



Rick Steves' **SYMPHONY** **IN A SUITCASE**

A CURRICULUM FOR EDUCATORS

All aboard for a symphonic journey with Rick Steves as your guide.

Discover the connections between music, Romanticism, nationalism, history, and Europe.
Your souvenir: a deeper appreciation for the beautiful world of music, culture, and travel.

Letter to Educators

Thank you for choosing to bring this curriculum into your classroom. We're thrilled to partner with you on this unique exploration of music, history, and culture. Our goal in creating these materials is simple: to demonstrate how music, history, and travel can be both connected and fun, and to help instill a love of these things in your students.

This curriculum is inspired by the *Rick Steves' Europe: A Symphonic Journey* concert, featuring John Morris Russell and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra. The performance (a streamable one-hour public television special) takes you on a musical journey through seven European countries, a stop exploring the European Union, and a final, happy homecoming to the United States. It addresses the themes of Romanticism and nationalism in 19th-century Europe and acts as a framework for the educational resources. Educators will benefit greatly by viewing the [performance in its entirety](#) first, while students can use the *Symphony in a Suitcase* curriculum in preparation to enjoy the full concert as a conclusion.

In this curriculum, Rick will introduce your students to the orchestra, music appreciation themes via the piano, the themes of Romanticism and nationalism, and the history and culture of each country on the symphonic journey itinerary. He'll bridge the gap between the music on the page, the land where it was born, and the messages being conveyed.

The resources used to make this curriculum immersive include:

- **Symphony Performances:** Featuring Rick and the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra
- **Rick Steves Classroom Europe:** A free library of over 600 short video clips from Rick's television series, with clips linked throughout this curriculum to bring each destination to life
- **Google Earth Tours:** Virtual explorations of Romantic-era locations that evoke national pride
- **Hands-On Activities:** Creative activity ideas to keep students engaged and inspired as they learn

To help your students stay organized and excited, you can utilize our extra "travel gear":

- **[Student Travel Journals](#):** To document their progress on this musical tour
- **[Passport](#):** To be stamped when they visit each country
- **[Composer & Instrument Family Cards](#):** Quick guides to the people and instruments behind the music
- **[Country Book and Film Lists](#):** A resource to dive even deeper into the countries, culture, and folklore

We hope you and your students enjoy using these resources as much as we enjoyed creating them. Thank you for the important work you do every day to open your students' eyes (and ears) to the world.

Happy Travels and Happy Listening!

Hosting *Rick Steves' Europe: A Symphonic Journey* in your hometown

If you'd like to actually bring the live *Symphonic Journey* to your hometown orchestra, you can do that free of charge and without Rick needing to be there in person. Rick Steves (a former piano teacher himself) has made his popular *Symphonic Journey* concert available as a turnkey package for orchestras, including the musical scores and parts, Rick's video appearances on the big screen, and video segments featuring the European landscapes and destinations from his travels.

Access here: ricksteves.com/symphony



Welcome Video

This video sets the stage for the entire curriculum. Rick will give an overview of what is to come, whether you are using all the resources or just the ones that work best for your students.



**Share
Your
Feedback**

We'd love to hear your feedback on the curriculum and learn how you're using it. Sign up using the QR code or link to receive updates and news about future educational opportunities.

GETTING ACQUAINTED

What is an Orchestra?

(Based on your students' background knowledge, spend as much time needed.)

An orchestra is a group of musicians who come together to play and perform music together. It is typically made up of four families of instruments:

- **Strings** (violins, violas, cellos, and double basses)
- **Woodwinds** (flutes, clarinets, oboes, and bassoons)
- **Brass** (trumpets, trombones, horns, and tubas)
- **Percussion** (drums, cymbals, xylophones, and timpani)



Tour of Orchestral Families | Meet the Orchestra



Meet the String Family



Meet the Woodwind Family



Meet the Brass Family

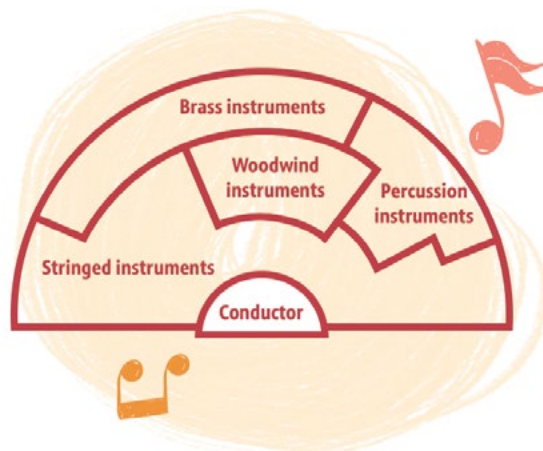


Meet the Percussion Family

Featuring musicians of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra, a program of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra



Meet the Orchestra | Bringing It All Together





Activities:

Get to Know the Families

Divide the class into four groups, each representing a different family of the orchestra.

At each “station” provide:

- A picture of the family’s instruments
- A short audio clip of the family’s sounds
 - **Strings- [Performance Only](#)**
 - **Woodwinds- [Performance Only](#)**
 - **Brass- [Performance Only](#)**
 - **Percussion- [Performance Only](#)**
- Paper or another way to record thoughts
- A quick fact card (optional)

At each station, students will:

1. Listen with eyes closed. Play the clip once through, with no explanation or expectation beforehand. Encourage students to simply notice: How does their body react? What feelings come up?
2. Listen again and document it. This time, students should write down: the personality (or timbre) and physical qualities of the family’s sound (bright, deep, mellow, warm, etc.), the feelings or physical reactions it stirs, and where they might have heard a similar sound before, in a movie, a parade, an event, anywhere.
3. Share. Each group presents their station’s findings to the class: what the family sounds like, how it made them feel, and where else they’ve heard it.

Discuss:

- *Why might a composer choose one instrument family over another to create a certain feeling?*
- *Does music outside the world of classical music (movies, video games, etc.) use sound this same way?*
- *How is each family’s sound actually produced: breath, bow, mallets, valves?*
- *If you had to choose one family to perform in, which one would you choose and why?*
- *Which instrument would you choose to play and why?*

Additional Resources:

[Behind the Stand CSO](#) (Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra):
Exclusive insider access to orchestra musicians



NOTE: The goal of this activity is to start training students to listen actively and attentively, not just to hear music, but to notice what it’s doing to them. You may also want to encourage them to think about what emotions they feel, or how their body responds, when they hear certain sounds. This will help them as they explore more music later.





Exploring Classical Music via the Piano

Go beyond the music itself and discover what makes classical music so powerful and fun. In this series, we'll meet some of the great composers, explore the musical tools they used to bring their ideas to life, and take a closer look at the piano, the instrument at the heart of so much classical music. Along the way, we'll hear a few surprising stories, experiment with musical ideas, and discover new ways to listen with guidance from Julie Spangler, pianist, of the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra.



Classical Music Through the Ages From Bach to Beethoven

A welcome to classical music and the videos in this series

Activity:

Students list four genres of music they enjoy including classical, noting one to three defining characteristics of each. Then, students name their two most favorite and two least favorite genres and explain why. If students like or dislike opera, rap, country, or nursery tunes, there must be a reason why.



The Basic Building Blocks of Music Notes, Pitch, and Rhythm

Gain insight into how composers use simple “tricks” to add complexity to their music like tempo, rhythm, scales, and syncopation.

Activity:

As students watch the video, have them make a list of the Italian words or musical concepts explored. Then, students must use each word in a sentence in a creative, non-musical way. (E.g. The rain made a staccato sound as it hit the roof.)



Meet Five of the Greatest Classical Composers Ever

Meet five of classical music's greatest composers and discover the distinctive sounds, personalities, and stories behind their music.

Activity:

Of the modern American composers students can name (film composers count), which ones do you predict will be remembered in 100 years, and why? Need names to start with? Consider Aaron Copland, Taylor Swift, John Williams, or George Gershwin. Were there more famous composers long ago than there are today? Why might that be?

Exploring Classical Music via the Piano (continued)



What Makes the Piano so Amazing? Let's Break it Down!

Explore the piano's history, versatility, and how its keys, hammers, and pedals work together to bring music to life.

Activity:

Pianos are still central to major performances, and once sat in nearly every home with money and culture. But the piano business is shrinking. Today, an old upright piano is hard to sell or even to give away. Ask students to think of five possible reasons why. Then think of a reason it might be nice to have a piano in the house.



What is Salon Music and Where Did it Come From?

Discover how classical masterpieces were shared before recorded music with *Beethoven's Symphony No. 5*, four hands, one piano.

Activity:

Before electricity, music was performed live by candlelight in someone's living room. Have students imagine how their favorite artist's music would sound performed in that way. Students should name one contemporary artist whose style would translate easily to the 1800s, and one whose style would be nearly impossible. What instruments would be used?



Improvise on the Piano Like a Pro Using the Blues Scale

Rick demonstrates the blues scale and how, with some basic skills, you can have years of fun with the piano (without even needing to read music).

Activity:

While many musicians only play music they can read on a sheet of paper, others can't even read music! Yet they play endlessly, just making melodies and baselines to accompany them as they go. In this clip, Rick played a piece he made up... it had never been played before and will never be played again. Ask students: How could he do that? Where does improvisation bring joy to their life? Are there times when they prefer to just make things up as they go?

ROMANTICISM



Passport to Romanticism

Grab your musical passport and travel back to the Romantic era, when composers pushed boundaries to express powerful emotions through music.

Romanticism was a cultural movement that began in Europe in the late 1700s and lasted through much of the 1800s. Instead of the logic and rules that informed the Classical period of music history, Romanticism celebrated:

- **Emotion and Imagination** – valuing feelings, passion, and creativity over strict reason
- **Nature** – seeing the natural world as powerful, beautiful, and sometimes dangerous, in contrast to industrial cities
- **Individualism** – highlighting the personal experience, inner struggles, and the uniqueness of each person
- **The Past and the Mysterious** – fascination with history, folklore, myths, and the supernatural
- **Freedom and Revolution** – supporting national movements for independence and social change, as well as the idea of breaking free from tradition

Sounds

Music of the Romantic Age didn't just entertain; it moved people, using emotional strings and bold brass to stir pride, longing, and joy. Students are about to set off on a musical adventure through the sounds that shaped this era.

Listening Activities:



How Did Nature Inspire the Music of the 1800s?

Become the Composer

Watch the “Nature” video and ask students to imagine themselves as a genius animal (rather than human) composer whose only instrumentation is things that make noise in nature (like elephants, thunder, rain on a pond, etc.). Have them create an orchestra of such “nature instruments” and explain how they would employ them to make an epic “Gaia Symphony.”



How to Convey a Mood in Music Can Music Really Affect Your Emotions?

Name That Mood! A Musical Game Show

In this activity, students join Rick and Julie for a musical game show. The *Name That Mood!* video helps them explore the different feelings that pieces of music can evoke.

Play a short clip of a Classical era piece, such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, alongside a Romantic era piece like Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Overture*. Prompt students with questions like: How does this music make you feel? Which one sounds more orderly? Which one sounds more emotional? Then ask students to jot a few words or draw a quick doodle to capture the mood of each piece.



