



MINDFUL MUSIC MOMENTS

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything."

—Plato

OVERVIEW

Each day for a week, the entire school (or classroom) mindfully listens to a 4-minute recording of Dvorak's "New World Symphony, No. 9".

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- In the morning, over announcements for the whole school
- At the beginning of class, or after lunch or recess
- Before a test
- At the beginning of a staff meeting

TIME REQUIRED

- Four minutes per day for five days

LEVEL

- PreK—Lower Elementary
- Upper Elementary
- Middle School
- High School
- Adult

MATERIALS

- Links to audio clips (in practice instructions)

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Develop an embodied sense of calm and focus
- Notice how music inspires imagination and social connectedness (if experienced by the whole school)
- Foster a deep appreciation of the musical piece

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making a Practice Trauma-Informed](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- Review the [Mindful Music.pdf](#) to familiarize yourself with the piece and the composer.
- Before using this practice with students, choose a quiet moment to try it yourself. Each audio file includes an invitation to become ready to listen and a prompt for reflection. Notice how the practice makes you feel.

INSTRUCTIONS

Note: The practice is self-contained in the daily audio files; all instructions given there are also included here for your reference.

- The first day's recording introduces the piece, including how in 1969 Neil Armstrong took a recording of the "New World Symphony" with him on Apollo 11—the first mission to land on the Moon.
- Mindful listening instructions: Put your feet on the floor, hands on your lap or on your desk, sit up nice and tall, close or focus your eyes, and find your breath.
- [Day 1 Prompt](#): Can you imagine hearing this music while in outer space, just like Neil Armstrong? Let's listen.
- [Day 2 Prompt](#): Largo, the tempo of this movement, is perfect to practice slow breathing. As you breathe, you might think of this: Deep, slow. In, out. Deep, slow. Let's go.
- [Day 3 Prompt](#): Today, as you listen, imagine an ice skater moving across the ice.

- [Day 4 Prompt](#): This music was composed while Dvořák was visiting the United States for the first time. Do you think this music represents the city or a place in nature? Can you imagine what the composer was thinking when he wrote this piece?
- [Day 5 Prompt](#): Let's take an imagination vacation today. Enjoy your time with this beautiful movement.

CLOSURE

- Give students time to process the experience, even if just giving them the opportunity to say what they noticed or how they felt.
- Be sure to allow students to have agency over their responses. For example, if a student doesn't like the piece of music, suggest they listen again the next day and see if they still feel the same way, or prompt them to notice what happens in their body when they feel dislike. Does their body tense? Breath shorten?

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THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

One [study](#) found that practicing mindfulness before listening to music has the potential to enhance listeners' experience by increasing their ability to focus on the music without distraction.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Mindfulness, as a practice, can take many forms, such as mindful breathing, eating, listening, or walking. Mindfully listening to music offers students a unique type of practice—one that is fairly new to the field, and that may also encourage further exploration of mindfulness due to the aesthetic enjoyment inherent in the practice.

In addition, while research on the effects of mindfulness on children is still in the early stages, a [2016 review of 12 studies](#) suggests some promising outcomes for young children relative to attention, self-regulation, and motor skills. A [2014 meta-analysis](#) that focuses on 24 studies of K-12 students demonstrated changes in students' attention and resilience to stress, including positive emotions, self-esteem and self-concept, and well-being.

SOURCE

Imagine an entire school -- students, teachers and administrators—taking time each morning to turn inward together, listen to a brief mindfulness prompt and world class music. That's [Mindful Music Moments](#), now in more than 100 K-12 schools, camps, and social service organizations daily and climbing, touching 50,000+ students in a calming and focusing ritual. See the program at work in this [PBS NewsHour story](#) from May, 2019.