



August

CALENDAR CONNECTIONS

Dear Families,
Have fun exploring music with your students this month. Here are some activities to get you started!

Mystery Music Term

Look carefully at the calendar, and find all of the letters in boldface. Unscramble the letters to spell a music term.

Mystery Melody

Here is this month's Mystery Melody:



Try singing or playing the notes to see if you can identify this piece.

Featured Musician and Listening Examples

Leonard Bernstein is this month's featured musician. You can learn more about him at <http://www.leonardbernstein.com/>. Also, spend some time listening to these famous works:

- "America" from *West Side Story*. Listen for the repetitive short and long sounds in the chorus.
- *Candide Overture*. Listen for the loud and soft dynamics.

Consider keeping a family music journal. Be sure to include the name of the composer, a list of his/her pieces, as well as your thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the music. Quality recordings of all featured musical works are available for purchase at <http://music4you.lorenz.com>.

Family Music Connections for August 2013

Return this portion of the page to your music teacher.

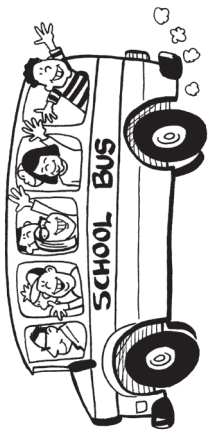
Name(s): _____


















Mystery Music Term: _____

Definition of Mystery Music Term: _____

The Mystery Melody for this month is: _____

September



| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| 1 Grandparents' Day | 2 Labor Day | 3  | 4 Beyonce Knowles's birthday (1981)  | 5  | 6 Read a Book Day  | 7  |
| 8 | 9 | 10  | 11 | 12  On this day in 1966, <i>The Monkees</i> TV show premiered on NBC. | 13 Clara Schumann's birthday (1819)  | 14  |
| 15  | 16 B. B. King's birthday (1925)  | 17 Constitution Day | 18 | 19 | 20 Family Fun Night Make a music video and share it with your music teacher. | 21 International Peace Day; Gustav Holst's birthday (1925)  |
| 22 | 23 Ray Charles's birthday (1930)  | 24  | 25  | 26 George Gershwin's birthday (1898)  | 27 Family Fun Night Watch the musical <i>The Sound of Music</i> . | 28  |
| 29 | 30 On this day in 1954, Julie Andrews made her first Broadway appearance in <i>The Boy Friend</i> . | | | | | |



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Here is this month's Mystery Melody:



Try singing or playing the notes to see if you can identify this piece.

George Gershwin is this month's featured musician. You can learn more about him and his brother, Ira, at <http://www.gershwin.com/>. Also, spend some time listening to these famous works:

- *Rhapsody in Blue*. Listen for the clarinet solo highlighted in this piece.
- "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess*. Listen to the lyrics of this American operatic aria.

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Name(s): _____

Mystery Music Term: _____

Definition of Mystery Music Term:

The Mystery Melody for this month is:

From My Classroom to Yours

Using Brain Research to Improve Your Students' Learning

By Mari Schay

How often have you found yourself thinking, "I know I taught this! Why aren't they getting it?" In the last few years, neuroscientists have been busy answering these questions by determining just how learning takes place.

Learning new information requires three basic actions from the brain: attention, activation, and retention. By structuring your lessons to gain attention, activate brains (and keep them activated), and promote retention, you can work smarter, not harder.



Attention

Research says you have twenty-nine seconds to get a child's attention, and between five and fifteen minutes to keep it before the brain either shuts down or refocuses. This means the first minute of an activity may be the most important because, consciously or unconsciously, your students' brains are deciding whether what comes next is worth the mental energy. Emotional connections, humor, and physical activities get our attention, so when you start a new song, game, ensemble, or activity, give the students' brains a reason to be curious about what will come next. You might try describing your connection to the music, telling a story, speaking with an accent, or connecting movement to concepts.

Our brains crave novelty but rely on familiarity. Novelty turns on the switch for learning and excites our curiosity; familiarity creates strong neural pathways. How do you combine the two? Think of your lesson like a theme with variations: your routines and teaching style are the theme, but the material you cover and the way in which you cover it are the variations. Here's an all-too-familiar situation that exemplifies this concept.

Many teachers use the clapping pattern "ta ta ti-ti ta" as a cue to listen; however, kids often keep talking or don't respond. Then, the teacher either claps louder or says something like, "I have asked for attention, and I want it now!"

But instead, the same teacher could try making use of novelty. She could try using a variety of rhythms, different body sounds, or even silly mouth sounds until the whole class is involved. The familiar activity is the echoing of four-beat patterns; the novelty is, "What will she think of next?" Everyone is paying attention, and no one is frustrated.