

Lesson Plan: Our Chants

Subjects: Music, CHamoru, English, Social Studies, History

Related background reading: Guampedia: [Chants](#)

Grade-level: Elementary [4-5], Middle [6-8], High [9-12]

Time required: 45 minutes

Related links: [Guampedia](#)

Description

In this lesson, students will learn about the importance and use of chants in CHamoru culture. They will then, in groups, create and share their own chants.

Objectives/Skills

- Students will learn about the importance of chants in CHamoru culture.
- Students will demonstrate their understanding of the purpose of chants by creating and sharing their own contemporary version.

Questions or Assessment

- Do students understand the prevalence of chanting in ancient CHamoru culture?
- Are students now familiar with the theorized ways by which chanting was used to share information, record history, and mourn the dead?
- Are students able to demonstrate this knowledge by creating their own contemporary chant?

Procedure

Teacher prep

Read the Guampedia entry on [Chants](#).

Learning about Chants (15 minutes)

1. Using information on the Guampedia page regarding chants, and any other resources you may have available, compile some teaching points to share with your class regarding the history and usefulness of chants. The content will vary greatly depending on the age, skill-level, and content being covered in your class; however, some common points include:
 - The history of chanting in CHamoru culture.
 - The use of chanting to mourn the dead, record history, celebrate important events, etc. [Be sure to touch upon this, as it will be the focus of the next activity].
 - The revival of chanting among cultural groups.
2. Ask students to consider the utility of chanting. Rather than simply music, chanting has symbolic, ritual, and practical purposes.
3. Have student brainstorm ways a contemporary chant, one that would be relevant in their day-to-day lives, would best be crafted. Ask some of the following questions of the class. There are no right or wrong answers; the exercise is more geared toward prompting thought.
 - What would the chant be about? (examples: mourning the loss of a family member, signifying an important date, celebrating a sporting victory)
 - How would the chant be performed?
 - When and where would the chant be performed?

Creating our Chants (15 minutes)

1. Divide class into smaller groups (ideally groups of four students).
2. Instruct students to create their own chants based on what they have learned in the previous section. Explain that each chant should have a purpose; examples include, celebrating a victory, recording something for historical purposes, mourning a loss, etc.
 - Due to time constraints, tell students that chants must be between 30 seconds and a minute long.
 - If students are bit confused by the anticipated final product, explain that a sample chant may be about the school's recent victory or loss in a sporting event. If you feel so inclined, provide the students with an example that you have made up yourself.
3. Walk about the class and observe/help students.
 - Remind students that they are not to put anything in their chants that is embarrassing, mean-spirited, or mocking of another student or individual.

- Encourage students to be creative with their chants. It is not important that they confirm to the style of traditional chants (video of which is available on Guampedia). Rather, it is more important for students to understand the value and purpose of chants, in terms of the function chants perform.
- Announce the time to students when they have five, three, and one minute left.

Sharing our Chants (13 minutes)

1. Have each student group share their chant with the rest of the class.
 - Depending on the personality of the students in your class, you may choose to have them perform in front of the class, or if more shy, allow them to chant while standing by their desks.
2. Following each chant, ask the class what they believe was the purpose of the chant. Then have the group itself briefly explain their purpose as well.
 - With each performance, be sure to compliment the group and provide positive feedback.
3. When the students have all shared their chants, conduct a brief discussion.
 - Prompt students to share their thoughts about the use of chants. Is it just pleasing music? Or does it serve a purpose?

Recap (2 minutes)

Recap what we've done and learned in the lesson:

“Today we learned about the historical significance of chanting. We learned that chanting is not only a musical expression, but also that it served numerous ritual, symbolic, religious, and practical purposes. To better understand this, we practiced creating our own contemporary chants, and shared out creations with each other. Good job everyone!”

Ask students for their favorite parts of the lesson.