

Many, Many Minutes

Content Areas: Musical Theater, Math

Grade Level: Fifth

Learning Objectives

1. Students will calculate the number of hours and days represented by 525,600 minutes.
2. Students will listen to the song “Seasons of Love” from the musical *Rent*.
3. Students will calculate another period of time and describe what they would accomplish during that time period.

Standards

- National Standards for Music Education 5–8
 - Content Standard 6—Achievement Standard(a)
 - Content Standard 9—Achievement Standard(a)
- National Standards for Elementary Education
 - Standard 2(2.3)(2.5)
 - Standard 3(3.4)
 - Standard 4(4.0)
- Common Core State Standards
 - 5.MD.1.

Procedures

The musical *Rent* was popular for its realistic themes of drug abuse, gender identity, and disease. The focus of this lesson, however, is on one song in the musical that talks of the dreams of all the characters by asking the question: What can be accomplished in 525,600 minutes, and how do we measure love?

It is important here to have students listen to the song after they have calculated and identified the various time periods equivalent to 525,600 minutes—because the song gives away the answer! The song should then be the starting point for a discussion on the relevance of this number of minutes and on using units of time in a new way. Try also to focus on the ideas and concepts described in the lyrics.

Students will then individually consider another time period and what might be accomplished during that time. The idea is to follow the theme of calculating minutes (or any smaller units of time), so the number representing the new time period should be large, and the period itself should not be easily identifiable from the number.

Extensions

Having students share their ideas would make a wonderful class discussion on the ways in which we can manipulate numbers to be something they do not necessarily seem and why someone would choose to do so. The concept of manipulating units of time can also be transferred to any other lesson or subject area.

Assessments

Students' final ideas and calculations are the main assessment for this lesson. Have students give a short presentation/description of their idea (to compare/contrast with their classmates) and also submit a more detailed written description. Encourage students to think broadly and differently about numbers—to look at numbers and units of time in new ways.