Ages 8-11.
- *Who Was Marie Curie?* by Megan Stine – A chapter book about the two-time Nobel Prize-winning physicist. Ages 7-10.

Political & Historical Leaders

- *The Story of Saint John Paul II: A Boy Who Became Pope* by Fabiola Garza – An illustrated biography. Ages 6-9.
- *Casimir Pulaski: Soldier on Horseback* by David R. Collins – A biography of the famous Polish nobleman and knight who fought in the American Revolution. Ages 4-11.
- *Lech Wałęsa: The Champion of Freedom* by Ann Angel and Mary Craig – A biography of the labor leader who helped bring democracy to Poland. Ages 8-10.

Writers & Artists

- *Frederic Chopin: The Story of the Boy Who Made Beautiful Melodies* by – An introduction to Poland's most famous composer. Ages 11+.
- *Frederic Chopin, Son of Poland, Early Years* by Opal Wheeler - Stories of Chopin's childhood. Ages 8-11.

WWII and Holocaust History

- *The Cats in Krasinski Square* by Karen Hesse – A picture book about Jewish resistance in Warsaw during WWII. Ages 8-11.
- *Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust* by Loïc Dauvillier – A graphic novel about a young girl's experience hiding during the Holocaust. Ages 6-10.
- *War Boy: A Wartime Childhood* by Michael Foreman – An award-winning memoir about growing up in wartime England. Ages 5-7.
- *The Champion of Children: The Story of Janusz Korczak* by Tomek Bogacki – A picture book biography of Janusz Korczak, a Polish doctor and teacher who cared for orphans during WWII. Ages 6-10.
- *Goodbye, Marianne* by Irene N. Watts – A story about growing up in Nazi Germany. Ages 8-12.
- *My Secret War: The WWII Diary of Madeline Beck* by Mary Pope Osborne – A look at wartime America by the author of the Magic Tree House series. Ages 10-12.

Nonfiction

Cooking & Food

- *Polish Food and Cooking* by Ewa Michalik – A kid-friendly introduction to Polish cuisine, including simple recipes for traditional dishes like pierogi and bigos.
- *Cooking the Polish Way* by Danuta Zamojska-Hutchins – A cookbook for young people or beginning cooks to try basic recipes and learn a little about the culture and customs of Poland.

Crafts & Activities

- *Polish Customs, Traditions, and Folklore* by Sophie Hodorowicz Knab – A description of Polish holidays and traditions with ideas for crafts and celebrations.
- *Hands-On History: World War II* by Simon Adams – Includes activities related to Poland's role in WWII, such as making wartime crafts and maps.
- *Christmas in Poland* by World Book – A reference book for Polish holiday traditions including step by step instructions for making Polish Christmas ornaments.

Festivals & Holidays

- *Let's Celebrate Polish Heritage* by Debra J. Rovin-Murphy – A fun book with activities, traditions, and historical facts about Poland.
- *Celebrate Easter Around the World* by Deborah Heiligman – Features Polish Easter traditions like pisanki (decorated eggs) and making butter lambs.
- *Festivals of the World: Poland* by Joanne Mattern – Explores Polish holidays with fun activities and crafts.