

# CREATIVE CANJOS



Pamela Barreca and Vanessa Million

Hollywood Hills Elementary School

3501 Taft Street

Hollywood, Florida 33021 754 – 323 – 6200

[pamela.barreca@browardschools.com](mailto:pamela.barreca@browardschools.com) and [vanessamillion@browardschools.com](mailto:vanessamillion@browardschools.com)

For information concerning IMPACT II opportunities, such as interschool visits, staff developments, workshops, and Adapter and Disseminator grants, please contact:

The Broward Education Foundation

600 SE Third Avenue, first floor

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301 754 – 321 - 2031

[www.BrowardEdFoundation.net](http://www.BrowardEdFoundation.net)

IMPACT II is a program of The Broward Education Foundation

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## **Introduction**

American Folk Art and Folk Music originated in the Appalachia area of the United States. The area includes West Virginia, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. One aspect that makes Folk Art and Folk Music unique is that it was created by artists that were untrained. Folk Art has certain characteristics inherent to it. Folk Artists used everyday material. They created many things for a specific purpose. They expressed their cultural identity and used themes from everyday life. The skills many artists possessed were often learned from family members and passed from generation to generation. Folk Art was often utilitarian, decorative, colorful, and laden with patterns.

The Appalachia area attracted poor people since the mountain soil was useless and therefore cheaper to settle. These lower class people were considered hillbillies and looked down upon. However, in actuality, they were resourceful, healthy, creative, and knowledgeable.

After the Civil War, most settlements consisted of no more than three generations within a family. They were isolated communities compared to other affluent areas. Life was a struggle and social activities were very important. These activities included art, music, and religion. Art and music were highly valued. Each settlement developed their craft with their family through time and practice at social gatherings that included friends and family.

## **Summary Description**

Students will learn about American Folk Art and Music, in addition to American History. Students will learn about the history of the canjo and its relation to folk music. Students will receive their own canjo and personalize it by painting it with their own interpretation of the style known as folk art. Students will also learn to play the canjo and then give a performance.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Students will learn the characteristics of folk art and the types of artwork produced during this era. They will also learn the characteristics of folk music and the types of music produced and instruments played during this era. The educational purpose of teaching folk music and art in the classroom is to strengthen the student's knowledge about our culture and American History.

## **Narrative Description**

This project will introduce the students to a fascinating part of American History. The students will learn about Folk Art and Folk Music. They will learn about the characteristics of folk art, the types of artwork produced, and some of the artists that are renowned for this style of art. They will also learn about the characteristics of folk music, the types of instruments played, and some of the musicians renowned for this style of music. The students will paint their own canjo and learn to play the instrument.

## Project Evaluation

The specific objectives are that the students will learn the characteristics of folk art and paint in the style of folk art, and learn the characteristics of folk music and learn to play a canjo in the style of folk music. Determining if the objectives have been met will be through the use of rubrics. The first rubric will assess if the canjos have been painted using the characteristics of folk art. The second rubric will assess if the students have mastered the skill of playing the canjo with the diatonic fret scale. In addition, the students will give a performance in the community.



## Lesson Plan #1

### SlideShow: Introduction to American Folk Art

We will look at some different types of American Folk Art today. One aspect that makes Folk Art unique is that Folk Art was created by artists that were untrained. You will notice that Folk Art has certain characteristics inherent to it. Folk Artists used everyday material. They created many things for a specific purpose. They expressed their cultural identity and used themes from everyday life. The skills many artists possessed were often learned from family members and passed from generation to generation. Folk Art was often utilitarian, decorative, colorful, and laden with patterns.

American Folk Art encompasses many different types of art. It includes two-dimensional and three-dimensional art. The media used for Folk Art is varied and extensive. They include paper, wood, metal, paint, textiles, clay and glaze. The slideshow has examples of artwork made from these materials. The artwork includes examples in the art forms of painting, sculpture, ceramics, samplers, quilts, embroidery, signs, and whittling.

The background music that you will hear is the song that you will learn to play on the canjo. The song is entitled "The Old Black Cat Couldn't Catch a Rat." The Folk Art Slides will provide the inspiration for the design to be painted on the canjo.

## SLIDES

**1. Columbia Weathervane**, 1876, artist unidentified , (anonymous), metal, Massachusetts, a weathervane is an instrument for showing the direction of the wind and are used as an architectural ornamentation on the highest point of a building. Although functional, weathervanes are decorative.