Sights

Music wasn't the only art evolving during this time. The Romantic movement could be seen in painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, and theatre. Explore some of these artistic mediums with your students to get a real sense of the Romantic movement and how an artistic movement spans all the arts together.

Sightseeing Activities:



How Did Music & Art Evolve Over Time? Composers, Artists & More

Art for Your Eyes and Ears

Watch the *How Did Music & Art Evolve Over Time?* video. From 1700 to 1900, art evolved from Baroque to Classical to Romantic to Impressionism; a shift visible in fashion, literature, paintings, and sculpture. Have students list musical eras that have come and gone since their grandparents' generation, then consider how other parts of culture (fashion, technology, attitudes) may have shifted alongside the music. Have them share their findings in a creative way connecting what was happening in the world to why they think those music styles changed.

Resources:

[Smart Art History:](#)

A collection of publicly available works of art

[Google Arts and Culture:](#)

Offers free images of artwork from museums and cultural institutions from around the world.

Content Warning: Art may feature nudity, violence, warfare or intense emotional themes. Review content before sharing with students.

Resources from Rick Steves

[Classroom Europe: Romanticism Playlist](#)

Consider using this resource with older students to introduce Romanticism. (Preview the videos before showing.)



NATIONALISM



Nationalism: Music that Helped Put Countries on the Map

Nationalism celebrates the culture and interests of a nation, fostering a strong sense of unity and loyalty among its people based on a common identity, such as language, culture, history, or traditions. At its core, it's about pride in and loyalty to one's nation.

Discuss: *Why might music, art, stories, and dance become symbols of nationalism for a country? What are some examples of such things that contribute to a feeling of national pride in your country? In other countries?*

Sounds

National pride can be heard in all the countries visited on this symphonic journey. Each composer's piece has become a source of pride and identity for each of the countries they represent. Before students dive into these particular nationalities, spend some time exploring other sounds that inspire national pride in general.

Listening Activities:



Can You Identify the Country by its Music?

A Musical Journey Through Europe

Students should first watch the *Can You Identify the Country by its Music?* video. This clip covers seven countries out of the nearly 200 countries on Earth. Have students list five countries not in the video and an example of music typical of its people. Need a starting point? Think of national anthems, folk dances, or groups of people singing at sporting events. Discuss why students already know this piece from a country they've never visited.

The Sounds That Unite Us

People around the world can embrace sound almost as instinctively as they salute a flag. Whether it's Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," Spain's "¡Olé!," or Scotland's bagpipes—great speeches, chants, and music work through more than the meaning of words alone. Have the class discuss how words and sounds unite people. Have students write a short speech, rally cry, or chant that brings people together on a topic of their choice: their school, community, or country ("Lean to the left...lean to the right...stand up, sit down, fight, fight, fight!"). Deliver this to the class.



Sights

National pride isn't just found in history books; it's alive in the stories people tell, the symbols they cherish, and the art that fills their worlds. Ask students to think like cultural travelers as they explore each country: pausing to admire the monuments that shaped its past, celebrating its heroes, listening to the traditional music that still stirs local hearts, and stepping inside the galleries where artists captured the spirit of their time.

Each sight and each piece of art offers students a window into what a nation values, what difficult times it has overcome, and how its identity has grown over the centuries. Let these cultural clues guide them to a deeper understanding of the pride a country carries.

Sightseeing Activity



The Story of Rick Steves' Uncle Thor from Norway

When Worlds Collide: Rick and the Uncle Thor Story

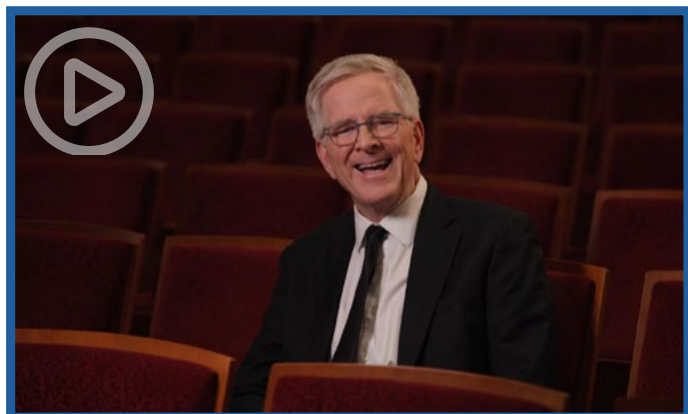
National symbols are designed to inspire: the face of a founding father, a maple leaf, rising sun, or bald eagle for national identity. Have students research their family heritage or a culture that feels meaningful to them, then find a piece of music from that homeland, just as Rick did with his Uncle Thor, from Norway. Using symbols, students design a family or personal crest that blends both their life today with their chosen culture or homeland's music, to capture the collision of the old and the new.

Resources from Rick Steves

[Classroom Europe: Nationalism Playlist](#)



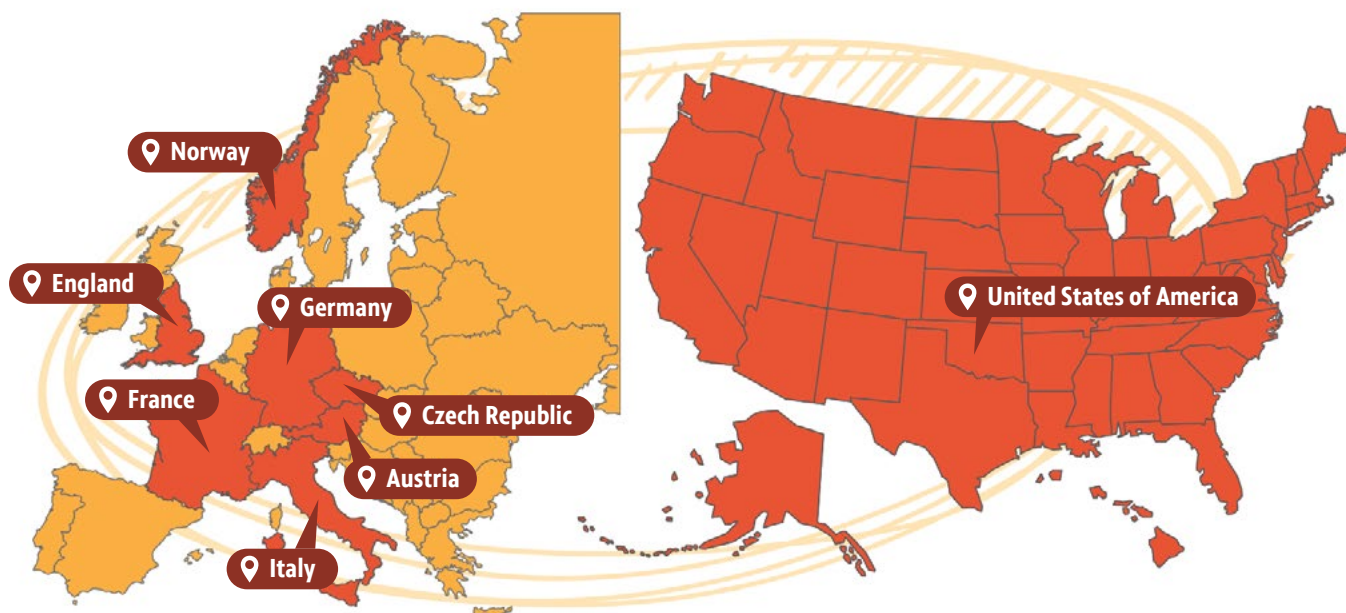
PORTS OF CALL



Bon Voyage!

The next section of this guide dives into each of the countries featured in our symphonic journey. In this video, Rick sets the stage for the students' travel through Europe with a send-off and a message to keep with them as they explore new places and the cultures that make them what they are.

CURRICULUM TRAVEL TIP: If using the “travel gear” while visiting the countries, don't forget to bring along the student [travel journals](#), [passport](#), and [composer cards](#) before heading out.



(Watch the [entire concert](#) or click on an individual country to view that country's piece.)

Watch the *Symphonic Journey* Concert: Your European Itinerary in Music

This musical journey has eight stops: Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, England, Italy, Norway, France, and the EU before returning home to the USA. Rick, as their tour guide, introduces each destination and the piece that brings students there. All music is drawn from the Romantic Age of the 1800s. Then, as the orchestra plays, tour guide Rick takes viewers on a virtual tour, sharing images from that land.





Classroom Europe

Classroom Europe, found at ricksteves.com, is Rick's gift to teachers and students curious about Europe: a free library of over 600 short videos pulled from his television series. Each stop in this curriculum has its own curated Classroom Europe playlist, ready-made clips that let students further explore each destination's art and culture. Beyond these curated playlists, the site lets users build their own custom playlist or search other users' playlists.



For Rick Steves Classroom Europe®, I've selected the most teachable moments from my Rick Steves' Europe TV shows, and broken them into short video clips for teachers to use in the classroom. I appreciate the challenges educators have, especially these days, and the passion they have for inspiring their students to learn. This project is a joy for me to offer and a small way of saying "thank you" to our teachers.

Rick Steves



Welcome to Austria

Today, we're taking a quick yet exciting journey to Austria, the home of world-famous composers, imperial elegance, and the Viennese waltz.



Austria at a Glance

Austria, roughly the size of South Carolina, is home to about 9 million German-speaking people. Located in the middle of Europe, this landlocked country is mostly mountainous, covered by the Alps. Yet while Austrians love to climb up and ski down their beautiful mountains, most actually live in valleys, along rivers and lakes. The largest city is the capital, Vienna, with 2 million people.

For centuries, Austria was a major European power, as it was home to the Habsburgs, who ruled a mighty empire and helped start (and ultimately lost) World War I. But these days, Austria no longer worries about being powerful. Instead, the country prefers to simply enjoy its Alpine scenery, its culture, and living well.



That culture includes a rich musical heritage (Mozart, Beethoven, and Strauss all composed here), folk life (like festivals where villagers wear Dirndls and Lederhosen), and sweet pastries. At the heart of it all is *Gemütlichkeit* (guh-MOOT-likh-kite), the cozy pleasure of good company. Austrians love to snuggle up over coffee, sit together around a piano, relax in a mountain inn, and enjoy life's simple pleasures.

Austria's Tasty Treats

Austria's food, like its people, is hearty and sociable. Its classic dish is Wiener Schnitzel (a big, breaded slab of veal). You'll also find plenty of Knödel (kuh-nuh-duhl), potato or bread dumplings served with roasts, stews, or on their own, and Spätzle (SCHPEHTZ-luh), little handmade noodles often tossed with butter and cheese. Also look for smoky sausages, rich goulash, and Kaiserschmarrn (KAI-zahr-shmahrn), a fluffy shredded pancake that's big enough to be a meal.

And don't miss the dessert! Apfelstrudel (AP-fel-shtroo-del) is like spiced apple pie wrapped in a flaky roll. Sachertorte (SAH-ker-tor-tuh) is Austria's famous, rich chocolate cake (with a layer of apricot jam). Enjoy them the Austrian way: in a cozy café with friends and a nice dollop of *Gemütlichkeit* (guh-MOOT-likh-kite).

