

Transcribe & Transpose...Then Jam

This holistic lesson will test your ear training, composition, and performance skills. By transcribing the original refrain from the spiritual "Wade In The Water" you will then be asked to transpose the melody to a different key using chromatic transposition techniques. Once transposed, you will have the opportunity to play the melody over an original PULSE groove of "Wade In The Water".

Outcomes:

- Students will apply transcription techniques in order to transcribe the original refrain from the spiritual "Wade In The Water"
- Students will apply chromatic transposition techniques to their transcribed melody
- Students will perform their transposed transcription over the "Wade In The Water" groove provided

Materials:

- Computer with a browser such as Chrome, Safari or Firefox, to access the Berklee PULSE website
- Projector, PA system
- Preferred instrument
- Blank Staff paper
- "Wade In The Water" Notation Mixer play along
- "Wade In The Water" sheet music for ensemble
- "Wade In The Water" (transcription answer sheet)
- "Wade In The Water" (transposition answer sheet)

Assessment:

- Informal assessment – through class discussion and participation
- Formal assessment – through accuracy of transposed transcription and performance of the melody asked to transcribe and transpose

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

Exposition of Material

1. Listen, with your students, to the "Wade In The Water" PULSE Groove in F minor that the students will eventually be performing along to. Then listen to the "Wade In The Water" Original Melodic Theme in D minor in which students will transcribe and transpose.

2. Transcription is a written version of a piece of music that was produced after hearing. There are many approaches to transcription, but here are some places to start.

- a. **Map out the form of the piece.** Elements of form may include the number of measures included in the melody. Knowing the form will help you know where to look in order to listen from another angle.
- b. **Determine the key of the song.**
- c. You might **try conducting** while listening, so you can pinpoint the downbeats.
- d. **Try singing or humming** to the melody before you try to play it on your instrument and before you write down a single note. This ensures that you have truly internalized the music, rather than relying on "finger patterns" or on notes on a page. When you've memorized and internalized the notes, you can more easily access them while performing.
- e. **Use your instrument** or piano to pinpoint the notes.
- f. **Check your work.** Play along to make sure your transcription is accurate.
- g. **Check with your teacher/private instructor** to check your work or to ask for additional approaches and ideas.

Activity/Assessment

3. Have your students transcribe the "Wade In The Water" Original Melodic Theme using blank staff paper. There will be two measures of a 4/4 time click track before the melody starts.
4. Once students have accurately transcribed this eight bar melody in D minor, review how to chromatically transpose this melody to the key of F minor. Transposition is the process of moving a group of notes up or down in pitch by the same interval. Chromatic transposition moves the melody by a given interval while maintaining the same, fixed number of half steps. If a whole phrase is transposed in this way, we often perceive a change in key, or tonal center.
 - a. Have your students transpose their melody from the key of D minor to the key of F minor. They can start this process by determining the intervallic relationship between their starting notes, which is the root (or scale degree "1") in their respective keys.
 - b. Students can review key signatures and major/minor scales with our Circle of Fifths tool below.
 - c. Once transposed to the key of F minor, the students' melody will be in the correct key of the "Wade In The Water" PULSE Groove. Below is an audio clip of the transposed melody in the key of F minor.
5. Allow your students time to practice their now transposed melody in the key of F minor along with the "Wade In The Water" PULSE Groove. They can perform either with their instruments or voices.

Lesson Closing

- Encourage your students to learn the other parts of the "Wade In The Water" PULSE Groove to perform as a live ensemble! [Download the sheet music here.](#)