

[The Great Nashville Train Wreck of 1918](#)

THE GREAT TRAIN WRECK OF 1918: REMEMBERING THROUGH MUSIC

Grade: 6

Subject: Music, Social Studies, English Language Arts

Tennessee State Curriculum Standards:

- Music: 6.0 Students will listen to, analyze, and describe music; 7.0 Students will evaluate music and music performances, 8.0 Students will understand relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts; 9.0 Students will understand music in relation to history and culture
- Social Studies: 6.2.02 Discuss economic connections, conflicts, and interdependence; 6.4.03 Identify how cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control resources, rights, and privileges; 6.6.01 Understand the impact of individual and group decisions on citizens and communities; 6.6.02 Demonstrate an understanding of concepts such as role, status, social class in describing the interactions of individuals and social groups
- English Language Arts: 0601.2.1 Demonstrate critical listening skills essential for comprehension, evaluation, problem solving, and task completion; 0601.2.8 Participate in work teams and group discussions; 0601.2.12 Use an organizational structure appropriate for the topic and purpose (e.g., sequential, chronological, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, cause-effect); 0601.2.17 Participate productively in self-directed work teams for a particular purpose; 0601.3.6 Develop relevant details or reasons in a manner that meets the needs of the audience and purpose; 0601.3.14 Edit to craft a tone that is appropriate for the topic and audience, and supports the purpose; 0601.3.15 Use language that conveys the writer's point of view; 0601.3.17 Generate notes on text, and identify main and supporting ideas; 0601.5.1 Use logic to make inferences and draw conclusions in a variety of oral and written contexts; 0601.5.2 Analyze text for fact-opinion, cause-effect, inferences, evidence, and conclusions; 0601.6.1 Comprehend and summarize the main ideas and supporting details of informational texts; 0601.7.1 Analyze media for their ability to inform, persuade, and entertain; 0601.7.2 Examine the relationship between the visual (e.g., media images, painting, film, graphic arts) and the verbal in media; 0601.7.3 Identify the purpose of a medium; 0601.7.4 Draw an inference from a non-print medium; 0601.7.5 Choose the statement that best summarizes/communicates the message presented by a medium; 0601.8.10 Determine the author's purpose for writing

Materials: All worksheets/information sources are included with this lesson plan.

Internet access

Worksheet & Activity Packet: Great Train Wrecks of Tennessee worksheet pre-activity, Sound Recordings Analysis Worksheet, Cause and Effect Group worksheet (link provided), Music and History post-activity

Time Required: One 45-minute class period

Prep Time: 5-10 minutes for media cueing

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Overview:

Students will use historical accounts, photographs, factual information and music to decipher the causes and effects of the Great Train Wreck of 1918 that occurred in 1918. Through analysis and interpretation of historically themed music, students will also begin to interpret music as a viable historical source.

Pre-Activity (to be done before class time): Great Train Wrecks of Tennessee worksheet

Procedure:

1. (10 minutes) Discuss the pre-activity worksheet in an open discussion format.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was something you found interesting about the online exhibit?

2. Had you heard of any of the train wrecks?

2. (4 minutes) Play "[The Great Nashville Railroad Disaster \(A True Story\)](#)" (this doesn't work) by David Allen Coe, 1985. Have the students follow along with the lyrics.

3. (4 minutes) Fill out Sound Recordings Analysis worksheet.

4. (3 minutes) Play "[Dutchman's Curve](#)" video.

5. (2 minutes) Split the class into groups of no more than three students and have each group form in front of a computer with internet access. Distribute a [Cause and Effect](#) worksheet to each group.

6. (15 minutes) Each group will visit the [Historic Nashville](#) website about the Great Train Wreck of 1918. Have each group fill in as many causes as they can and the effects of those causes on the worksheet. Play "[The Great Nashville Railroad Disaster \(A True Story\)](#)" (this doesn't work) by David Allen Coe again.

7. (7 minutes) Have groups share their findings. Teachers may find it helpful to keep a master list on the board.

Post-Activity: Music and History worksheet

Sound Recording Analysis Worksheet

Song Name: _____ Artist: _____ Style: _____

What instruments do you hear?

