

AMERICAN IDOL

Lesson Title: American Idol Judge for a Day

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Objective:

Students will learn how professionals identify good singing ability and be able to critique singing based on the learned criteria.

National Music Standards Lesson Teaches:

Standard 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.

Standard 7. Evaluating music and music performances.

Standard 8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.

Materials Needed:

- Recorded episode of American Idol (If you don't have a copy, you can pull up some prescreened snippets of the show on YouTube)
- TV or Computer to share American Idol episode
- America Idol Judging Worksheet/Judging Rubric (copy double-sided if possible)

Age: This lesson can be adapted for upper elementary through high school

Procedures:

1. Take a quick student poll. 1) How many students watch American Idol? 2) How many of students would like to be a judge for a day?
2. Tell students that they are going to help you put together a job description for an American Idol judge. Using the board, ask students to share what the judge does.
3. Most likely, the students shared many jobs the judge must carry out, but the most important is their ability to know what good singing is.
4. Ask the students, "What makes a singer good?" Write their answers next to the American Idol judge job description. Depending on the age of the students, the teacher may need to introduce or review these terms:
 - a. Singing in tune- the singers voice matches the background music or holds the tune steady. Tell students you're going to sing a song and they should raise their hands in the air when you start to sing off key. Demonstrate by singing "Twinkle, twinkle." Half way through the song, start singing the song in a different key. Students should raise their hands to show they heard the center of the key switch.

- b. Lyric memorization- the singer needs to remember the words at all times.
 - c. Tone- the singer's tone needs to be pleasing to the ear. Demonstrate by singing through your nose, using a squeaky voice, raspy voice, etc.
 - d. Stage presence- the singer needs to have confident body language, eye contact and generally make the audience comfortable while listening.
5. Pass out the provided worksheet/rubric.
 6. Tell the students they are going to have a practice opportunity as the American Idol judge. Review the worksheet and rubric provided.
 7. Play a clip of an American Idol contestant singing. Play twice if necessary (Choice of clip based on episode recorded or YouTube availability.)
 8. Students should critique the singer on their sheet and write notes about the performance.
 9. Volunteers read their critiques aloud.
 10. Students come to the front of class in groups of 3 or 4 (depending on the even number of the class size.) Students should draw the numbers 1-4 out of a hat to decide the judging order.
 11. Chose a new performer for the judges to listen to. Give judges time to make notes then have them speak aloud their critiques in the judges' order chosen. *New rule:* students may NOT repeat the same critique as the judge before them- they must comment on something different about the performance.
 12. Teachable Moment: Depending on the type of class and age of students, you may need to stop the judging abruptly if a judge says something "unprofessional" or out of line (example: "That girl looks ugly!" "She sings awful!" That type of critique is not constructive or applicable to whether the singer is good or bad based on the criteria. Have students focus on the "why" the performer is good or bad.)

Lesson Wrap Up:

Either aloud or in a writing assignment, have students reflect on the experience of judging others. Was it easy? Did they like it? Why or why not?

Extension Springboard:

What kind of careers exist similarly where judging is important?

Extension Assignment:

Profile the career of another type of judge. Example: Olympic sport judge,