

STEP Curriculum

Student Textbook

This textbook was designed and belongs to alumni of the MAD-PC project at the American Embassy School, New Delhi, namely Arnav Gulati, Minsung Kim, Shreyas Rajesh, Mrinalini Sisodia Wadhwa, and Siddhant Vasudevan, under the guidance of Mary Catherine Frazier, PhD.

For educational and non-profit use only.

Last revised August 2020.

SAMPLE

STEP

Topic 1

The Arts in Our World

Introduction

In Topic 1, we explore how the arts have been used to share human beings' experiences and emotions, and to shape the world around us. This topic looks at the features of three art forms in detail — music, visual art, and theater — including which skills artists use, how their artworks are experienced by audiences, and how they have changed over time. We also look at the relationship between culture, society, and artists: how an artists' works are affected by the culture they grow up in, and how their works can cause changes in their society. Finally, we will reflect on how we experience the arts in our daily lives, whether through posters we see, songs we listen to, or movies we watch.

Key Questions

While studying Topic 1, consider three key questions about The Arts In Our World:

1. How do we define the arts and different art forms?
2. What is the relationship between culture and the arts?
3. How do the arts affect society?

Subtopics

- 1.1 Defining the Arts
- 1.2 Music
- 1.3 Visual Art
- 1.4 Theater
- 1.5 Subjectivity and Diversity in Art
- 1.6 Art in Society

1.1 Defining the Arts



Understanding the Arts

We see many different things as works of art: a *tabla* performance, a Bollywood movie, an Orissi dance item, or a colorful *rangoli*, to name a few examples. Yet what do all these examples have in common?

For someone to create any of these artworks, they will need both imagination and technical skill. **Imagination** means being able to think of new ideas and concepts, often ‘seeing’ these in one’s mind. Someone creating a *rangoli* may use their imagination to decide which colors will go well together before using colored sand to create their designs, while someone acting in a Bollywood movie may use their imagination to plan how their character would act in a made-up situation. **Technical skill** refers to how well one can carry out specific actions, such as singing a note, playing an instrument, or using a paintbrush. Artists can develop technical skills through training and practice. For example, *tabla* players and Orissi dancers train under experienced teachers and practice many times before performing in front of an audience.

All of these artworks are **creative expressions** of what the artist believes, feels, and lives through. This means that using an original (or creative) mix of technical skill and imagination, artworks show (or express) the artist’s **beliefs**, emotions, and experiences. An Orissi dance item, for example, may honor the Hindu god Jagannath, showing the dancers’ religious beliefs. A Bollywood movie may show what daily life looks like in an Indian town or city, showing the experiences of the artists who created it.

Experiencing Artworks

We experience artworks through one or more of our **five physical senses** (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste). Different artworks make us use different senses. We use sound to experience the player’s beats in a *tabla* performance, sight to experience the bright colors of a *rangoli*, and both sight and sound to experience an Orissi performance and a Bollywood movie, watching the performers’ movements and listening to their speech and the background music.

However, artworks usually have an **impact** on us that goes beyond our physical senses, affecting our thoughts and feelings. Seeing a character suffer in a movie, for example, can make someone feel sad or angry, or think about their own experiences of pain. Looking at a bright, floral *rangoli* can make someone feel joyous, or think about traditions and celebrations such as

the Hindu festival of Diwali. In both of these cases, how people see and hear the artworks through their physical senses changes how they feel and think, showing how experiencing artworks can deeply affect us.

Art Forms

The artworks we have discussed so far all seem very different from each other: listening to a *tabla* performance is unlike watching a Bollywood movie or looking at a *rangoli*. This is because each of these artworks belongs to a different art form (or type of artwork). There are many art forms in the world, from dance to literature to film-making, though we will focus on three common art forms in Topic 1: music, visual art, and theater.

Music is an art form that we experience through sound, including songs used in Bollywood movies, beats played in the background of Orissi dance items, or compositions from *tabla* performances. Visual art is an art form we experience through sight, including a *rangoli* made to celebrate holidays such as Diwali or Pongal, paintings we see in museums, homes, or government buildings, or posters put up on the streets. Unlike music and visual art, we experience theater through more than one sense — using hearing, sight, and sometimes even smell — while watching actors perform in plays or in movies.