**2. Flag Gate**, wood, 1876, New York, a flag in the form of a gate, folk art characteristic - utilitarian, artist unknown

**3. Patriotic Wall Hanging** , wood, relief sculpture, A **relief sculpture** is a sculpture which either emerges from a base and is slightly raised, but is not free standing.

**4 Patriotic Figurine** A **figurine** is a statuette that represents a human.

**5. Quilt**, textile, a quilt is a type of bedcover, traditionally composed of three layers, a woven cloth top, batting, and a woven cloth bottom, combined together by stitching.

**6. Quilt**, textile, The top layer is decorative and is made by patchwork of various squares sewn together.

**7. Quilt**, textile, motif, what is repeated in a pattern

**8. Decoy**. H.G.Traver, Illinois, BlueBill Decoy., wood, something used to lure or lead another into a trap; *especially* : an artificial bird used to attract live birds within shot.

**9. Red Fox**, Adkins, Minnie. wood, Kentucky, Minnie Adkins is a well-known artist and best known for whittling.

**10. Terminator Eater**. Adkins, Minnie. wood, Kentucky, Minnie began whittling at a young age. She does not remember a time when she was not whittling.

**11. Two Roosters**, Adkins, Minnie. wood, Minnie was born in 1934, and is one of Kentucky's best known artist.

**12. Possum with Babies**, Adkins, Minnie. wood

**13. Thumbprint Flowers**, painted on plywood. Sudduth, Alabama Internationally renowned (famous) for his mud paintings on plywood. He found 36 different shades of mud from around his rural area, and enhanced the colors with berries and grasses. Jimmy lee Sudduth was a black American artist born in 1910 and died in 2007 at the age of 97.

**14. Bird Watercolor**, Painting, Pennsylvania, Lancaster County

**15. The Old Checkered House** Painting. New York. Grandma Moses (1860-1961) Anna Mary Robertson Moses, A very famous american folk artist who did not start painting until she was 70 years old. She hung her paintings in the drugstore and was discovered by a famous art collector, Louis Caldor. She painted over 1,600 paintings. Most were landscapes. She lived until she was 101.

**16. Rooster with Blue Feathers**, Alabama, Betty Sue Matthews, born 1950. She has been making quirky art since she was a little girl. She uses unconventional media such as tin, metal sheets, and wood

**17. Eagle Weathervane**, metal (verdigris ), a green or bluish patina forms on copper, brass, or bronze surfaces exposed to the atmosphere for long periods of time; New Hampshire, late nineteenth century.

**18. Weathervane**, metal, blackhawk, driver and sulky (a light, two-wheeled, one-horse carriage for one person), 1875, originally mounted on a carriage house in Vermont.

**19. Toy Tavern Sign**, 1800s, Massachusetts

**20. Americana Advertising** - An advertisement for soap. The slogan says "Who can tell the best lye?" 'lye' is the term for soap, but is used as a homophone for 'lie'.



**21. Hex Sign** - 'Abundance' - painted on barns by the Pennsylvania Dutch, are thought to be "painted prayers," invocations and petitions made visible, asking God for the blessing of protection for home and farm, good fortune, abundance and prosperity or inviting guests to be welcome.

**22. Rug** - Embroidery, textile, 1835 Vermont, Zeurah Caswell; The Caswell carpet took five years to embroider and is 12 feet by 12 feet. Caswell was an accomplished needleworker. She worked with wool that was sheared, spun and dyed from her own sheep.

**23. Mary Mann - Sampler**, textile, silk on linen, 11 years old, 1824, a handstitched piece of embroidery used to show skill in needlework.

**24. Lydia Lippincott - Sampler**, textile, needlework, silk on linen, 1832.

**25. Ceramic Crock**, tall wide-mouthed jar, stoneware with cobalt blue oxide slip, John Burger, Rochester, New York , 19th century (1800s) grayish-white clay.

## Creating Art

Objective - Students will be able to create a canjo design inspired by American Folk Art.



### Materials for Creative Canjo design

Black and white copies of slides, pencils, erasers, black pens, colored pencils, 4 x 12 white paper

Create a quick sketch for your design. Color.