Austria (continued)

Sounds

Watch: [Symphonic Journey: “Emperor Waltz” by Johann Strauss II](#)

Discuss:

- What do students notice about the sound, the beat, and the feel of the “Emperor Waltz”?
- Where does the music seem to swell with pride?
- Does it sound like something written to flatter an Emperor’s ego?
- Did you get Rick’s joke which got a good laugh about “so vein?”

Listening Activities:

Students can create a visual representation of an Austrian waltz or write a short reflection on why the waltz became Austria’s most popular form of music during the Romantic Age, and how it captures emotion, nationalism, or nature.



Featured Composer: Johann Strauss II

Johann Strauss II (1825-1899) worked for the Habsburg emperor. The Habsburgs loved music and were great patrons of the arts. (That’s why Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms all lived and composed in the imperial capital of Vienna.) Strauss composed more than 500 works and became known as the “Waltz King” for popularizing the Viennese waltz. Strauss was the heartthrob of the Romantic period in Vienna. With his violin, he could whip the audience into a frenzy as his lilting and twirling waltzes were all the rage.



Sights

During the performance, students saw many different images capturing the essence of the country. Take them on a Google Earth Tour to a few of the places that inspired and created national pride in Austria, then and now.

[Austria Google Earth Tour](#)

Places You Will Visit:

- The Alps
- Vienna
- Salzburg
- Schönbrunn Palace
- Hofburg
- Mirabell Palace
- Burg Ehrenberg
- The Danube River’s Wachau Valley



Sightseeing Activities:

Map Adventure

On a map of Austria, mark Vienna and Salzburg, then trace the Danube River and squiggle in the Alps. For each location, add an icon representing what it’s known for: ski resorts, hiking trails, castles, and other things the students discover. Once the map is labeled, explore where most Austrians live. Is it in the mountains, or along the rivers and valleys? Mark it on the map.

Digital Version: Students can also create a Google Earth Project with custom icons for each city or landmark using the built-in ruler tool to measure distances digitally.

Resources from Rick Steves [Classroom Europe: Austria Playlist](#)



Welcome to GERMANY

Today we're off to Germany, united in 1871. We'll discover how composers and myths worked together to inspire national pride and create unforgettable music.



Germany's cities are also rewarding. The capital and biggest city is Berlin (about 4 million people), which mixes a trendy crowd with powerful 20th-century history (dominated by World War II and the Cold War). Munich (with about 1.5 million people) combines grand architecture with southern conviviality, and Hamburg (with about 2 million people) has a salty maritime spirit. While Germany's regional identities are strong, foods, accents, and traditions change based on where you go. Whether you're in Bavaria, Saxony, the Rhineland, or the Baltic coast, it seems every region shares a love for nature, hearty meals, and gathering with friends.

Germany's Tasty Treats

German food is heavy and satisfying. Sausages (they have the best Wurst) are the national icon, with hundreds of varieties from grilled Bratwurst to Berlin's beloved Currywurst. Schnitzel, a breaded and fried cutlet, is another menu favorite, while Schweinshaxe (SHVYNES-hak-suh), crispy roasted pork knuckle, is a Bavarian classic. You'll also find lots of potatoes, dumplings, cabbage, and Sauerkraut accompanying roasted meats and rich gravies. Bread-lovers are in heaven here: dark rye loaves, crusty rolls, and soft pretzels are everywhere. For dessert, try Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte (SHVAHRTS-vel-der KEERSH-tor-tuh) AKA Black Forest cake, a chocolate cake with cherries and cream. Want something more familiar? Good news! This is the home of gummy bears!



Germany at a Glance

Germany, in the heart of Central Europe, is about the size of Montana, but it packs in roughly 84 million people (more than California, Florida, and New York combined). It has Europe's largest economy, with industries like automobiles (think BMW and Mercedes-Benz), machinery (Bosch), and high-tech manufacturing (Siemens), producing roughly \$5 trillion in goods and services each year (compared to \$30 trillion in the USA). Germany is much more than factories. It's actually very green, with forests, farmland, rivers, and mountains filling the countryside between its busy cities.

Travelers in Germany enjoy a variety of scenery and experiences. The Rhine Valley is lined with vineyards, half-timbered villages, and medieval castles perched dramatically above the river. In Bavaria, onion-domed churches and remote farms sit at the foothills of the Alps while the Black Forest is famous for wooded hills, cuckoo clocks, and villages cute as a gingerbread hamlet.

Germany (continued)

Sounds

Watch: [*Symphonic Journey: "Prelude to Act 3" from Lohengrin by Richard Wagner*](#)

Lohengrin Backstory: In Act 3 of this opera, right after their triumphant wedding, Elsa breaks her vow by asking Lohengrin his forbidden name, forcing him to reveal he is a Grail Knight sent to protect her. Having been asked, he must leave her forever, departing on a swan-drawn boat.

Discuss: Bright brass and fast strings provide the instrumentation for Act 3 of this opera.

- Does the energy of the music feel exciting? Tragic? Urgent? Something else?
- Where in the music does it announce that something big is about to happen in the story?

Listening Activities:

Ask students to close their eyes and imagine a story as the music plays: superheroes, sad times, happy times, it's their call. What might be happening when the music is fast and loud? Quiet and gentle? Is somebody dreaming, or riding through a forest? Have students share their story with a partner. Listen again: Now knowing the backstory, does this fanfare sound like music that knows a tragedy is coming? Why might Wagner have chosen to open Act 3 this way?



Featured Composer: Richard Wagner

Richard Wagner (1813–1883) was a defining German composer of the Romantic Era. Famous for his massive, myth-based operas like *Lohengrin* and *The Ring of the Nibelung*, his music inspired great national pride by celebrating traditional German folklore. To this day, when Germans want to stoke the national pride of their countrymen with music, Wagner is the composer they turn to.



Sights

Throughout the performance, students saw many different images capturing the essence of the country. Take them on a Google Earth Tour to a few of the places that inspired and created national pride in Germany, then and now.

[Germany Google Earth Tour](#)

Places You Will Visit:

- Danube River
- Neuschwanstein Castle
- Brandenburg Gate
- Cologne Cathedral
- The Black Forest
- Nymphenburg Palace, Munich
- Rothenberg ob der Tauber
- Rhine Valley



Sightseeing Activities:

Exploring Through Fairy Tales

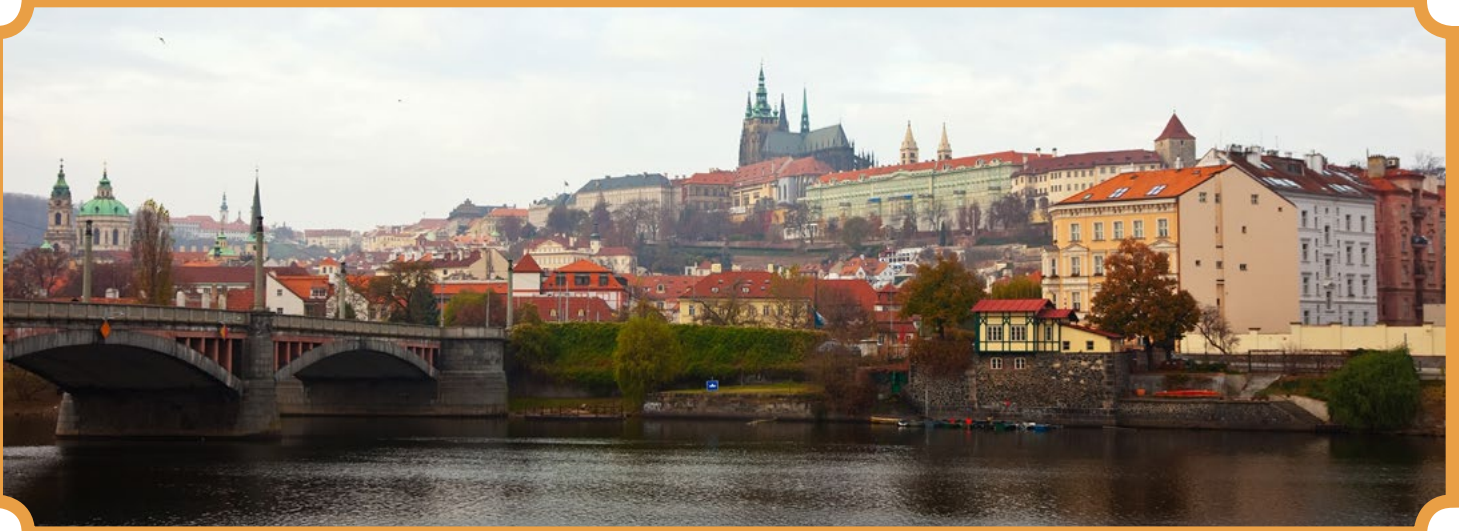
Germany gave the world some of its most famous stories, collected in the early 1800s by the Brothers Grimm from folk tales passed down for generations. Many are darker and stranger than the versions we know today. In good Romantic style, their tales celebrated a national folk culture or spirit before that nation (Germany) was established.

Have students pick a story they know well and retell it through the villain's point of view. Why might the villain think they're actually the hero of the story? Give them a reason for doing what they do.

Need ideas? Consider the wolf from *Little Red Riding Hood*, the stepmother from *Cinderella*, Maleficent from *Sleeping Beauty* or the witch from *Hansel and Gretel*. Students can also invent a brand-new fairytale character, giving them a name, a setting, a special characteristic, and a challenge to overcome.

Resources from Rick Steves

[Classroom Europe: Germany Playlist](#)



Welcome to the CZECH REPUBLIC

Let's travel to the center of Europe, the Czech Republic, a nation that fought long and hard for its freedom. This country is known for castles, music and its beautiful capital, the city of Prague.



Czech Republic at a Glance

The Czech Republic, or Czechia, is a landlocked country in Central Europe. About the size of Maine, it's home to 11 million people who speak Czech, a Slavic language related to Polish and Russian. Prague, its capital and largest city, has about 1.5 million people and one of Europe's best-preserved (and most enjoyable) Old World city centers.

Czechia is split into two proud regions: Bohemia, in the west (with Prague), and Moravia, in the east (known for its traditional villages and vineyards). It was all once part of the Habsburg empire, which ruled for centuries from Vienna. This, combined with the area's Slavic roots, gives Czech culture a distinctly Central European character. For travelers, Czechia offers an appealing combination of grand architecture, medieval townscape, and a rolling countryside of farmland, forests, gentle mountains, and one castle-topped town after another.

Czech Republic's Tasty Treats

Czech food is hearty, unpretentious, and meant to be enjoyed with good company. A classic meal might feature roast pork or beef with gravy, accompanied by knedlíky (k-neh-dlee-kee), bread or potato dumplings, perfect for soaking up all that gravy. Goulash (a beefy soup) is another national favorite, along with sausages, schnitzels, roast duck, and cabbage. For something sweet, try traditional gingerbread, fruit-filled pastries, or a slice of fruit cake, served with coffee and friends!

Czech Republic (continued)

Sounds

Watch: [*Symphonic Journey: "The Moldau" \(Vltava\)* by Bedřich Smetana](#)

Discuss:

- How can a symphonic poem about the Vltava River help to preserve the national identity of the Czech people?
- What does it mean for Czechs to hear a journey through their homeland, landscapes, and capital city, brought to life by an orchestra?