Evolution of Art

No art form has stayed the same over time. Rather, art forms **evolve** (adapt and grow) because of changes in **society** and new art movements. This can be seen through how art forms have evolved in India over the past years due to changes in Indian society and movements led by Indian artists.



When Mughal rulers took over North India in the 1500s, they caused many changes to India's mostly Hindu society, bringing their own beliefs, traditions, and art forms. As a result, visual artists in India started to use the flower and plant patterns found in Mughal art for the first time. This can be seen in the floral borders surrounding the painting "Jahangir Preferring A Sufi Shaikh to Kings" (see *left*), painted by Bichitr, an Indian artist. By using these new patterns in their paintings, Bichitr and other Indian artists changed India's visual art, showing how this art form evolved because of changes in Indian society.¹

Another example of these changes in Indian society can be seen in how Indian theater changed after India gained its independence from British rule in 1947. Independence led to many new art

¹ Roshna Kapadia, "Bichitr, Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings," Khan Academy, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/south-east-se-asia/india-art/a/bichtir-jahangir-preferring-a-sufi-shaikh-to-kings>.

movements in India where artists wanted to focus on celebrating India's own culture, recognizing its new status as an independent country. Thus, Indian actors and film-makers began creating plays and movies about their own histories, languages, and lifestyles, which became known as Bollywood.² This new version of acting and cinema that grew after the 1950s because of this art movement changed the art form of theater in India.

² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Bollywood," Encyclopædia Britannica, last modified May 13, 2020, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bollywood-film-industry-India>.

1.1 Connections

Like visual arts and theater, Indian music has also evolved greatly. Classical Indian music traditions were first written about over 6,000 years ago in India's *Sama Veda*. These early forms of music were meant to express religious beliefs and faith, honoring Hindu deities (or divine figures) and performed in Hindu temples.³



Since the time of the *Sama Veda*, classical music in both North and South India has been performed through *ragas*.³ A *raga* combines different sounds to create music. As can be seen in photo of an Indian classical music performance (see left), a *raga* includes:

1. Vocals (the singer in front)
2. String instruments (the *veena* player)
3. Percussion (the *tabla* players)

While this style of classical music continues on today, Indian music has also evolved in recent years. With the rise of Bollywood after 1947, film songs sung by “playback singers” (used in Bollywood movies) have become well-known in India. While this is a new style of music, it still uses traditions from India’s classical music. In fact, both Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle, two of India’s most famous playback singers, had studied in Indian classical music when they were young and used this training when recording film songs later on.⁴ Their role in creating this new style of music shows how the evolution of an art form — in this case, India’s music — can bring together past traditions with new influences.



³ Riverboat Records, "The Music of India," World Music Network, last modified August 23, 2010, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://worldmusic.net/blogs/guide-to-world-music/the-music-of-india>.

⁴ IMDb, "Asha Bhosle: Biography," IMDb, last modified 2020, accessed July 17, 2020, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0080427/bio>.

1.1 New Vocabulary

Imagination	<i>Noun:</i> Thinking of or picturing something in one's mind that one has not experienced or seen in real life
Technical skill	<i>Noun:</i> How well someone can carry out actions (or skills) needed to finish their work or create something new
Creative	<i>Adjective:</i> Something that is a new, original idea
Expression	<i>Noun:</i> Something that shows (or expresses) someone's ideas, thoughts, emotions, or beliefs
Belief	<i>Noun:</i> Something a person is sure about, or thinks is true.
Five Physical Senses	<i>Noun:</i> Sight (seeing with eyes), hearing (hearing with ears), smell (smelling with nose), taste (tasting with tongue), touch (feeling with skin)
Impact	<i>Verb:</i> To affect or change something/someone
Evolve	<i>Verb:</i> To change or grow over a period of time
Society	<i>Noun:</i> A group of people sharing the same culture, country, or religion

1.1 Exercises

1. In your own words, write a one-sentence definition of “the arts.”

2. Give four examples of art forms that were mentioned in the passage.

3. According to the passage, what do all artworks have in common?

- A. All artworks were created to be experienced through sight.
- B. All artworks were created to make us feel sadness, anger, and other negative emotions.
- C. All artworks were created to be experienced through one or more of our five physical senses, affecting our thoughts and emotions.
- D. All artworks were created to be experienced through both sight and sound.

