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CIVICS

MUSIC AND IDENTITY

**How does music influence our history,
lives, culture, and identity?**

**Middle/High
School**

Music and Identity: How does music influence our history, lives, culture, and identity?

C3 Framework Indicator	D2.His.5.9-12., D2.His.12.9-12.	
Staging the Compelling Question	Brainstorm and collect information about the fall of the Berlin Wall, music, and identity.	
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
How does the study of Berlin's techno music help us to understand the shaping of post-reunification Germany and Berliners, specifically East Berlin youth?	How does the study of Berlin's techno music help us to understand why music is such a powerful form of expression, worthy of cultural preservation?	Why was East Berlin's techno music chosen to be part of Germany's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Students will learn content information about the fall of the Berlin Wall and how music played a role in the evolution of German youth identity. Students will use a note catcher activity as a formative performance task.	Students will listen to East Berlin Techno music and discuss why and how music can be such a powerful tool in social and political movements. Students will break into small groups to reflect and explain East German identity.	Students will read and analyze current event documents about why German techno music has been accepted as a national cultural intangible heritage component of Germany.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
Source A: " Berlin Techno: A History " Source B: " How Berlin Became Europe's Techno Capital " Source C: " Techno Culture in Berlin " Source D: Worksheet 1	Source A: " Energy Flash " Source B: " For an Angel "	Source A: " Berlin Techno on Germany's Intangible Cultural Heritage List " Source B: " Germany Adds Berlin's Techno Scene to UNESCO cultural heritage list " Source C: " How Berlin's techno scene transformed the city and gained UNESCO status " Source D: " Why has Berlin techno been added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage? "
Summative Performance Task	Argument: 1-2 page response about German expression, identity, and music.	
	Extension: Compare techno music with other nationally significant styles of music.	
Taking Informed Action: Using your voice to make change	Understand: Students identify music within their own culture that is valuable and should be preserved.	
	Assess: Students research and create an argument in support of their music that should be preserved as part of the intangible heritage list.	
	Act: Students seek out and observe a type of music or performance that they believe to be of great cultural significance.	

Music and Identity

Target Grade Level: 6-8, 9-12

Target Course: Civics

Compelling Question

How does music influence our history, lives, culture, and identity?

Inquiry Overview

This lesson plan offers students an opportunity to connect music with historical and cultural change, exploring how East German techno music symbolizes the transformation of a divided nation. Through listening, discussion, and reflection, students will understand why techno culture in Berlin became a global symbol of freedom and why Germany formally recognized it on its intangible cultural heritage list.

Teacher Background Information

Teachers should have a working knowledge of the differences between East and West Berliners, from the fall of the Berlin Wall to contemporary times. Two of these differences include the use of city space and entertainment. Abandoned buildings in East Berlin, which had not been used under communist East Berlin, became the perfect spots for underground dance clubs. It was here that techno flourished and became part of East German identity for teenagers and young adults. Techno represented a newly found freedom and became associated with a new era for East Germans.

Teachers should have a working understanding of what constitutes an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Going through a selective process, cultural heritage proposals are considered once a year by many countries, and if chosen, artists receive funding to continue the practice of such traditions. In many cases, some intangible cultural heritages are considered to be in need of urgent safeguarding. While not (yet) on the UNESCO World list, Berlin techno has been recognized by Germany to be in need of preservation.

Suggested Time Frame

One 50-minute class period; Optional extension activity included

Concept List

- Techno
- Culture
- Heritage
- Intangible Cultural Heritage

Instructional Resources

- Whiteboard/smartboard
- Projector or access to digital resources
- Audio clips of East German techno music
- Video clips of Berlin Wall's fall and post-reunification cultural scenes (optional)
- Articles about techno and its recognition on Germany's intangible cultural heritage list (can be printed or shared digitally)
- Worksheets with questions for discussion and reflection

NCSS Thematic Strands

- Culture
- Time, Continuity, and Change
- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

C3 Framework Indicators

- **D2.His.5.9-12.** Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.
- **D2.His.12.9-12.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

Outcomes for Student Learning

- Students will be able to identify and discuss the intrinsic value of cultural heritage.
- Students will analyze primary and secondary sources to explain what constitutes cultural components that should be preserved for the sake of national identity.

Germany-Related Learning Goals

- Students will be able to identify and explain the evolution and importance of techno music to German history and to its national identity.

Compelling Question

How does music influence our history, lives, culture, and identity?

Introductory Activity

- Ask students:
 - What do you know about the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany?
 - What role do you think music plays in social and political movements?
 - What role does music play in shaping our personal and national identity?
- Write down their responses on the board, guiding them towards understanding how music, culture, and history intersect.
- Ask students:
 - What do you know about Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity recognition?
 - What constitutes cultural heritage? What might be included?
- Write down their responses on the board, guiding them towards understanding that intangible components of culture can define identity.