Listening Activities:

Ask students to listen for sections of this symphonic poem that reflect the ever-flowing water of a river, from a slowly flowing stream to a rushing current, and finally to the wide river flowing past the capital city of Prague.

Can they imagine various folk scenes like a wedding or a hunt? How did the composer use the orchestra to bring these different scenes to life? How might the city of Prague itself sound, musically?



Featured Composer: Bedřich Smetana

Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884), the first great Czech composer, blended folk melodies and themes to inspire. He was a key figure in the Czech National Revival movement. Smetana's best-known piece, *Vltava* (*The Moldau*), was named for the great river that literally and emotionally connected the Czech people. This piece and the river it represents embody the enduring heroic spirit of the Czech people. To this day, Czechs get a lump in their throat when they hear Smetana's hauntingly beautiful melody: *The Vltava*.



Sights

Throughout the performance, students saw many different images capturing the essence of the country. Take them on a Google Earth Tour to a few of the places that inspired and created national pride in the Czech Republic, then and now.

[Czech Republic Google Earth Tour](#)

Places You Will Visit:

- Prague
- Charles Bridge
- Vyšehrad Fortress
- St. Vitus Cathedral
- The Vltava River
- Municipal House in Prague
- Castle of Konopiste
- Český Krumlov



Sightseeing Activities:

Explore Puppetry

Puppetry is a cultural tradition in the Czech Republic. They are known for handcrafted wooden marionettes. Have students create their own puppet of a famous Czech person, animal, or story character and explain why that figure might be featured in a Romantic story.

Resources from Rick Steves

[Classroom Europe: Czech Republic Playlist](#)



Welcome to ENGLAND

Let's grab our passports and set off to explore jolly old England, a land of castles, kings, and cozy villages. This country is bursting with history, culture, and adventure.



England at a Glance

England packs about 60 million people into an area roughly the size of Idaho, making it by far the largest and most populous country of the United Kingdom. The terminology, "United Kingdom," can be confusing, so here's a breakdown. England shares the island of Great Britain, with Scotland and Wales. Add Northern Ireland and you've got the full United Kingdom (UK). This, plus Ireland and surrounding smaller islands, combine to make the British Isles. It all floats off the coast of Western Europe, connected to France by a tunnel under the English Channel (or "the Chunnel").

England was once the global superpower, ruling a vast empire upon which the sun famously never set. While no longer ruling a mighty empire, it's still pretty influential, especially economically (many banks are based here) and culturally (locals include the Beatles and Harry Potter).



England is famously rainy, so its landscape is green and gentle, think rolling hills, fertile plains, and patchwork farmland. By European standards, England's "mountains" are just big hills. London, the capital and by far the largest city, has about 9 million residents, more than New York City. For travelers, England combines bustling metropolitan life with cathedral towns, medieval castles, stately homes, thatch-happy villages, and a remarkably accessible countryside, all steeped in centuries of history and local tradition.

England's Tasty Treats

English food is comforting and generally uncomplicated. Once famously boring (to put it politely), the local cuisine could be awarded Europe's "most improved" award, with old-fashioned pub grub now joined by gastropubs and creative little restaurants mixing Asian and European influences with traditional English cooking. You'll still find classic fish & chips takeaways, pubs serving savory meat pies beneath flaky pastry crusts, and beans with your breakfast — but things are evolving, and Chinese and Indian restaurants seem more common than fish & chips joints. For a special treat, enjoy the tradition of afternoon tea with cute little sandwiches, cakes, and scones served with jam and clotted cream or savor something sweet, like sticky toffee pudding or a fruit crumble.

England (continued)

Sounds

Watch: [**Symphonic Journey: “Pomp and Circumstance” by Sir Edward Elgar**](#)

Discuss:

- This music is often described as grand and confident. *Do you agree with that description? What other emotions or ideas do you hear?*
- *In what ways does the music suggest celebration, accomplishment, uncertainty, reflection, or other emotions?*

Listening Activity:

Have students draw a visual representation of the music's structure, using paths, shapes, or doodles to show what they hear. The piece is a “regal march.” What does that mean? How might students “dance” to this music?

Students can also compare and contrast different versions of the piece, looking for a recording of the full march, a simplified version, one with different conducting styles, or a version that includes lyrics.



Featured Composer: Edward Elgar

Edward Elgar (1857–1934) was an English composer whose music became a symbol of national pride in the late 19th century when Queen Victoria ruled a quarter of the planet. Elgar's music puts the ‘great’ in Britain, blending grandeur with deep expression. His march, “Pomp and Circumstance,” seemed to provide a fitting soundtrack to the confidence that was Britain's at the dawn of the 20th century.



Sights

Throughout the performance, students saw many different images capturing the essence of England. Take them on a Google Earth Tour to a few of the places that inspired and created national pride, then and now.

[England Google Earth Tour](#)

Places You Will Visit:

- The Lake District, Lake Windermere
- Westminster, London
- Trafalgar Square, London
- Cornwall
- Cambridge
- Yorkshire
- Cotswold Hills
- Blenheim Palace



Sightseeing Activities:

Design a Home

Students design their own castle or palace, the kind that might have inspired Romantic Era artists. Think perhaps of a ruined castle on a remote hill rebuilt and pointier than ever, the sort that reminds people of a grand and hard-fought history.

Exploring Romantic Art

Print short excerpts of works by English Romantic poets (Wordsworth, Keats, Byron, Blake, Shelley) and pair them with English art from the Romantic period. Place them around the room as stations. Students rotate through, reading, observing, and jotting down the feelings or themes they notice.

Afterwards, discuss how nature, emotion, and nationalism appear in Romantic poetry and art. As a bonus, include a piece of Pre-Raphaelite art. It's technically from a slightly later age and is super Romantic in spirit.

Resources from Rick Steves [Classroom Europe: England Playlist](#)



Welcome to ITALY

Pack your bags! Next, we head to bell'Italia! In beautiful Italy (united in 1870), we'll learn about its rich culture, magnificent art, and passionate music.



Italy at a Glance

Italy, in the south of Europe, sticks out like a long boot into the Mediterranean Sea. It's roughly twice the size of Florida and has nearly three times as many people (60 million). The north end of Italy is defined by the Alps, a great mountain range that arcs across Italy's northern frontier from Slovenia to the French Riviera. Rome is Italy's capital and largest city, with more than 4 million people in its greater metro area. Greater Milan and Naples each have about 3 million people.

Northern Italy has a romantic lake district and the broad, fertile Po River Valley, Italy's agricultural and industrial heartland and home to many of its people. Farther south, the climate gets warmer and more Mediterranean.

Running down the Italian peninsula like a spine are the Apennine Mountains, and the island of Sicily, a cultural lasagna of Middle Eastern, African, and European influences, is just off mainland Italy, like a football being kicked by that boot.



Italy's Tasty Treats

When Americans think of "Italian food," they often picture what Italian immigrants brought to America over a century ago. Many came from the poorer regions of southern Italy, bringing the cooking traditions of their hometowns with them and helping shape the tastes of pizza- and spaghetti-loving Americans today. Mamma Mia!

But back in Italy, there really isn't one "Italian food." Instead, there are many. Italy has 20 regions, and each is fiercely proud of its own specialties, ingredients, and traditions. Northern regions are known for risotto, polenta, and rich cheeses; and the south is the land of tomatoes, olive oil, and pizza. For Italians, trying food from another region can almost feel like eating something "foreign." The golden rule for dining throughout Italy seems to be: eat local and eat what's in-season.

Wherever you go in the country, you'll find that Italians are almost evangelical about their food, focusing on great ingredients rather than fancy sauces or elaborate menus. Food is like sports and religion here: Italians take it seriously, love to talk about it, and have strong traditions and opinions.

Italy (continued)

Sounds

Watch: [*Symphonic Journey: “Nabucco Overture”*](#)
by [*Giuseppe Verdi*](#)

Discuss: Imagine being an Italian patriot.

- How do you think hearing this music for the first time would make you feel?
- What might the quieter, slower parts symbolize?
- What about the louder, faster parts?

Listening Activities:

Have students listen to the piece three times, ultimately making a conga-line-style “tempo train.” As a shorter alternative, consider “Libiamo ne’ lieti calici” from *La Traviata*, or the *William Tell Overture*.

1. Listen to the piece just to know its personality. Have students note where the mood and speed change.
2. Introduce students to a few Italian words composers use to indicate when the mood or speed changes: Lento (slow, slower than walking pace), Andante (moderate, about walking pace), Allegro (fast, like jogging or running), Presto (very fast, a sprint), Piano (soft), Forte (loud), Dolce (sweet), and Agitato (excited). Play the piece a second time and ask the students to describe the music using these Italian words in the right places.
3. Play the piece one last time and have students form their music train. The first student in line becomes the conductor, walking and waving their arms for dynamics and mood, at the speed the music is playing while the rest of the line follows their lead. If the music slows, the conductor commands “lento” and walks slowly. If it speeds up, the command is “andante” then “allegro” and finally “presto” as everyone moves faster. A fancy conductor can even inject “piano” (tiptoe), “forte” (stomp), “dolce” (sway gently), and “agitato” (almost a train wreck). Get ready for a little “bel caos,” beautiful chaos, which is an Italian forte.

[Note to teachers: This train game can be applied to any music in this concert—other pieces may even fit it better. And younger students may just want to listen once and do the fast and slow “tempo train.”]



Featured Composer: Giuseppe Verdi

Giuseppe Verdi was born in 1813, when Italy was still a patchwork of kingdoms and foreign-controlled territories. Like his countrymen struggling for independence and unification, he embraced themes of oppression, liberty, and national identity, even serving briefly in Italy’s first parliament. His operas became associated with the spirit of the Risorgimento, as the unification movement was called. By the time he died in 1901, the modern and united country of Italy was well-established and Verdi had become one of its great cultural heroes.



Italy (continued)

Sights

Throughout the performance, students saw many different images capturing the essence of Italy. Take them on a Google Earth Tour to a few of the places that inspired and created national pride, then and now.

Italy Google Earth Tour

Places You Will Visit:

- Naples
- Amalfi Coast
- Rome
- Verona
- Florence
- Tuscany
- Venice



Sightseeing Activities:

A Quiz Show

In groups, students gather facts about Italy during the 19th century, along with information on famous cities. Using their research, have them create questions, form teams, and run a class quiz show.

Italian Street Names Scavenger Hunt

Walk through any Italian city and students will bump into its founding fathers, not in a museum, but on street signs and piazzas. Here are five names worth knowing.

- **Garibaldi** – military hero and charismatic revolutionary
- **Vittorio Emanuele II** – Italy's first king (1861 to 1878)
- **Cavour** – political mastermind and Italy's first prime minister
- **Mazzini** – revolutionary writer and nationalist visionary
- **Umberto I** – Italy's second King (1878 to 1900)

The Challenge: Find a map of an Italian city (Rome, Florence, and Milan all work well). Search for streets named after these five figures. How many can students find?

Extra Credit: Find other streets and places with names related to Italy's Risorgimento (independence movement). And what's with all the streets named "Via XX Settembre"?