4. According to the passage, do art forms change over time?

- A. No, because art forms such as music, visual art, and theater are meant to stay the same even as society changes.
- B. No, because art forms such as music, visual art, and theater have no connection to society.
- C. Yes, because art forms such as music, visual art, and theater change randomly.
- D. Yes, because art forms such as music, visual art, and theater change because of changes in society and new art movements.

5. Write a sentence for each of the following new words that shows your understanding of its meaning: imagination, society, evolve, belief.

1.2 Music

Defining Music

Music is created by making sounds — controlling what the audience hears — to develop **compositions**. Works of music can use different kinds of sounds. Musicians trained in singing create **vocal sounds** (or sounds created with the human voice), while musicians trained to play instruments such as the flute, drums, or violin, create **instrumental sounds** (or sounds created using other objects). A musical composition uses these different sounds to create **rhythm** (a pattern of sounds) and **melody** (a series of sounds played one after another that sound unified).

Musical compositions can help a society preserve its culture and identity. For example, “Jana Gana Mana,” the Indian national anthem, is a musical composition that encourages unity and patriotism (or love for one’s country) in India since independence in 1947. Musical compositions can also help people in their daily lives. Many of us enjoy listening to music as a way to connect with each other, reduce feelings of worry and fear, and go through difficult emotions and experiences.

Creating Music

Creating music is a complex process, as musicians have to learn how to control the different qualities of vocal and instrumental sounds. Sound has many qualities, including how high or low the sound is (pitch), how loud the sound is (amplitude), and how long the sound is played for (duration). To play a musical composition, musicians need to have the skills to control these qualities simultaneously (at the same time).⁵

To improve their playing, musicians also learn to control their **posture** and **tone** when playing an instrument. Posture refers to the position in which the musician holds his or her body while playing the instrument. Playing with correct posture prevents musicians from experiencing pain or injury, and improves the quality of sound. Tone refers to the strength and pitch of a sound — how high or how low a sound is, for example. Musicians must control the tone of the sound being produced so that they can create the different sounds in a musical composition.

Changing Music Styles

All over the world, in both India and Western countries, music has grown and changed over the years. As a result of this evolution of music, there are now two main types of music that we can experience today: **classical** and **modern**.

Classical music is traditional, meaning it usually follows existing rules and structures. These rules and structures look different depending on location — whether in an Indian *raga* or a Western symphony — but have all existed for hundreds of years.

Indian classical music dates to 6,000 years ago, when the *Sama Veda* was written. This text recorded the *ragas* and chants that were performed in temples for worship. In the following

⁵ John Ellinger, “Six Basic Properties of Sound,” ed. Jeff Trevino, Carleton Academics, last modified September 2014, accessed July 17, 2020, <https://acad.carleton.edu/courses/musc108-00-f14/pages/01/01SixBasicPropertiesofSound.html>.

years, the *Sama Veda* continued to shape Indian classical music, which grew with the influence of musicians such as Matanga, Tansen, Ramnidhi Gupta, and Sourendramohan Tagore between the years 600 and 1900.⁶ Western classical music traditions grew in Europe over 400 years ago with the work of musicians such as Wolfgang Mozart from Austria and Ludwig van Beethoven from Germany. Not only did they show great skill in playing instruments, but they also created famous compositions that are still performed.⁷ The musical compositions and traditions of Indian and Western classical musicians are still studied and enjoyed by many people today.

Modern music is much newer than classical music, as it began to grow during the 1900s and 2000s. The development of this new music style happened while more and more people could listen to music through radios, record-players, and the internet. This was a change from previous years, where only religious leaders or wealthy citizens could listen to performances of classical music. As more people could listen to, create, and share their music, modern music styles such as jazz, rock and roll, and hip hop became popular in Western countries. These styles influence modern Indian music, especially film music produced for Bollywood movies. They use new sounds and compositions, while also including some classical music traditions.

Musical Instruments

There are three kinds of instruments used to create music: percussion, string, and wind.⁸



Musicians hit or shake **percussion instruments** to create a pattern of beats (usually a certain number of beats each minute). Drums are the most common percussion instruments, creating a hollow, deep sound. Other examples of percussion include bells, gongs, and cymbals.



String instruments like violins, violas, and cellos are played with bows (long, curved rods) or by hand. The strings vibrate when played by a musician, producing different noises; some sounds are high-pitched, while others are low and deep. Examples of string instruments include violins, violas, and guitars.