Supporting Question 1

How does the study of Berlin's techno music help us to understand the shaping of post-reunification Germany and Berliners, specifically East Berlin youth?

► Formative Performance Task 1

To give students the needed context and background information to complete the lesson plan, provide a brief history of East Germany and the evolution of East German techno music. This should include:

- Pre-1989 Context
 - Under Communist rule in East Germany, music was often tightly controlled, with Western influences banned. Youth had limited access to free cultural expression, which led to underground movements, which included punk, new wave, and techno music
- Techno's Emergence
 - After the fall of the Berlin Wall, abandoned buildings and industrial spaces in East Berlin became hotspots for underground techno parties/raves. These previously prohibited buildings under the GDR, became hubs for self-expression and freedom.
 - Techno music was seen as a symbol of freedom and unity, especially for East Berliner youth. The genre had ties to the West, capitalism, and new freedoms.
- Cultural Significance of Techno
 - Techno was not just about the beat, but a form of free expression and cultural identity. It represented the breakdown of walls, not just physical but metaphorical.
 - The techno scene became a place for everyone, not just a unique subset of people. Its identity included inclusion, love, peace, and diversity. All people: young and old, local and foreigners, East and West, could come together to celebrate. Clubs like Berghain, Tresor, and Sisyphos became world-famous

Students should fill out the included 3-2-1 Learning Reflection worksheet or the teacher can choose a graphic organizer of choice.

Resources

For teacher and student support in learning about Berlin's techno music and its formation, the following videos can be used:

- [“Berlin Techno: A History”](#) (YouTube: 10:48).
“How Berlin Became the Capital for Clubbing, Techno, and Raving.” YouTube, DW History and Culture, 18 Jan. 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzJ1qTprouA.
 - How Berlin became the capital for clubbing, techno, and raving. This video explains the rise of Berlin's techno scene, focusing on the underground parties after the fall of the Berlin Wall and how the city became the center of global techno culture. It features archival footage.
- [“How Berlin Became Europe’s Techno Capital”](#) (YouTube: 4:15)
“How Berlin Became Europe’s Techno Capital.” YouTube, DW Euromaxx, 2 Oct. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDhDhLi59m8
 - DJ Allien explains the rise of Berlin’s techno scene and how it impacted her life after German Reunification. Brings the view to 2020 with how Covid impacted the scene.
- [“Techno Culture in Berlin//Film on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Application”](#)(YouTube: 9:30)
“Techno Culture in Berlin.” YouTube, Rave the Planet, 13 Nov. 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAmT11KRvcM
 - A short documentary from Rave the Planet that explains the importance of techno music in the early days of East Berlin after the fall of the wall. Explains that techno is a form of music that brings people together, and allows for diversity and inclusivity. Techno allowed a creative expression that allowed clubs to take off, creating a safe space for not just music but all the arts.
- Worksheet 1 to download

Supporting Question 2

How does the study of Berlin’s techno music help us to understand why music is such a powerful form of expression, worthy of cultural preservation?

Formative Performance Task 2

Have students actively listen to a well-known East German techno track or a recording from iconic Berlin clubs like Berghain or Tresor. If possible, show a short video or documentary clip of techno parties or the evolution of Berlin’s techno scene.

- Discussion:
 - After listening, ask the students to reflect on how the music made them feel.
 - Ask students to consider why music is such a powerful form of expression, especially in times of political and social change.
 - Use the following discussion questions:
 - How do you think East Germans felt when they first experienced freedom through music after reunification?
 - What role do you think techno music played in bridging the gap between East and West Germans?
 - How can music reflect social and political movements, like reunification?
 - Can you think of other places and groups of people who have used music for social and political movements? Other time periods?
 - Can you connect this movement to anything in the United States, or in your own personal history?
- Group Work:
 - Break students into small groups and give them the following task:
 - "Imagine you are an East German youth in the early 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin Wall. You’ve just experienced your first techno party in Berlin. Write a brief reflection or diary entry describing how the music made you feel and what it represented to you personally."
 - Encourage them to think about freedom, unity, and the emotional impact of the music.

Resources

Two well-known East German techno tracks are included below. An easy YouTube search can uncover many more. Suggested tracks:

- "[Energy Flash](#)" by Joey Beltram (considered a classic of early techno)
 - "Joey Beltram-Energy Flash." YouTube, Bodi Satva, 14 Aug 2021. www.youtube.com/watch?v=maOM81a-Gyg&t=74s
- "[For an Angel](#)" by DJ Paul van Dyk, who became prominent in Berlin's techno scene
 - "For an Angel." YouTube, Paul van Dyk, 29 May 2009 www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRvEwXDxz_I
- Live recordings from Berlin clubs like Tresor

Supporting Question 3

Why was East Berlin's techno music chosen to be part of Germany's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity?