Resources from Rick Steves

Classroom Europe: Italy Playlist





Welcome to NORWAY

Let's travel to our northernmost stop: Norway, the "land of the midnight sun." While it only broke away from Sweden in 1905, this was the home of the Vikings over a thousand years ago.



Norway's landscape has always shaped its people's culture. With little good farmland, towering mountains separating communities, and the sea never far away, Norwegians traditionally looked to fishing, farming, and the ocean for their livelihood. Today's Norway is prosperous and famously comfortable, but that old bond to nature remains strong. Norwegians love getting outdoors to hike, ski, boat, or just escape to a family cabin.

Norway's Tasty Treats

Traditional Norwegian food is the cuisine of people who had to figure out how to survive long, cold winters. Fish was dried, salted, smoked, or pickled; meat was cured; and grains, potatoes, and dairy products became everyday staples. Salted and dried cod was for centuries one of Norway's great natural resources. For Norwegians, throughout the old days it was "in cod we trust."

Norwegian food today is much more varied, but these old favorites still connect Norwegians to their farming and fishing past. Lefse (LEF-suh), a soft flatbread often made with potatoes, remains a favorite, as does porridge served with butter, sugar, and cinnamon. Travelers will also find excellent salmon, hearty breads, waffles topped with jam, and a distinctive goat cheese that's sweet, caramel-like, and in every school kid's sandwich. It looks and feels like earwax, but think of it as sweet and tasty earwax.



Norway at a Glance

Norway is nature showing off: spectacular fjords, mountains, glaciers, waterfalls, and countless islands strung along a rugged coastline. Tucked into the far north of Europe, it stretches well above the Arctic Circle. Up there, summer brings the midnight sun, when the sun doesn't set for weeks, while in winter, darkness can arrive just after lunch.

Norway is so long and skinny that it's roughly as far from Oslo to Nordkapp (its northernmost cape) as it is from Oslo to Paris, about 800 miles. And with fewer than 6 million people spread across a country about the size of New Mexico, there's plenty of elbow room. Oslo, Norway's capital and largest city, has about 1.5 million people in its greater metropolitan area. Bergen, the historic gateway to the fjords and a cultural capital, is a distant second with about 300,000.

Norway (continued)

Sounds

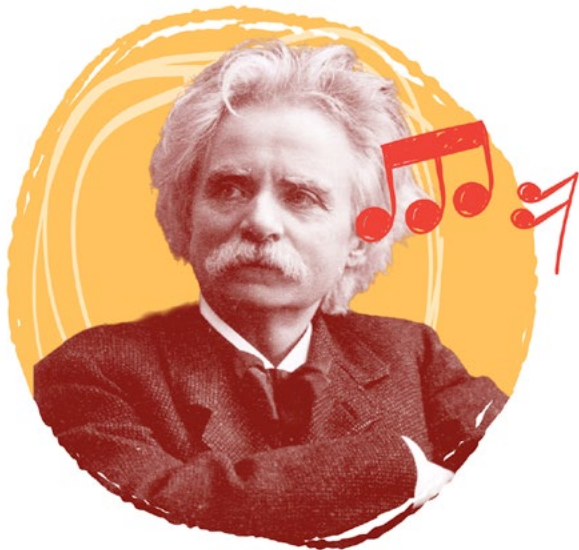
Watch: [*Symphonic Journey: “Morning Mood”*](#)
by [Edvard Grieg](#)

Discuss:

- How can music bring people together?
- How might Norwegians have felt hearing music by a composer from their humble little country, capturing the Norwegian landscape?
- If students were a Romantic-era Norwegian composer or a painter, where would they be inspired to do their best work?

Listening Activity:

Listen for sounds of nature that might reflect Norway's beautiful natural resources. Make a list of adjectives that describe the sound of the music. Can these adjectives describe nature, too? Have students draw a picture that reflects what comes to mind when they hear the piece. Share and compare interpretations.



Featured Composer: Edvard Grieg

Edvard Grieg, born in Bergen in 1843 and known as his country's national composer became a champion of Norwegian music, art, and theater. For this reason, the great Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen asked Grieg to write music to accompany his play, *Peer Gynt*. Some of Grieg's most well-known works come from music he wrote for the play, including “Morning Mood” and “In the Hall of the Mountain King.” When Grieg died in 1907, 40,000 people honored him in the streets of Bergen.

Sights

Throughout the performance, students saw many different images capturing the essence of Norway. Take them on a Google Earth Tour to a few of the places that inspired and created national pride, then and now.

[Norway Google Earth Tour](#)

Places You Will Visit:

- Bergen
- Edvard Grieg's Home, Troldhaugen
- Oslo
- Lofoten Islands
- Mountains and Glaciers
- Sognefjord
- Borgund Stave Church
- Norwegian Folk Museum at Bygdøy



Sightseeing Activities:

Design a Viking Shield

The Vikings represent a huge part of Norwegian history. Have students research the meaning of different Norse symbols (like the Valknut or the Hammer of Thor) and design their own shield on a paper plate or cardboard circle.

Norwegian Art for Your Eyes... Then Ears

Norway's nature and culture are portrayed in 19th-century paintings from Oslo's National Gallery, full of dramatic themes: towering mountains, stormy seas, lonely farms, dancing peasants, trolls, and legends. Composer Edvard Grieg turned themes just like these into music (*Peer Gynt*).

Have students:

1. Choose a Norwegian painting that shows a dramatic theme.
2. Imagine they are composers and decide what their painting would sound like as music if it came to life. Things to consider:
 - Tempo: Fast and urgent or slow and still?
 - Dynamics: Loud and strong or quiet and soft?
 - Instrumentation: Which instruments capture the scene? Brass, strings, woodwinds, or percussion?
 - Mood: What's one word that captures the feeling of the piece?
3. Create a 5-second composition with [Google Chrome Music Lab](#) that represents their painting and musical choices, then share it with a partner. If internet access is unavailable, students can use found objects instead.

Resources from Rick Steves

[Classroom Europe: Norway Playlist](#)

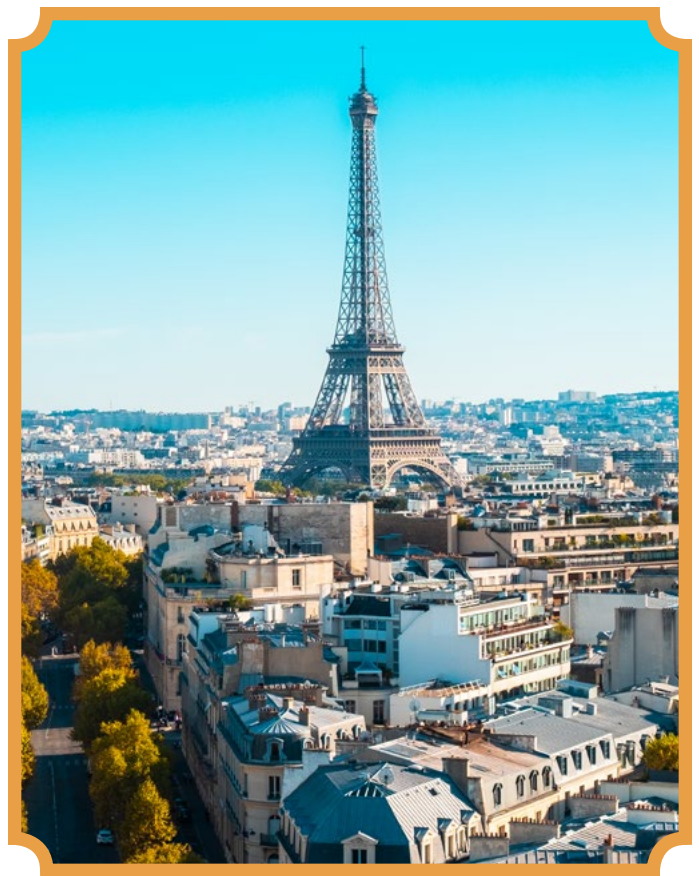
Welcome to FRANCE

France, while long independent, swapped out kings for people power with several inspiring revolutions throughout the Romantic Age. If you like liberty, equality, and fraternity, then you'll like singing, "Vive la France!" From the scalps of the Alps to the Riviera beaches to Paris' Eiffel Tower, it's a land well worth exploring.



France at a Glance

France is one of Europe's biggest and most varied countries, about the size of Texas, with 70 million people. Its landscape ranges from rolling farmlands in the north to sunny Mediterranean beaches in the south, with the Alps marking the Italian border and the mighty Pyrenees mountains separating France from Spain. France has its own version of "sea to shining sea" (the Mediterranean to the Atlantic) with great rivers like the Seine, Loire, and Rhône winding through its countryside to one sea or another. Looking down over it all is Mont Blanc (15,780 feet), the highest peak in the Alps. Meanwhile, the Eiffel Tower looks down over Paris, France's capital and dominant city, with roughly 11 million people in the greater metro area.



France has long stood at a European crossroads, absorbing influences from its Spanish, Italian, Germanic, and northern European neighbors and, more recently, from North Africa. The result is a country with a strong national identity, but remarkably distinct regions, from Celtic-flavored Brittany to German-feeling Alsace to Mediterranean Provence. With its delightful mix of venerable cities, medieval villages, vineyards, beaches, mountains, and countryside, and each region proud of its way of life, you won't be bored in France.

France's Tasty Treats

The French take food seriously. At the core of French cuisine are quality ingredients that are prepared well, eaten in season, and enjoyed without rushing. For travelers, some of France's greatest pleasures are the simplest: a warm baguette from the neighborhood bakery, a wedge of local cheese, fresh fruit from a market, or a buttery croissant for breakfast.

But, like the country itself, French food is regional with an attitude. Mediterranean Provence cooks with olive oil, garlic, tomatoes, and herbs; Brittany is known for buttery crêpes and seafood; and Alsace mixes French finesse with hearty Germanic meats. Sprinkle in additions brought from North Africa, especially couscous and fragrant spices, and modern French food gets even more diverse. Every region seems to have its own cheeses, pastries, breads, and specialties, and the French debate their merits with impressive pride and passion. Food here is not just food. It's an art form, it's identity, and it's one of the great pleasures of being French...or simply visiting.

France (continued)

Sounds

Watch: [*Symphonic Journey: “Marche Militaire Français” by Camille Saint- Saëns*](#)

Discuss:

- Why do you think this piece is called a military march?
- Are there any instruments that give it a marching sound?
- How does this music reflect the ideas of the French Revolution or the spirit of France at the time (1871)?

Listening Activities:

Have students think about how they would move or dance to this music as they listen. Then, as you listen to it again, have them move to the music.

Have students write a short story inspired by the music. Make up your own story: What is the military marching for? Where are they going? What do they see and experience along the way?



Featured Composer: Camille Saint-Saëns

Camille Saint-Saëns was a French composer who lived from 1835 to 1921. A child prodigy, he amazed audiences with his piano and organ playing from a very young age. During the Romantic era, he became one of the most important composers in France. His music is full of color, emotion, and imagination, but it also keeps the balance and clarity of earlier classical music. He was determined to give French music its own voice during a time when German composers were most influential.



