

# Class Playlist



15 Minutes



Community-Building

## OVERVIEW

Playing music in class can improve students' focus, motivation, and overall mood, leading to a more positive learning environment. In this activity, students work together to create a playlist that represents the class and reflects their tastes and personalities. The teacher then draws on the class playlist when selecting songs to play in class throughout the semester.

## USEFUL FOR

- Beginning to form a connection with the class community
- Discovering new songs
- Learning to navigate the course LMS

## PREPARATION

- Teachers must set up an online platform students can use to share music (e.g. Padlet, Spotify, discussion forum on the course LMS)

## PROCEDURE

1. **Engage students by playing a song before class starts.** Depending on the time of day and the learning goals, you might play: an upbeat song to energise students; a calmer song to promote concentration and focus; or a song with lyrics related to the class's learning objectives for the day. A useful strategy is to time the song so that the music ends at exactly the time class starts. This will cue students to wrap up their activities and focus on the class.
2. **Introduce the class playlist activity:** tell students that they will work together to create a playlist that represents the class and reflects their tastes and personalities.
3. **Model how to add songs to the class playlist.** This is a good opportunity to show students how to access your course LMS and locate different learning activities.
4. **Ask each student to choose one song to add to the class playlist.** Acknowledge that students might be tempted to add a popular or trendy song just to fit in. This impulse is understandable because belonging is a

fundamental human need. However, the goal of the activity is for students to pick a song that really resonates with them.

5. **Invite students to break into small groups and discuss their song recommendations.** Give students enough time to play a snippet of each song.
6. **Debrief the activity** by inviting students to raise their hand if:
  - They heard a song they liked
  - They were introduced to a new song
7. **Explain how the class playlist will be used throughout the semester.** Here are some options:
  - Teachers can start each class with a song from the class playlist.
  - Teachers can use the playlist as background music for wellness activities or other class activities.
  - Students can use the playlist to find new songs to study to, to work out to, etc.
  - Teachers can challenge students to look for connections between the songs on the class playlist and the concepts, theories and/or data discussed in class. Students are more likely to retain new information if they connect it to something they already know.
8. **Tell students the class playlist will remain “open” throughout the semester.** They are welcome to continue adding songs to the class playlist.

## EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

- Students learn better when they feel like they belong. Yet, a sense of belonging cannot be cultivated through a single interaction or a single activity. By starting each class with a song recommended by students, teachers repeatedly send the message that students’ – and their contributions to the class – matter. Starting class with a song also conveys that classroom can be a space for fun, playfulness, and creativity.
- Music can trigger strong emotions. If you play songs that may be triggering to some students, be sure to make time to name and discuss the themes explored in the song.

## ADAPTATIONS AND EXAMPLES

Depending on how much time you have available, you may challenge the class to create more than one playlist. For example, your class may create playlists for one or more of the following themes:

- Songs I love
- Relax
- Energise
- Songs for [name of course], i.e. Songs that relate to the major themes/topics of the course

## USEFUL RESOURCES

- [Collaborative playlists](#) on Spotify
- [Collaborative playlists](#) on YouTube