Formative Performance Task 3

Using the articles provided, students will read, discuss, and reflect on why East Berlin techno music was recognized on the German list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

- Suggestions for how to use these articles:
 - Read-Aloud/Discussion: Share the articles with the class and have students read them aloud in groups or individually. Afterward, lead a class discussion on the significance of this recognition and its impact on the global perception of Berlin's techno culture.
 - Reflection Writing: Have students write a short reflection on the article of their choice, considering questions such as:
 - Why do you think techno music was added to Germany's Intangible Cultural Heritage list?
 - What role did Berlin's techno culture play in post-reunification society?
 - How does the music genre connect to themes of freedom, unity, and cultural exchange?

Resources

- "[Berlin Techno on Germany's Intangible Cultural Heritage List](#)" (Deutsche Welle)
 - Sost, Annika. "Berlin Techno on Germany's Intangible Cultural Heritage List-DW-03/13/2024." DW.Com, Deutsche Welle, 15 mar. 2024, www.dw.com/en/berlin-techno-on-germanys-intangible-cultural-heritage-list/a-68515354
 - Summary: This article provides an overview of why Berlin's techno culture was added to Germany's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. It discusses the significance of techno music in the post-reunification period, its role in bringing people together from all over the world, and its transformation of Berlin into the global techno capital. The article also touches on the unique aspect of Berlin's techno scene, particularly the "culture of diversity and tolerance" and the historical importance of the Love Parade.

- "Germany Adds Berlin's Techno Scene to UNESCO cultural heritage list" (The Guardian)
 - "Germany Adds Berlin's Techno Scene to UNESCO Cultural Heritage List." The Guardian, 15 March 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/15/berlins-techno-scene-added-to-unesco-intangible-cultural-heritage-list?quot>
 - Summary: This article delves into the journey of Berlin's techno scene, from its underground beginnings after the fall of the Berlin Wall to its recent recognition by UNESCO as being on Germany's country registry. It discusses how techno music became a symbol of freedom and unity in the reunified city, and how this cultural movement is still a driving force in Berlin today. The Guardian also explores the role of iconic techno clubs and how they continue to shape the cultural landscape of the city.
- "How Berlin's techno scene transformed the city and gained UNESCO status" (BBC News)
 - Brown, Lynn. "How Berlin's Techno Scene Transformed the City and Gained UNESCO Status." BBC, 22 Mar. 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20240322-berlin-techno-scene-gains-unesco-status>
 - Summary: BBC's coverage of the UNESCO recognition highlights the cultural importance of techno music in Berlin, focusing on its roots in East Germany after reunification. The article also includes information about how this recognition will help clubs access to government funding and support—a much needed asset as rents have soared and caused a "clubbing crisis."
- "Why has Berlin techno been added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage?" (Time Out)
 - Kelly, Liv. "Why Has Berlin Techno Been Added to Unesco's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage." Time Out, 15 Mar. 2024. <https://www.timeout.com/news/why-has-berlin-techno-been-added-to-unescos-list-of-intangible-cultural-heritage-031524>
 - Summary: A short article from Time Out examines the implications of Berlin's recognition for the city's vibrant nightlife scene. It explores the social impact of the Berlin techno movement, and why Berlin is set on preserving its world-famous nightlife.

Summative Performance Task

Essay / Presentation	<p>Have students construct a written 1-2 page response to the following prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did techno music in East Germany represent both freedom and unity after the fall of the Berlin Wall? In what ways does music serve as a form of cultural and political expression?
Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can compare Berlin's techno culture with other forms of music or art that have been recognized by UNESCO (this includes Flamenco in Spain, Reggae in Jamaica, Tango in Argentina, Gagaku in Japan, Music of Sufi Whirling Dervishes, Pansori in Korea, Cajon in Peru, Raga music in India, Mongolian throat singing, Haka in New Zealand, Cuban Son, Rebetiko in Greece, Kora in West Africa). Students create a presentation that compares and contrasts these musicalities in a PowerPoint or google presentation. • Have students research a specific aspect of the Berlin techno scene, such as the role of Berghain or Tresor, or a well-known DJ from Berlin, and present their findings to the class

Taking Informed Action

Understand	<i>Students choose a cultural aspect of their own lives that they think should be considered an intangible piece of humanity to be preserved.</i>
Assess	<i>Students should research their cultural aspect and make an argumentative claim as to its importance. Students need to state their claim, create an argument in defense of their claim, and present their argument to the class. After all presentations, students should choose the cultural aspect that is most worthy of preservation.</i>
Act	<i>If possible, students should experience the cultural aspect that was selected. For example: if the cultural aspect is music, students should go to a concert or performance of said music. If it is a type of art form, seek out an art show that would have it on display. If a play or performance, seek out a venue to watch the play.</i>

Modifications for Differentiation

One modification might include using more video time during lecture as opposed to lecture (videos included with lesson).



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