Sights

Throughout the performance, students saw many different images capturing the essence of France. Take them on a Google Earth Tour to a few of the places that inspired and created national pride, then and now.

[France Google Earth Tour](#)

Places You Will Visit:

- Paris
- Normandie, Mont Saint Michel
- Provence
- Cote d'Azur
- Dordogne
- Châteaux of the Loire Valley
- Chamonix and Mont Blanc
- Fontainebleau



Sightseeing Activities:

Virtual Tour: Palace of Versailles

Take students on a virtual tour of the Palace of Versailles, pointing out its scale and luxury.

[Château de Versailles Virtual Tour](#)

[Rick Steves Versailles, Europe's Palace of Palaces Video](#)

Take the Tour of Versailles Further

Discuss: While the French royal family lived in this kind of opulence, most French citizens were living in poverty, struggling to get by. Why might this disparity lead to a revolution? Can students relate this to anything happening in the world today?

Design a Protest Poster

Have students choose a side: Royalists or Revolutionary? Design a poster that captures their cause and convinces others to join. Have them consider a call-to-action, a catchy slogan, or a provocative image that would stick in someone's mind.

Resources from Rick Steves

[Classroom Europe: France Playlist](#)



Welcome to the EUROPEAN UNION

For this symphonic journey's grand finale, our last musical stop celebrates the economic and political union of 27 European countries who have agreed to trade away some of their sovereignty to enjoy the benefits of functioning as one.

European Union at a Glance

The European Union is a grand experiment in getting 450 million people in neighboring countries to live and work together. Today, 27 European countries belong to the EU. The EU grew out of the wreckage of World War II. Europeans realized that a key to keeping France and Germany from bombing each other was to weave their economies together. It became clear that for Europeans to trade competitively in an increasingly global economy, they would be wise to become a free trade zone themselves. Their idea was surprisingly practical: trade boomed, resources were shared, and a big war among EU members has become almost inconceivable. The countries of the EU have enjoyed an extraordinary period of peace and prosperity.

EU countries remain independent nations, with their own governments, languages, traditions, and identities. They've agreed to share some decision-making and follow common rules in exchange for the efficiency and clout that come from functioning as a larger team. Goods, services, and people move easily across national borders. EU citizens can generally live, work, and study throughout the Union and 21 of the 27 countries share the same currency, the euro. That means you can buy a croissant in France, a gelato in Italy, and a bratwurst in Germany without changing money.



The EU's Tasty Treats

If there's one thing Europeans have not agreed to standardize, thankfully, it's dinner. One thing they all seem to share is a love of good eating. And the EU brings together many food traditions: French cheeses and pastries, Italian pasta and pizza, Belgian chocolates, Spanish tapas, German sausages, Greek olives, Polish pierogi, and plenty more.

Food is actually a good example of how the European Union lives up to its motto: "United in diversity." In most EU countries, you can cross a border with ease, and suddenly the language, architecture, music, and menu all change. Goods move freely between members, and most Europeans now have the same coins jangling in their pockets. Each country proudly hangs on to what makes it distinctive, while enjoying the advantages of being part of something bigger.



European Union (continued)

Sounds

Watch: [**Symphonic Journey: “Ode to Joy” from Symphony No. 9 by Ludwig van Beethoven**](#)

Discuss:

- What is the European Union, and why is “Ode to Joy” a fitting piece for our grand finale?
- Beethoven set this music to a poem about universal brotherhood. What does “universal brotherhood” mean?
- The words call on all people to come together, united joyfully in their diversity, and to celebrate freedom. How might those ideas have been revolutionary in Beethoven’s time? How might they still be revolutionary today? What does revolutionary mean?
- What would Beethoven think if he could sit in a classroom today and listen to popular music alongside students? In 1963 the Beatles had a big hit called “Roll Over Beethoven.” What might he think of that song?

Listening Activities:

This piece is an anthem. Have students research what an anthem is. Then have them find an example of an anthem in their world. If they go to a party, dance, or sporting event, is there a particular song that everyone loves singing together? That’s an anthem. Share their example with a partner or the class.

The European Union’s motto is “United in diversity,” and its official anthem is Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy.” What does “United in diversity” mean? Why do you think Europeans chose this particular piece of music to represent that idea? Could the class have a motto?



Featured Composer: Ludwig van Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven, born in Bonn, Germany in 1770, lived during an age of revolution, when old ideas about kings, power, freedom, and the rights of ordinary people were being challenged. Beethoven believed passionately in freedom and human dignity, and those ideals thunder through his music. Near the end of his life, he composed his monumental Ninth Symphony. For its finale, he did something revolutionary. He added singers to a symphony, using Friedrich Schiller’s poem “Ode to Joy,” with its dream that all people could live together as brothers and sisters. Nearly 200 years after Beethoven imagined a world united in joy, Europeans chose his melody as their official anthem.



European Union (continued)

Sights

Throughout the performance, students saw images from individual countries capturing the essence of Europe. Unlike the single-country tours in this curriculum, the EU is a union of many nations, so this final tour takes a wider view. Have students take a Google Earth journey visiting these iconic sights from across the entire continent, some inside the EU, some just beyond its borders.

EU Google Earth Tour



Places You Will Visit :

- **Mont Blanc** — Western Europe's highest mountain.
- **The Rhine River Gorge** — Between Koblenz and Bingen, a Romantic stretch of river lined with castles.
- **London** — Home to one of Europe's largest metropolitan areas.
- **Moscow** — A reminder that this program leaves Europe's eastern half unexplored.
- **Nordkapp** — A dramatic cape in Norway near Europe's northernmost point.
- **The Rock of Gibraltar** — Where two continents and two seas meet (Africa, Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic).
- **The Acropolis in Athens** — Ruins of an impressive ancient civilization that flourished centuries ago.
- **Amsterdam and the Netherlands** — A capital famous for its canals in a country where much of the land was reclaimed from the sea.

Sightseeing Activities:

Trace your Symphonic Journey

Give students a map with the outlines of Western Europe's countries and ask them to label the countries featured on this musical tour.

Populate the Map With Europe's Greatest Sights

Take a blank European map and draw in the continent's iconic sights and spectacles with cartoon icons. To get started, here are five: a windmill along a Dutch canal; Sicily's active volcano, Mount Etna; the Arctic Circle; vineyards in France; the fairy-tale towers of Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany. Draw 10, and you're a cartographer!

Resources from Rick Steves

Classroom Europe: EU Playlist



Why We Travel

You can spend your life doing many things. Some people make music, some garden, some are great athletes, others just love their cars. Rick Steves has spent about a quarter of his life since he finished high school (about 90 days a year for 50 years) traveling. Here are five clips telling why he's glad he did:

[Why We Travel #1: For Fun and Excitement](#)

[Why We Travel #2: To Appreciate History](#)

[Why We Travel #3: To Appreciate Art and Culture](#)

[Why We Travel #4: Like Pilgrims, to Learn and Grow](#)

[Why We Travel #5: To Connect with Our World](#)

Watch these clips and imagine why you might travel. Imagine how the world might be different if everyone had to take a big long trip between their school years and what follows. If you did that, how might that traveling gap year impact your future?



Welcome to the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Today, we're exploring a land spanning between two vast oceans. It's a country known for its wide-open skies, wealth of natural wonders, and a spirit of freedom and innovation. Let's journey across the United States of America.



USA at a Glance

Compared to all the other countries we've visited, America is younger. It's more of a cultural and ethnic melting pot. It's richer, more powerful, and far bigger—bigger than all the European countries featured in this program combined. Add up the populations of Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, England, Italy, Norway, and France, and the total comes to roughly 300 million people, not far off from the USA's own population of 340 million. But squeeze all those countries together and their combined land area is still less than a quarter of the United States. Europe is many countries with a dense population living in tight quarters. The USA, on the other hand, has lots of elbow room.



USA Tasty Treats

American cuisine is a delicious reflection of the country itself: big, diverse, informal, and shaped by generations of immigrants. Native American corn became Southern cornbread; European traditions, from German sausages to Italian pasta, enriched the mix; while African, Mexican, Asian, and countless other influences spiced up the national table. Rather than a single national cuisine, America is a feast of regional specialties: smoky barbecue in the South, Cajun cooking in Louisiana, seafood in New England, Tex-Mex along the border, and burgers at nearly every freeway off-ramp. Americans borrow, combine, Super Size, and reinvent. From Thanksgiving turkey and pumpkin pie to food trucks and backyard barbecues, American cooking is less about rigid tradition than abundance, experimentation, and sharing a good meal. Like the culture itself, it favors the practical and convivial over pretense and formality.

United States of America (continued)

Sounds

Watch: [*Symphonic Journey: “America the Beautiful” by Samuel A. Ward*](#)

Discuss:

Have students picture a place in the United States they know well. It could be a hometown, a favorite landmark, or a city they’ve visited. Then, play the piece and ask:

- *Does it feel like it could have been written for that place? Why or why not?*
- *How might this music make people feel proud or inspired?*

Discuss as a class or with partners.

Listening Activity:

After listening, ask students to draw a picture of something in the United States that makes them feel proud or happy. It could be a natural place, a city, a flag, or an image of people helping each other. Have students share their pictures and explain why they chose the subject of their pictures. Encourage them to connect their ideas to the feelings the music gave them.

Have students imagine which geographical parts of the country match the music’s mood (mountains, rivers, fields, cities). Analyze how the composer and orchestra create the mental images of those places using the different sections of the orchestra.



Featured Composer: Samuel A. Ward

Samuel A. Ward was an American musician born in 1848. He loved writing church music and composed a hymn in 1882 for a song called “O Mother Dear, Jerusalem.” But in 1904, people matched his tune with Katharine Lee Bates’s poem “America.” Together, they became the famous patriotic song “America the Beautiful.” Sadly, Samuel Ward passed away in 1903 and never got to hear how his music and Bates’s words came together to inspire millions of people.

Sights

Throughout the performance, students saw many different images capturing the essence of the United States. Take them on a Google Earth Tour to a few of the places that inspired and created national pride, then and now.

[United States of America Google Earth Tour](#)

Places You Will Visit:

- Plymouth, Massachusetts
- The Rocky Mountains
- Statue of Liberty
- Mount Rushmore
- The Grand Canyon
- Los Angeles
- New York City
- Mississippi River



Sightseeing Activities:

Regional Differences

America is a big country with one flag and one national anthem, but it is a country of proud regions, each with its own identity. Have students choose a region they know well (where they live, places they’ve visited, or places their family is from). Have them create a visual symbol that represents it, like its own flag, logo, or icon, and describe a music anthem that might capture its essence.

Plan a Trip to a National Park

Have students choose a national park and do a little research on its climate, terrain, wildlife, and native plants. Using what they discover, have students plan a week-long visit to the park.