## Vocabulary

textile - cloth, any cloth produced by weaving

whittle - to cut, trim, or shape a piece of wood by carving off bits with a knife

media - any materials that are used to create a piece of art

medium - any material that is used to create a piece of art

utilitarian - useful

sampler - a piece of cloth embroidered with various stitches, serving to show a beginner's skill in needlework

embroidery - the art of working ornamental designs in threads upon woven fabric with a needle

## Review

1. Was Folk Art created by trained or untrained artists?  
**untrained**
2. One of the characteristics of Folk Art is that it can be utilitarian. What does utilitarian mean?  
**useful**
3. Name a type of Folk Art that is useful.  
**a quilt, a weathervane, a store sign, a ceramic crock**
4. What does textile mean?  
**cloth**
5. Name a type of artwork that is textile art.  
**a quilt, a sampler, a rug**
6. What does whittle mean?  
**to cut, trim, or shape a piece of wood by carving off bits with a knife**
7. What artist is famous for whittling?  
**Minnie Adkins**
8. What is a synonym for renowned?  
**famous**
9. What is a word for an “unidentified” artist?  
**Anonymous**

## **Lesson Plan #2**

### Introduction to American Folk Music

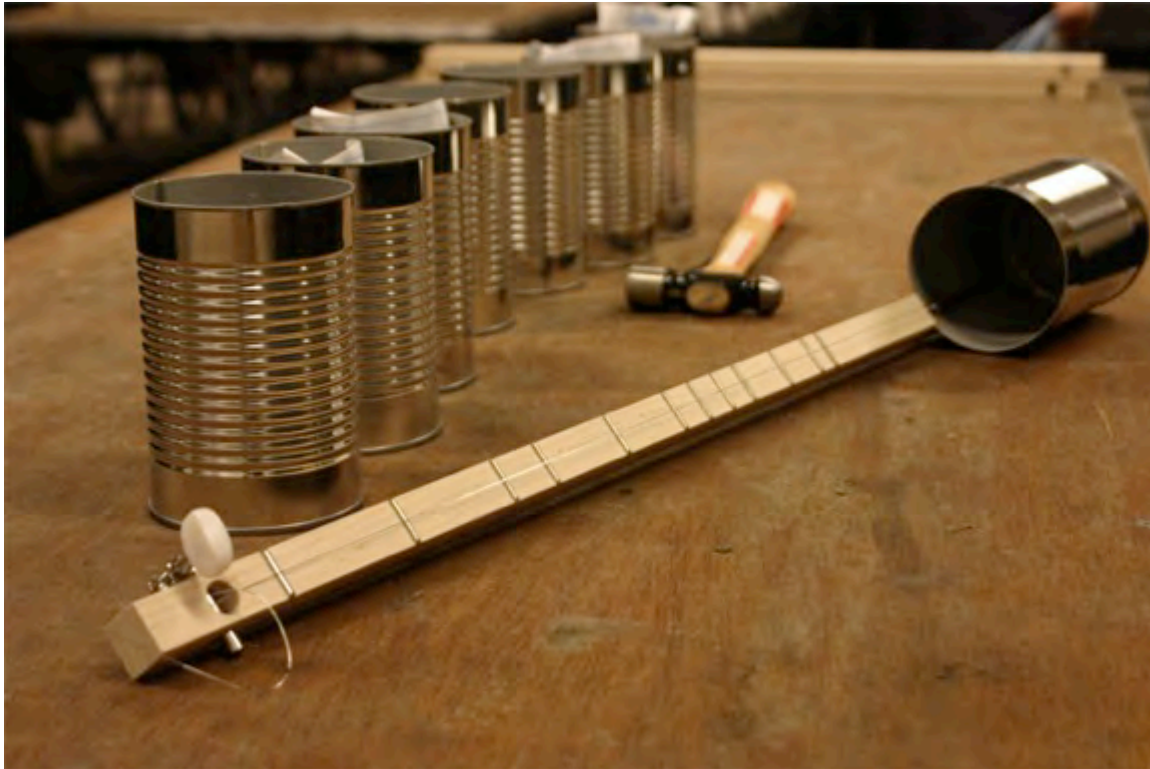
#### Folk Instruments

The instruments used to play American Folk music were the banjo, violin, pianoforte, accordion, drum, dulcimer and canjo. While the pianoforte, accordion, violin, banjo and guitar were brought over from other countries, the dulcimer and canjo are American made instruments. People were poor and used what materials they had to make the canjo. Using a tin can, wood and string, the canjo produces music using the diatonic scale.

#### **The Canjo**

##### Parts of the Canjo

The canjo consists of a tin can, stick with frets, a dulcimer string, and tuner.



### Tuning the Canjo

At the end of the canjo is a peg to which the string is attached. When moving the peg tuner, be sure to turn slowly and match the sound to the note C. You may use a piano or pitchpipe to tune the instrument. Online tuning is the easiest. If you go to Wikipedia and key in Diatonic Scale, you will be taken to a sight that shows you the notes as well as plays the pitch for you.

