


Lesson Plan Four
AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL

Composer: Samuel A. Ward
Poet: Katherine Lee Bates
Meter: 4/4
Key: C Major
Form: Verse/Refrain

Background:

Samuel A. Ward, the composer of *America, the Beautiful*, was also the organist/choirmaster of Grace Church in Newark, New Jersey. His hymn tune, "Materna" was used to set Katherine Lee Bates' beautiful poem, which was inspired by a trip to Pikes Peak in 1893. A college English teacher from Boston, Bates' poem was published on July 4, 1895 and the words and music were first published in 1910.

Teaching sequence: Identify rhythm patterns.

Place the following rhythms on the board: 

Ask the class to sing verse 1 of *America, the Beautiful*.

Divide the class in half. Assign one rhythm to each half. Ask each group to read and clap the assigned rhythm. Exchange rhythm with the other group and repeat.

Ask students to locate these rhythms in *America, the Beautiful*.

Ask Group A to chant the words and clap  every time they encounter it in verse 1.
 Ask Group B to chant the words and clap  every time they encounter it in verse 1.

As the class sings verse 1:

Ask Group A to sing only those parts of the melody that contain their assigned rhythm, and think the remaining melody.

Have the groups switch rhythm patterns and repeat.

Read the additional verses out loud.

Review the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Perform the entire four verses with the refrain.

Extended Learning: Collect pictures, photographs, or slides that show the beauty of America. Prepare a scrapbook, photo album or slide show that could be shared while singing *America, the Beautiful*.