Include:

- Pick trails to hike
- Make a supply list
- Spot the wildlife on the trail
- Identify native plants along the way
- Choose a trip highlight

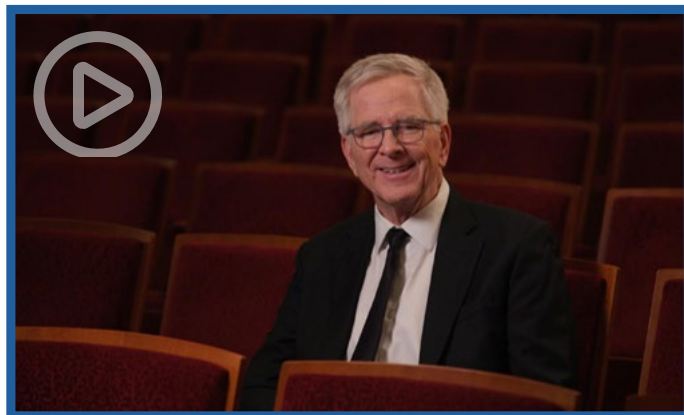
Homecoming

Welcome Home

In this video, Rick wraps up the journey with a message to students to take with them as they think about where they have been.

A Letter from Rick

This closing letter is written to students, but it's just as much for you. Feel free to read it aloud, print it out, or create and share a direct link with your class as a final send-off after this journey. Ideally, use it as a springboard... a poem inspiring some final discussion. However you use it, we hope it leaves both you and your students with a little more wonder about where the road, and the music, might take you next.



I appreciate how travel broadens my perspective. I love how I learn more about my home and my culture by leaving it and looking at it from a distance. I'm both invigorated and liberated by enjoying dimensions of life that are near and dear to people of other nationalities that may be totally different from my own. I've found that travel can help make us curious and bold... enthusiastic about building bridges. It reminds us that we Americans are just a small part of this planet (only about 4%). It shows us how we can learn from and be inspired both by history and by other cultures. I welcome these wonderful growing pains of that broader perspective to be a part of my life.

In a broader sense, this symphonic journey also reminds us that we can enrich and celebrate life in endless ways, in countless other journeys. Life is more multi-faceted and multi-dimensional and wild-and-crazy than we can imagine. And how much of that you'd like to tap into — to carbonate the story of your life — is a choice.

This curriculum was about weaving four of my favorite dimensions — travel, music, Romanticism in the 19th century, and Europe — together in a fun way. It could have been about gardening, comparative religions, and Asia. It could have been about sports, medicine, and indigenous peoples. Or... fill in the blanks. There are endless ways to swizzle your life... it's your choice.

And if there's a journey awaiting you to embrace life with, it's fair to say, "the sooner the better." Imagination, youth, gumption, time, a partner, money, luck, inspiration... these are just some of the helpful ingredients...everyone has a different mix. And it's my hope that you take your ingredients and cook up a life well lived — filled with joy, wonder, and meaning. And wherever you end up going with your life, I'd like to bid you "Happy travels!"

Rick Steves

APPENDIX

Extension Activity Ideas:

Music

Name That Instrument Game

Play short audio clips of instruments. Students call out or “buzz in” to identify which orchestral family the instrument belongs to. Bonus challenge: Identify the specific instrument if they can.

Invent an Instrument

Dream up a new instrument belonging to one of the four orchestral families. Draw it and describe how its design creates its unique sound and why it fits the family you put it in. Give it a descriptive name. Option (if workable): actually build your instrument. Another option: be funny.

Research a Composer

Have students research a composer and analyze how they used the different families of instruments in their works. What made them memorable?

Explore Career Connections

Have students explore different careers in music, such as orchestra conductor, film composer, sound designer, and pit musician. Students can create videos, flyers, or presentations to share about their findings that could encourage other students to pursue that career, too.

Tempo Train (Part 2)

Play any piece of music and have students form a conga-style line, with one student as “conductor,” walking and waving their arms for dynamics and mood, setting the pace to match the music’s tempo. When the music speeds up, slows down, or shifts mood, the conductor and line adjust. For a challenge, layer in musical terms like piano, forte, dolce, and agitato to guide the movement. (For much more on how to do this and variations, see the fuller explanation in the Italy pages above.)

Tasty Treats

Write a Food Guidebook Entry

Students write a short guidebook entry introducing a country’s food to a first-time traveler. Include a list of must-try dishes, with a reason each one made the list.

Teach Culture Through Food

Use food to teach a bit of a country’s culture, history or people. Students design a 4-course menu (appetizer, first course, main course, dessert), pairing each dish with a short lesson about the place it comes from.

Taste Test

Students can bring in a food inspired by their favorite country to share with the class.

Tourism Challenge

Create a Travel Poster

Create a poster that invites people to visit a country from this itinerary.

Travel Itinerary in 1850

Students design a multi-day adventure tour of a country. It should be built around Romantic Age travel: no internet, no airplanes, no global tourism, just the dangers and confusion of the era. It could even stay in a single city with a Romantic theme. (Include the many ways you can imagine travel was different in 1850 than it is today.)

Create a Promotional Booklet of a Country’s Greatest Hits

Create a mini travel guide. Have students choose a favorite or famous landmark and create a picture, a short description, and a fun fact into one enticing page. Collect each page to create a class travel booklet designed to celebrate the best sights in that country.

Create a Themed Tour

Students design a themed 5-day tour of a country. Each day represents a different aspect of the country’s culture. For example: Day 1, art (visit an art gallery); Day 2, nature (take a swan boat ride); Day 3, food (make a seasonal and local salad, eat a famous dessert); Day 4, local life (learn to do a traditional dance); Day 5, music (attend a concert).



APPENDIX

Extension Activity Ideas:

Country Exploration

Tall Tales of a Nation

America has its own legendary heroes: George Washington and the cherry tree, John Henry the steel driving man, Paul Bunyan shaping the American landscape, Johnny Appleseed cultivating the frontier, Daniel Boone blazing the west, even Bigfoot lurking in the woods. Have students share another country's tall tales or create their own.

Past & Present

Create an infographic showing a country "Then & Now," highlighting Romantic influences that are still visible today.

Dig Into the Facts

Have students research topics like government, economy, popular sports, food, and other everyday details to build a fuller picture of that country.

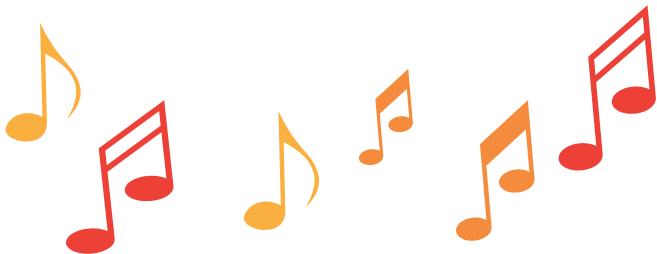
Discover the Arts

Students collect a short list of a country's most iconic artworks. Explain what makes each one so special.

Romanticism Across the Arts

Romanticism wasn't just a painting style; it was a hunger for emotion, freedom, nature, and drama that shaped literature, art, architecture, fashion, and music alike. Students explore this by choosing one option:

1. Play the role of a young Romantic in 1850s Paris. Describe a typical day: your lifestyle, your favorite art, music, and fashion.
2. Write a diary entry for one full day lived entirely in the Romantic spirit, then share it with a partner or group.
3. Tour the make-believe home of a great Romantic-era composer. Describe the art on the walls and the books on the shelves that reveal their Romantic taste.



BOOK LIST

To help students build deeper connections with the music, history, and cultures explored in this guide, we have curated a list of books and films. This list is designed to extend student learning and inspire independent exploration. Whether used for read-alouds, independent research, or cross-curricular lesson extensions, these titles offer students an entry point into music and the stories and traditions of each location.

Music

- *Orchestra* by Avalon Nuovo
- *The Story Orchestra Series*-Frances Lincoln Children's Books
- *Allegro: A Musical Journey Through 11 Musical Masterpieces* by David W. Miles
- *How to Build an Orchestra* by Elisa Paganelli

Austria

- *Little-I-am-me (Das kleine Ich bin ich)* by Mira Lobe
- *The Little Witch* by Otfried Preußler
- *The Skull: A Tyrolean Folktale* by Jon Klassen
- [Rick's Book and Film List for Austria](#)

Germany

- *Grimm Brothers' fairy tales*
- *Hansel and Gretel*
- *Snow White*
- *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri
- [Rick's Book and Film List for Germany](#)

Czech Republic

- *This is Prague* by Olga Cerna, Michaela Kukovicova
- *The Golden Spinning Wheel: An Old Bohemian Folk Tale* by Lisl Weil
- *Czech Folk Tales* by Josef Baudiš
- [Rick's Book and Film List for the Czech Republic](#)



England

- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
- *Robinson Crusoe*
- *Gulliver's Travels*
- [Rick's Book and Film List for England](#)

Italy

- *Strega Nonna* by Tomie dePaola
- *The Legend of Old Befana* by Tomie dePaola
- *Italian Folktales* by Italo Calvino
- [Rick's Book and Film List for Italy](#)

Norway

- *East O' the Sun and West O' the Moon* by George Webbe Dasent
- *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Paul Galdone
- *Adventures with Waffles* by Maria Parr
- [Rick's Book and Film List for Norway](#)

France

- *Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans
- *Babar*
- *Carnival of the Animals* by John Lithgow
- [Rick's Book and Film List for France](#)

USA

- *America the Beautiful - Celebrating America's History, Landmarks, Parks, Artists, Food, Maps, And More!* by Cholena Rose Dare
- *Travels with Charley in Search of America* by John Steinbeck
- *A Walk Across America* by Peter Jenkins
- *Blue Sky White Stars* by Sarvinder Naberhaus
- *Lonely Planet Kids America's National Parks* by Alexa Ward (Author), Mike Lowery (Illustrator)



MUSIC LIST

What Makes Up an Orchestra?

Meet the String Family

- Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92, II. Allegretto by Ludwig van Beethoven

Meet the Woodwind Family

- Wind Quartet, Op. 93, II. Scherzo by Karl Goepfert

Meet the Brass Family

- Canzon Seconda a Quattro by Giovanni Gabrieli

Discover Classical Music

Classical Music Through the Ages | From Bach to Beethoven

- "Piano Sonata No. 3 in C Major," Ludwig van Beethoven

The Basic Building Blocks of Music | Notes, Pitch, and Rhythm

- "Symphony No. 5 in C Minor," Ludwig van Beethoven
- "Piano Sonata No. 3 in B-flat Major, III. Rondo," Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- "The Stars and Stripes Forever," John Philip Sousa
- "Waltz of the Flowers," from *The Nutcracker*, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
- "Twelve Variations on 'Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman'" (Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- "I Got Rhythm," George Gershwin
- "In the Hall of the Mountain King" from *Peer Gynt*, Edvard Grieg
- "Arabesque No. 1," Claude Debussy "Galop Infernal (Can-Can)" from *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Jacques Offenbach
- "Träumerei," Robert Schumann
- "Montagues and the Capulets" from *Romeo and Juliet*, Sergei Prokofiev
- "The Washington Post March," John Philip Sousa
- "William Tell Overture (Finale)," Gioachino Rossini

Meet Five of the Greatest Classical Composers Ever

- "Two-Part Invention in A Minor," Johann Sebastian Bach
- "Piano Sonata No. 16 in C Major, K. 545," Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- "Symphony No. 5 in C Minor," Ludwig van Beethoven
- "Ode to Joy" from Symphony No. 9, Ludwig van Beethoven
- "Für Elise," Ludwig van Beethoven
- "Träumerei," Robert Schumann
- "Nocturne in E-flat Major," Frédéric Chopin

What Is Salon Music and Where Did It Come From?