⁶ ITC, "Story of Hindustani Classical Music," ITC Sangeet Research Academy, last modified 2016, accessed July 17, 2020, <http://www.itcsra.org/Story-of-Hindustani-Classical-Music>.

⁷ Ralph Thomas Daniel, "Western Music," Encyclopædia Britannica, last modified July 5, 2017, accessed July 17, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Western-music>.

⁸ Naxos Digital Services, "Musical Instruments," Naxos Records, last modified 2020, accessed July 17, 2020, https://www.naxos.com/education/music_instruments.asp.



To play **wind instruments** like the flute, clarinet, and recorder, a musician blows into the instrument. This causes the air to vibrate (or move) within the instrument, creating sound.

In an **orchestra**, musicians trained in these three kinds of instruments play together to perform works of classical music.

While modern music continues to use these instruments, these musicians also use **electrical instruments** such as digital pianos and drum machines. These allow modern musicians to make sounds that cannot be created using traditional percussion, string, and wind instruments.

The Music Industry

The music **industry** includes people who are involved in creating, performing, recording, and sharing works of music, whether in their own country and around the world. Some musicians in the industry perform songs for a recording company or for a movie, while other musicians create and share their music independently. India's music industry, like that of other countries, contains different styles of music including traditional classical music (known as *asmarga*) and folk music (known as *ordeshi*), along with the newer style of film songs.⁹

Within the industry, works of music are created for different reasons. Some works are meant to be stand-alone pieces for people to enjoy, such as songs recorded for people to listen to in their homes, or compositions performed in front of an audience. Other works of music are meant to support other art forms, especially dance, theater, and film. Songs and sound effects can add to the impact of a movie, play, or television show, while beats and singing are used to plan and perform dance items.

⁹ Riverboat Records, "The Music," World Music Network.

1.2 Connections



The Indian tradition of the *Ram Leela*, taking place every year during the Hindu festival of *Dussehra*, shows how music can be used with other art forms in a performance. Meaning “Rama’s play,” *Ram Leela* performers tell the story of Lord Rama, a Hindu deity and the prince of the kingdom of *Ayodhya*, as it is recorded in the *Ramayana* (a Hindu epic that was written over 500 years ago).¹⁰

Ram Leela performers use two different art forms to tell Rama’s story: theater and music. As can be seen in the photo on the right, actors represent the different deities in the *Ramayana*, such as Lord Rama, his brother Lakshmana, his wife Sita, or the demon Ravana. They often wear colorful masks and costumes as they act out the *Ramayana* scenes.



Behind the actors, musicians are seated, playing the flute (a wind instrument), *tabla* (a percussion instrument), and *veena* (a string instrument). Their songs add to the actors’ narration, as the performers tell Rama’s story through both theater and music.¹⁰

¹⁰ United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Ramlila, the Traditional Performance of the Ramayana,” Intangible Cultural Heritage, last modified 2019, accessed July 17, 2020, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/ramlila-the-traditional-performance-of-the-ramayana-00110>.

1.2 New Vocabulary

Composition	<i>Noun:</i> A work of art (in general); a combination of different kinds of vocal and/or instrumental sounds (in music)
Vocal	<i>Adjective:</i> Sounds that are created using the human voice, such as singing
Instrumental	<i>Adjective:</i> Sounds that are created using instruments (objects or tools to create musical sounds), such as the flute, violin, or <i>tabla</i>
Rhythm	<i>Noun:</i> A pattern of sounds
Melody	<i>Noun:</i> A series of sounds played one after the other that sound pleasing and unified to an audience
Posture	<i>Noun:</i> The position in which someone holds their instrument while playing
Tone	<i>Noun:</i> The pitch and strength of the sound being created, such as how high or low the sound is
Classical	<i>Adjective:</i> Something that has existed for many years (sometimes hundreds or thousands of years), following traditional rules and structures
Modern	<i>Adjective:</i> Something that is new, not following traditional rules and structures
Percussion Instruments	<i>Noun:</i> Instruments that musicians hit or shake to create beats such as drums, cymbals, and gongs
String instruments	<i>Noun:</i> Instruments where musicians use bows and/or their hands to pluck strings to create sound, such as violins, violas, and cellos
Wind instruments	<i>Noun:</i> Instruments where musicians blow air to create sound, such as flutes, clarinets, or recorders
Orchestra	<i>Noun:</i> A group of musicians playing the three kinds of classical instruments (percussion, string, and bow) who perform together
Electrical instruments	<i>Noun:</i> Instruments where musicians use electrical devices to create or change the sounds being produced, such as electrical guitar and electrical keyboard
Industry	<i>Noun:</i> All the people involved in a specific craft/art form/trade, such as music

