

1-2-3 Composition Challenge

Create a three-note motif (a short musical idea that reappears throughout a piece) using a specific emotion as your inspiration. Using that same emotion as inspiration, develop your motif into a short piece using at least three of the ideas from the Motivic Menu below:

Motivic Menu

- **Repetition:** motif repeated with no changes
- **Transposition:** motif repeated at a higher or lower pitch
- **Inversion:** motif presented with reversed pitch direction or rhythm, or both
- **Augmentation:** motif presented with longer note values
- **Diminution:** motif presented with shorter note values
- **Rhythm Change:** motif presented with changes in the rhythm of the pitches
- **Dynamic Change:** motif presented with changes in the initial dynamic
- **Articulation Change:** motif presented with changes in the articulation of the pitches

Students can use any combination of melodic instruments they would like to compose their pieces. The following composition formats are recommended:

Collaborative Composition

Divide up your class into four or five groups. All of the groups should use the same three-note motif and the same emotion, but each group should find their own way of interpreting the prompts. Perform each group's composition in sequence as a single multi-movement work, reserving applause and feedback until all compositions have been performed.

Class Composition

Compose a work with your class as one large group. Find ways of democratizing the process so that all students have a say in the composition, and consider voting for the original motif, emotional prompt, and different modes of motivic development.

Tips

Once the notes of the three-note motif have been selected, consider labeling the pitches "1-2-3" so that notation is not a barrier for participation. Also consider connecting this activity to any socio-emotional learning initiatives that may be taking place in your school, and exploring emotions beyond "happy," "sad," and "angry."