

Picture This: What's the Story?

Directions: Below you will find 16 orchestral works along with links to listen to them on YouTube. Each work has either an actual story behind it, or is musically portraying an event or setting. Choose one or two for this activity.

First, research the piece to find descriptions or program notes to learn the backstory. Usually doing a search on the title and composer will produce information.

After reading about and listening to the work, give examples of how the composer musically portrays what is happening. Include such things as:

- How do they use particular sections or instruments to portray characters or moods?
- How do they use recurring themes, note and rhythm patterns, volume, dynamics, etc. to paint a picture with music?

Think of these as a “soundtrack without a movie”, and discuss how the composer brings a visual image to life through the music. What do you “visualize” while listening?

1. *An American in Paris* by George Gershwin
<https://youtu.be/EGt000iascg>
2. *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* by John Adams
https://youtu.be/5LoUm_r7lt8
3. *Grand Canyon Suite* by Ferde Grofe
https://youtu.be/xc6oYN_2h6g
4. *The Moldau* by Bedrich Smetana
<https://youtu.be/h7oFgoHi9TU>
5. *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Paul Dukas
<https://youtu.be/GxH-nY3iq7g>
6. Suite from *The Firebird* by Igor Stravinsky
<https://youtu.be/pHxstilybz4>
7. *Appalachian Spring* by Aaron Copland
<https://youtu.be/8e3rVcSy3IQ>
8. *Overture 1812* by Pyotr Tchaikovsky
https://youtu.be/0DFsF_0tfiM
9. *Metropolis Symphony V. "Red Cape Tango"* by Michael Daugherty
<https://youtu.be/O9zEcGNDH1M>

10. *Billy the Kid Suite* by Aaron Copland
<https://youtu.be/jVkOSITKglw>
11. *La Mer* by Claude Debussy
https://youtu.be/1mGqLaD_zau
12. *Romeo and Juliet Overture Fantasy* by Pyotr Tchaikovsky
<https://youtu.be/Cxj8vSS2ELU>
13. *The Pines of Rome*
IV. The Pines of the Appian Way by Ottorino Respighi
<https://youtu.be/pMeXzqTfNcY>
14. *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* by Richard Strauss
<https://youtu.be/ZpA47nVfgBY>
15. *Danse Macabre* by Camille Saint-Saens
<https://youtu.be/WCmAlMgNon4>
16. *Symphonie Fantastique* by Hector Berlioz
IV. March to the Scaffold: <https://youtu.be/roX70PAu3oA>
V. Dream of a Witches Sabbath: <https://youtu.be/cao6WyF-61s>

Student Name: _____

First Selection:

_____ by _____

What are some examples of specific things the composer did to portray a character, mood, or event as related to the background of the work?

What did you visualize while listening?

Second Selection:

_____ by _____

What are some examples of specific things the composer did to portray a character, mood, or event as related to the background of the work?

What did you visualize while listening?