1.2 Exercises

1. In your own words, describe three new pieces of information you learnt about musical compositions from this passage.

2. In your own words, describe three new pieces of information you learnt about the music industry from this passage.

3. According to the passage, what is the difference between classical and modern music?

- A. Classical music only uses instrumental sounds, while modern music only uses vocal sounds
- B. Classical music only follows traditional rules and structures, while modern music uses new compositions and sounds along with some classical traditions
- C. Classical music only uses percussion, string, and wind instruments, while modern music only uses electrical instruments
- D. Classical music is only found in India, while modern music is only found in Western countries

4. According to the passage, why is it challenging for musicians to perform compositions?

- A. Because they need to control the qualities of sound, including amplitude, pitch, and duration, simultaneously
- B. Because they need to learn to play electrical instruments, which are more complex than percussion, string, and wind instruments
- C. Because they need to learn to create vocal sounds and instrumental sounds simultaneously
- D. Because they need to learn to use classical and modern styles of music simultaneously

5. Write a sentence for each of the following new words that shows your understanding of its meaning: composition, classical, modern, industry.

Answers to End-Of-Section Exercises

1.1 Exercises

1. Accept any answer that paraphrases the given definition of the arts in Section 1.1 (*creative expressions of human beliefs, thoughts, and experiences using technical skill and imagination*).

2. Accept any four of the following art forms: *visual art, music, theater, film, dance, literature/creative writing*

2. The correct answer is C, “All artworks were created to be experienced through one or more of our five physical senses, affecting our thoughts and emotions.”

3. The correct answer is D, “Yes, because art forms such as music, visual art, and theater change because of changes in society and new art movements.”

4. Accept all answers that accurately represent the meanings of the given words, as defined at the end of Section 1.1.

1.2 Exercises

1. Sample pieces of information include:

- *They use vocal and/or instrumental sounds*
- *They create rhythm and melody*
- *They bring together members of a society*
- *They benefit us in our individual lives*

2. Sample pieces of information include:

- *The music industry includes people involved in creating, performing, and sharing music*
- *The music industry includes many different kinds of music, such as classical, folk, and modern*
- *The music industry includes independent musicians and musicians working for movies or recording companies*
- *The music industry supports other art forms and produces stand-alone works of music*

3. The correct answer is B, “Classical music only follows traditional rules and structures, while modern music uses new compositions and sounds along with some classical traditions.”

4. The correct answer is A, “Because they need to control the qualities of sound, including amplitude, pitch, and duration, simultaneously.”

5. Accept all answers that accurately represent the meanings of the given words, as defined at the end of Section 1.2.

Works Cited

Sources of Information

Image List (in order that they appear)

1. *Tabla* Performance:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tabla_Performance_Pandit_Sudarshan_Das.JPG
2. *Rangoli*:
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rangoli,kolam,chennai,Tamil_Nadu382.jpg
3. *Orissi* performance:
[https://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarian_Odissi#/media/Fail:Sitara_Thobani_Odissi_classical_dance_mudra_India_\(16\).jpg](https://ms.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tarian_Odissi#/media/Fail:Sitara_Thobani_Odissi_classical_dance_mudra_India_(16).jpg)
4. “Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings”:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bichitr_-_Jahangir_Preferring_a_Sufi_Shaikh_to_Kings_from_the_St._Petersburg_album_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg
5. *Raga* performance:
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sawai.jpg>
6. Lata Mangeshkar, famous Indian playback singer:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lata_Mangeshkar_at_Vishwashanti_Kala_Academy_Award.jpg
7. Asha Bhosle, famous Indian playback singer:
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ashaji.jpg>
8. Percussion instruments:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/vxla/4067057425>
9. String instruments:
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arianna_String_Quartet_\(14193354501\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arianna_String_Quartet_(14193354501).jpg)
10. Wind instruments:
<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/clarinet-bass-clarinet-4304035/>
11. *Ram Leela* performers:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ramlila_Dasratha.jpg
12. *Ram Leela* performers and musicians:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saang#/media/File:Swang_'Raja_Vikramaditya'_in_Mandi_House_SRC_New_Delhi.jpg