Acoustic Guitar	Banjo	Bass
Drums	Electric Guitar	Fiddle/Violin
Piano	Steel Guitar	Other:

How would you describe this song?

Fast	Flowing	Hard
Loud	Rough	Smooth
Soft	Twangy	Other:

Do you like this song? Why or why not? _____

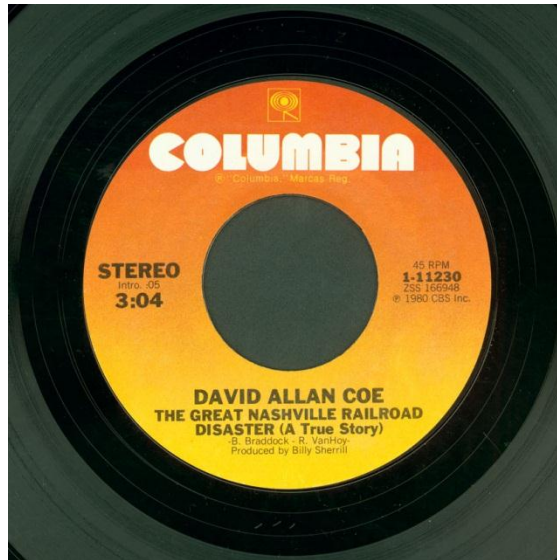
List some adjectives to describe the sound. _____

Describe the theme in one word? _____

Music and History

1. How does music like “The Great Nashville Railroad Disaster (A True Story)” by David Allen Coe, 1985 help people who didn’t experience the Great Train Wreck of 1918 understand it?

2. What songs do you think will help future generations interpret and connect with historical events that have happened in your lifetime?



Teacher Resources:

Lyrics: "The Great Nashville Railroad Disaster (A True Story)" by David Allen Coe, 1985

ONE SULTRY SUMMER MORNING IN THE YEAR OF 1918
THREE HUNDRED MEN WITH EBONY SKIN
PULLED OUT OF UNION STATION
HEADING OUT OF NASHVILLE FOR WESTERN TENNESSEE
HOMEWARD BOUND CAUSE UNCLE SAM CLOSED DOWN
THE MUNITIONS FACTORY.

AT THAT VERY MOMENT ON THE CHEATHAM COUNTY LINE
OLD NUMBER ONE TRAIN FROM MEMPHIS
WAS RUNNING WAY BEHIND
BACK IN THE SMOKEY CLUB CAR A MEMPHIS GAMBLING MAN
SAID GENTLEMAN, IM FOLDING THESE CARDS
CAUSE I DREW A DEAD MANS HAND!

A YOUNG MAN IN A MILK TRUCK OUT NEAR DUTCHMAN'S GRADE
SAID OH MY GOD TWO TRAINS ONE TRACK
THEN HE CLOSED HIS EYES AND HE PRAYED
A SISTER FROM THE ORPHANS HOME MADE A CROSS UPON HER CHEST
CAUSE A ONE IRON BEAST WAS COMING FROM THE EAST
AND ANOTHER ONE WAS COMING FROM THE WEST

THE BIRD FLEW FROM THE TREE TOPS AS THE IMPACT SHOOK THE GROUND
THE SCREAMING WHEELS AND THE GRINDING STEEL
COULD BE HEARD FOR MILES AROUND
NOW EVERY JULY 9TH A FEW MILES WEST OF TOWN
TO THIS DAY SOME FOLKS SAY
YOU CAN HEAR THAT MOURNFUL SOUND

Here is a link to the song catalogue located at My Homeland: [Click Me!](#)

Supplemental Resources:

Center for Popular Music. "My Homeland Tennessee: Tennessee History". Last Modified 2012.
<http://popmusic.mtsu.edu/Homeland/history.html>.

Cresswell, Tim. "Embodiment, Power and the Politics of Mobility: The Case of Female Tramps and Hobos". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* , New Series, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1999), pp. 175-192.

Kazek, Kelly. *Forgotten Tales of Tennessee*. Charleston: The History Press, 2011.

Old Hickory. "The Great Train Wreck of 1918". Last Accessed March 15, 2013.

<http://www.oldhickory.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/TrainWreckOf1918.pdf>