- "Symphony No. 5 in C Minor" (arranged for piano, four hands), Ludwig van Beethoven

How to Convey a Mood in Music | Can Music Really Affect Your Emotions?

- "The Swan" from *The Carnival of the Animals*, Camille Saint-Saëns
- "Funeral March" from Piano Sonata No. 2, Frédéric Chopin
- "Galop Infernal (Can-Can)," Jacques Offenbach

How Did Music & Art Evolve Over Time? | Composers, Artists & More

- "Italian Concerto," Johann Sebastian Bach
- "Eine kleine Nachtmusik," Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- "Aufschwung" from *Fantasiestücke*, Robert Schumann
- "Arabesque No. 1," Claude Debussy

How Did Nature Inspire the Music of the 1800s?

- "Morning Mood" from *Peer Gynt*, Edvard Grieg
- "Flight of the Bumblebee," Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
- "Vogel als Prophet" (Bird as Prophet) from *Waldszenen*, Robert Schumann
- "The Elephant" from *The Carnival of the Animals*, Camille Saint-Saëns
- "Clair de Lune," Claude Debussy

Can You Identify the Country by Its Music?

- "Tales from the Vienna Woods, Op. 325," Johann Strauss II
- "Tarantella" (Traditional)
- "Ride of the Valkyries" from *Die Walküre*, Richard Wagner
- "Sevilla" from *Suite Española*, Isaac Albéniz
- "Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1," Sir Edward Elgar
- "Reine de Musette" (Traditional)
- "The Stars and Stripes Forever," John Philip Sousa

The Story of Rick Steves' Uncle Thor from Norway

- "Morning Mood" from *Peer Gynt*, Edvard Grieg
- "Wedding Day at Troldhaugen," Edvard Grieg

Rick Steves' Europe: A Symphonic Journey (2025)

- "Emperor Waltz," Johann Strauss II (Austria)
- "Prelude to Act 3" from *Lohengrin*, Richard Wagner (Germany)
- "The Moldau" (Vltava), Bedrich Smetana (Czech Republic)
- "Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1," Sir Edward Elgar (England)
- "Nabucco Overture," Giuseppe Verdi (Italy)
- "Morning Mood" from *Peer Gynt*, Edvard Grieg (Norway)
- "Marche Militaire Française," Camille Saint-Saëns (France)
- "Ode to Joy" from Symphony No. 9, Ludwig van Beethoven (European Union)
- "America the Beautiful," Samuel A. Ward (United States of America)
- "The Stars and Stripes Forever," John Philip Sousa (United States of America)



GLOSSARY

Abstract - Expressing ideas without literal representation

Accelerando - Gradually getting faster while playing music

Allegro - Fast, like jogging or running

Andante - Moderate pace, about walking speed

Anthem - A song representing a group or nation

Baroque - Ornate musical style from about 1600–1750

Bon Voyage - French phrase meaning “have a good journey”

Chromatic scale - A scale using all twelve musical pitches

Composer - A person who creates and writes music

Conductor - A person who leads and directs an orchestra's tempo, dynamics, and expression

Crescendo - Gradually increasing the volume of music

Dolce - Sweetly

Dynamic contrast - Noticeable differences between loud and soft sounds

Ethnocentric - Believing your culture is the normal one

Forte - A musical direction meaning loud or strong

Fortissimo - A musical direction meaning very loud

Gemütlichkeit - German for cozy and convivial

Genre - A category or style of music

Harmony - Notes sounding together to create chords

Heritage - Traditions and culture passed through generations

Impressionism - Music emphasizing atmosphere, color, and mood (1890-1920)

Improvisation - Creating music spontaneously while performing

Legato - Notes played smoothly and connected together

Lento - Slow, slower than walking pace

Lyrical - Expressive, flowing, and song-like in character

March - A piece of music with a strong, steady beat

Melody - A sequence of notes forming a tune

Meter - The grouping of beats in music

Metronome - A device that keeps a steady beat

Mode - A type of musical scale or pattern (like major and minor)

Motif - A short, recurring musical idea

Nationalism - Music expressing a nation's culture or identity

Neoclassical - Modern music inspired by earlier classical styles (1750- 1820)

Orchestra - A large group of instrumental musicians

Percussion - Instruments played by striking, shaking, or scraping

Pianissimo - A musical direction meaning very soft

Pianist - A musician who plays the piano

Piano - A musical direction meaning soft, or a keyboard instrument with 88 notes

Prelude - A short piece of music that introduces a larger work or section

Presto - Very fast, faster than allegro

Rhythm - The pattern and timing of musical sounds

Risorgimento - The 19th-century movement to unify Italy into a single nation

Ritardando - Gradually getting slower while playing music

Romantic Age - Era emphasizing emotion, expression, and imagination (1800s)

Staccato - Notes played short and separated (opposite of legato)

Symphony - A large musical work written for orchestra

Syncopation - Emphasis on unexpected or off-beat rhythms (jazzy)

Tempo - The speed at which a piece of music is played

Timbre - The unique tone color or “personality” of a sound

Transcription - Writing down or adapting music for performance

Vibrato - A slight wavering that enriches musical tone

Waltz - A dance in 3/4 time, popular throughout the Romantic Era

Standards Covered

Grades 3–4

Reading (Informational Text & Literature)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of informational texts, citing explicit textual evidence as the basis for answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3 Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Speaking & Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1 / CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade-level topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2 / CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2 Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.5 (where applied) – Create engaging audio recordings of stories or poems that demonstrate fluid reading at an understandable pace; add visual displays when appropriate to emphasize or enhance certain facts or details.

Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Grades 5–8

Reading (Informational Text & Literature)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.7 Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.9 Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2 (where applied) Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2/ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2/ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts that examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3/ CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques and descriptive detail.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7 Conduct short research projects drawing on several sources to answer a question.

Speaking & Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, including interpreting information, posing and responding to questions, and building on others' ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2–CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2 Interpret and analyze information presented in diverse media and formats.

Grades 5–8 (*continued*)

History/Social Studies 6–8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6–8.3 Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6–8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Arts (NCAS)

MU:Cn11.1.5 Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

MU:Re7.2.6–8 – Explain how music's expressive qualities convey meaning (analyze elements like tempo, dynamics, timbre).

MU:Re8.1.6–8 – Interpret and explain how expressive elements support cultural or programmatic ideas.

MU:Cr1.1.6–8 – Generate melodic or rhythmic ideas to represent themes or concepts.

MU:Cn10.0.6–8 – Relate music to history, culture, and identity.

Grades 9–12

Reading (Informational Text & Literature)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9–10.7 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11–12.7 Analyze and integrate information presented in diverse media or formats, evaluating credibility and accuracy.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9–10.2 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11–12.2 Determine central ideas or themes in literature and analyze development across texts and medium.

Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9–10.4 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11–12.4 – Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Speaking & Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9–10.1 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.1 – Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others' ideas and expressing one's own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9–10.2 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.2 – Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats to address complex questions or tasks.

Language

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11–12.6 – Acquire and use general academic and domain-specific vocabulary accurately and precisely.

Arts (NCAS)

MU:Re7.2.I–II / MU:Re8.1.I–II – Analyze and justify interpretations of how music's elements convey meaning and support ideas (compare interpretations across performances and media).

MU:Cr1.1.I–II – Compose, refine, and justify original musical ideas for expressive intent and cultural context.

MU:Pr6.1.I–II – Perform with technical accuracy and expressive intent appropriate to style and purpose.

MU:Cn10.0.I–II / MU:Cn11.0.I–II – Relate music to historical/cultural contexts and contemporary issues; connect musical study to personal and civic identity.

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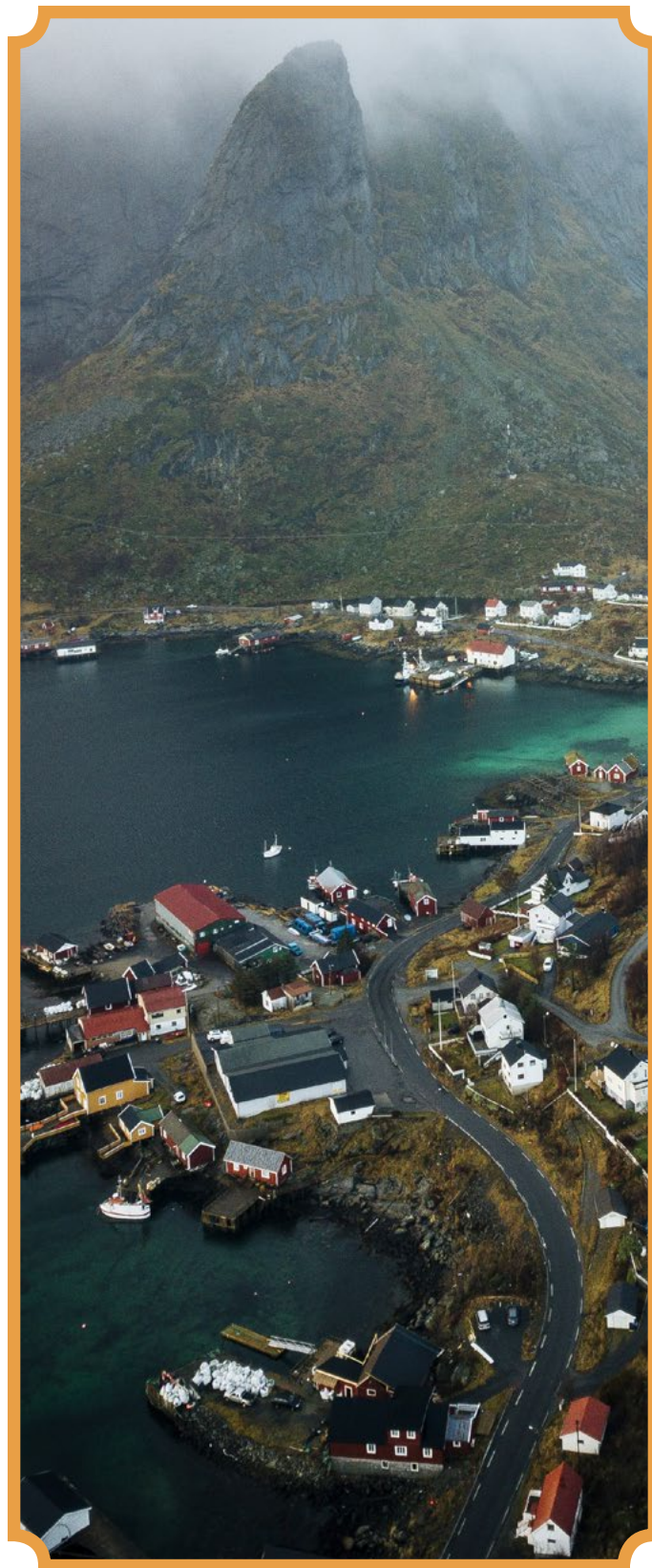
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Dedicated to:

Dick and June Steves who made Rick practice the piano and introduced him to Europe.