### Playing the Canjo

Playing the canjo is played by numbers and tuned diatonically to the key of C. Frets separate each note with wire inserts. For instance, open is the note C (do not press string), one is D, two is E, three is F, four is G, five is A, six is B and seven is high C.

As with the dulcimer, there is no rule on how to hold the canjo. Most people hold it like a guitar, but others hold the canjo flat like a dulcimer. When playing by numbers, notes evenly spaced get one beat, but notes consecutively not spaced are two notes to one beat (counted “one-and”).

### Music for Canjo

The Old Black Cat Couldn't Catch a Rat is a folk song from Kentucky and played often in folk workshops and at folk music festivals. Listen to the recording so you know the rhythm. When practicing, strum the string playing slowly in small segments. Gradually speed up so students do not feel rushed. When ready, add the CD or dulcimers for accompaniment.

## Vocabulary

Dulcimer – a three or four-stringed instrument from the Appalachian Mountains

Canjo – a one-stringed banjo having a tin can and stick

Folk Music – Music from the Appalachian Mountains created by unskilled musicians

Diatonic Scale – a seven note repeating scale. For instance, low C to High C

Strum – to stroke the string

Tuner – a peg that holds the string and can be turned to tune the instrument



### **Lesson Plan #3 (Alternate Plan)**

#### Pop Art Canjos

This alternate plan still offers education in Art, Music, and American History. This plan is available for those that cannot implement the canjo project due to the unavailability of facilities and resources as this plan requires no painting. The canjos will be made with “Campbell Soup Cans” as opposed to regular cans. This plan caters to the performing arts people that do not have resources for the hands-on art activities.

This version introduces an exciting art movement called Pop Art. Pop Art is introduced through technology and visual art. A DVD entitled “Dropping in on Andy Warhol” will be viewed by the students. This series drops in on some of the greatest artists in history in an animated format with a Puffer, a puffin, that is an art reporter. This is an engaging art education video that introduces important information about the Pop Art movement and introduces important artworks by Andy Warhol. A visual of the infamous Soup Can will also be on display. Both the DVD and the Soup Can Poster can be ordered for less than fifty dollars from amazon.com.

For more information on Andy Warhol and the Pop Art movement, visit The **Andy Warhol** Foundation for the Visual Arts at [www.warholfoundation.org/](http://www.warholfoundation.org/).





## **Lesson Plan #4 – (Addition Historical Information)**

### Daniel Boone Was A Trailblazer

Daniel Boone was raised in Pennsylvania, but moved to North Carolina. At age 16, Daniel was an expert hunter and rifleman.

He married Rebecca Bryan at age 21 and made his living hunting and trading. Boone fought in wars from 1754-1761.

Boone became a trailblazer with 28 other men through the Appalachian Mountains to Kante-ke. (Kentucky)

While in Virginia, Boone camped in Abingdon, Virginia, where a pack of wolves came out of a cave to attack and killed his dogs. Boone had many jobs during his life, but never wore a coon skinned hat or killed 99 bears.

#### Vocabulary

Trailblazer: A person who makes a new track through wild country; A pioneer; an innovator.

Rifleman: A person skilled at using a rifle.

Trading: The business of buying and selling goods. (Boone sold animal skins.)

[https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:gh5Ja0QRK14J:www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/collateral/articles/Daniel.Boone.pdf+www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/collateral/articles/Daniel.Boone.pdf&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESiUwoK2TVwwBbqBwQ3pc0b73npcQaeyup1cHtoSxYdcB4t\\_iHR1GHKdblncOZapoyv6JsC0Wlbg\\_Ke6kstp8XIxwws7L6Lklev7tf7BNqzXRoQvo\\_TAGcYQuK7\\_Fb1c7Rx3XfJm&sig=AHIEtbRtuW\\_xxJILzUa2vXd6Ak0HU-mHVQ](https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:gh5Ja0QRK14J:www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/collateral/articles/Daniel.Boone.pdf+www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/collateral/articles/Daniel.Boone.pdf&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESiUwoK2TVwwBbqBwQ3pc0b73npcQaeyup1cHtoSxYdcB4t_iHR1GHKdblncOZapoyv6JsC0Wlbg_Ke6kstp8XIxwws7L6Lklev7tf7BNqzXRoQvo_TAGcYQuK7_Fb1c7Rx3XfJm&sig=AHIEtbRtuW_xxJILzUa2vXd6Ak0HU-mHVQ)

## **NGSSS : BIG IDEAS AND ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS IN THE ARTS**

### **BIG IDEA C**

**CRITICAL THINKING AND REFLECTION:** Critical and creative thinking, self-expression, and communication with others are central to the arts.

Enduring Understanding C.1. Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret, and create with artistic intent.

### **BIG IDEA S**

**SKILLS, TECHNIQUES, AND PROCESSES:** Through dance, music, theatre, and visual art, students learn that beginners, amateurs, and professionals benefit from working to improve and maintain skills over time.

Enduring Understanding S.1 The arts are inherently experimental and actively engage learners in the processes of creating, interpreting, and responding to the art.

Enduring Understanding S.2 Development of skills, techniques, and processes in the arts strengthens our ability to remember, focus on, process, and sequence information.

Enduring Understanding S.3 Through purposeful practice, artists learn to manage, master, and refine simple, then complex, skills and techniques.

### **BIG IDEA H:**

**HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS:** Experiences in the arts foster understanding, acceptance, and enrichment among individuals, groups, and cultures from around the world and across time.

Enduring Understanding H.1 Through study in the arts, we learn about and honor others and the world in which they live(d).

Enduring Understanding H.2 The arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events, and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.

Enduring Understanding H.3 Connections among the arts and other disciplines strengthen learning and the ability to transfer knowledge and skills to and from other fields.

# Canjo Music



# The Old Black Cat Couldn't Catch A Rat

0 1 3 33 43 11 3 33  
0 1 3 33 43 1 0-

0 1 3 33 43 11 3 33  
55 55 5 44 3 1 0-

4 4 4 34 5 7 7-  
55 44 3 1 3 3- -  
4 4 4 34 5 7 7-  
55 44 3 0- - -

repeat top

## The Old Black Cat Couldn't Catch a Rat

The old black cat couldn't catch a rat.

The old black cat couldn't catch a rat.

The old black cat couldn't catch a rat.

Tell me little boy what you think of that?

Listen to the song for free. <http://www.macjams.com/song/22354>

## Hot Cross Buns

2 1 0-  
2 1 0-  
0000 1111  
2 1 0-

## A B C's

0 0 4 4 5 5 4 4  
3 3 2 2 1 1 1 0 0  
4 4 3 3 2 1 1  
4 4 3 3 2 2 1 1  
0 0 4 4 5 5 4 4  
3 3 2 2 1 1 0 0



## Row Your Boat

0 0 0 12

2 12 34

777 444 222 000

4 32 10

# You Are My Sunshine

0 3 4 5 5-  
5 4 5 3 3-  
3 4 5 6 8-  
8 7 6 5- -  
3 4 5 6 8-  
8 7 6 5 3-  
3 4 5- 6 4- 4 5 3- -

# America

3 3 4 2-3 4  
5 5 6 5- 43  
4 3 2 3- -  
7 7 7 7-65  
6 6 6 6-54  
5 65 43 5- 67  
8 6 5 4 3- -

# Cotton Eyed Joe

2 22 2 0 2 22 3-

2 22 1 0 11 1 0-

2 22 2 0 2 22 3-

1 22 1 0 11 1 0-

4 55 6 7 7 55 4 5

7 55 4 3 2 11 0-

4 45 7 7 7 55 4 5

7 55 4 3 2 11 0-



# Rocky Top

7 7 7 7 8 88 75 3

3 33 43 4 5- - -

7 7 7 7 8 88 75 3

3 33 43 4 3- - -

7 7 7 7 8 88 75 3

3 33 43 4 5- - -

7 7 7 7 8 88 75 3

3 33 43 4 3- - -

88 8- 8 7 7 7-

9 9 9-7 8 - - -

8- 8- 75 3- -

33 3 4 4 5 - - -

33 3 4 4 3 - - -

Lyrics for Rocky Top (Boudleaux Bryant and Felice Bryant)

Wish that I was on ol' Rocky Top  
Down in the Tennessee hills;  
Ain't no smoggy smoke on Rocky Top  
Ain't no telephone bills.  
Once I had a girl on Rocky Top  
Half bear, other half cat  
Wild as a mink and sweet as soda pop  
I still dream about that

chorus:

Rocky Top, you'll always be  
Home sweet home to me;  
Good ol' Rocky Top  
Rocky Top, Tennessee  
Rocky Top, Tennessee.

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