



# LESSON PLAN

## COMPOSING A BUGLE CALL

Soprano Recorders

*Elementary School (3-6)*

### OVERVIEW:

Buglers sound the call “Taps” to close military funerals many times a day at Arlington National Cemetery, and nearby Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall uses bugle calls throughout the day to signal different events. Bugles can only play the notes C, E, and G, so composers must use rhythm and articulation to communicate a call’s meaning instead of mode and harmony. In this lesson, students listen to bugle calls and describe their purpose before composing their own “bugle call” using soprano recorders.

**Estimated time:** 1 class period, 60 minutes total

### STANDARDS:

**National Association for Music Education PK-8 General Music**

- MU:Cr1.1.3b: Generate musical ideas (such as rhythms and melodies) within a given tonality and/or meter.
- MU:Cr2.1.3a: Demonstrate selected musical ideas for a simple improvisation or composition to express intent, and describe connection to a specific purpose and context.
- MU:Cr2.1.3b: Use standard and/or iconic notation and/or recording technology to document personal rhythmic and melodic musical ideas.
- MU:Cr3.2.3a: Present the final version of personal created music to others, and describe connection to expressive intent.
- MU:Pr4.3.5a: Demonstrate and explain how intent is conveyed through interpretive decisions and expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, timbre, and articulation/style).

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Students will identify compositional techniques used to communicate meaning in bugle calls.
- Students will compose a bugle call.

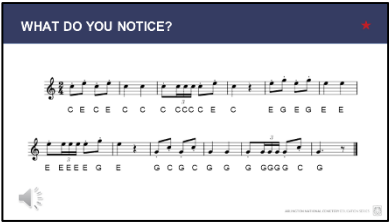

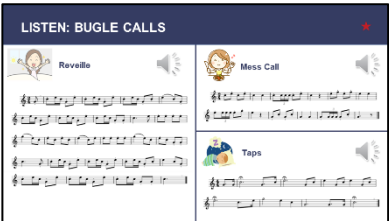
### RESOURCES NEEDED:

- Composing a Bugle Call PowerPoint
- Composing a Bugle Call student worksheet (1 per student)
- Soprano recorders (1 per student)

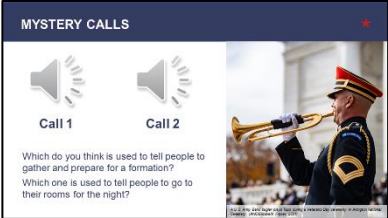
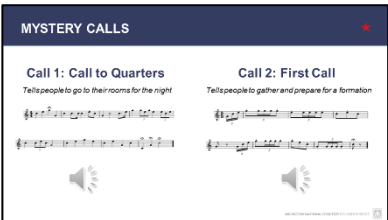


## LESSON ACTIVITIES:

- Use the notes below to lead a discussion about bugle calls before introducing the composition activity.

Slide:	Notes for Presentation
<p>Slide 2: What Do You Notice?</p> 	<p>What do you notice about this piece of music?</p> <p><i>Depending on students' prior knowledge, they may comment on the meter, clef, rhythms, etc. Continue encouraging responses until someone points out that there are only three note names used.</i></p> <p>This piece only uses three note names, but still sounds pretty exciting. Let's listen.</p> <p><i>Click on the audio icon to play.</i></p>
<p>Slide 3: Bugle Calls</p> 	<p>This piece of music is a bugle call. A bugle is an instrument that looks a lot like a trumpet, but it has no buttons. It can only play a few notes.</p> <p>Hundreds of years ago, before we had phones and radios, or people had their own watches and clocks to see the time, it was hard to tell a whole bunch of people that it was time to do something. A bugle is loud and can be heard from far away, so armies started using bugle calls to tell soldiers when it was time to do certain things. Even though we now have clocks and phones, the U.S. Army still carries on the tradition of using bugle calls.</p>
<p>Slide 4: Listen: Bugle Calls</p> 	<p>What do you think a bugle call telling people to wake up would sound like? Do you think it would be fast or slow? Really jumpy or really smooth?</p> <p>How about a bugle call telling people it was time to go to sleep?</p> <p>Let's listen to some bugle calls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reveille – this call is used to wake people up in the morning.</li> <li>Mess Call – this call is used to tell people it is time to eat. We already listened to this one, but let's hear it again.</li> <li>Taps – this call is used to tell people it is time to turn out their lights and go to sleep. It is also played at the end of military funerals.</li> </ul>



	<p>Did you hear how the wake up call had lots of short notes and staccatos? And the call telling people it was time for bed had lots of long notes and was played very legato?</p> <p>Even though bugles can only play a couple of notes, the rhythms and articulations (way the notes are played) can communicate a lot of emotion and meaning.</p>
<p>Slide 5: Mystery Calls</p> 	<p>Let's listen to two more mystery calls and see if you can guess what they are supposed to mean. One call is used to tell people it is time to gather and get ready for a formation, the other is used to tell people it is time to go to their rooms for the night.</p> <p><i>Play each call and then ask which was which. Prompt students to describe how the music communicated its meaning.</i></p>
<p>Slide 6: Mystery Calls</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 1: Call to Quarters – <i>this call is used to tell people to go to their rooms for the night. Listen to the long note values, including fermatas.</i></li> <li>• Call 2: First Call – <i>this call is used to tell people to gather for a formation. Listen to the short note values and staccato articulation.</i></li> </ul>

- Pass out worksheets, display Slide 7 and explain instructions for composing a bugle call:
  1. Before you begin composing, decide what the purpose of your bugle call is and write it on your worksheet. It could be something we talked about today – like waking people up or telling them it is time for bed – or you can make up your own purpose like telling people to turn in their homework or announcing soccer practice is over. Think about this purpose when writing your call – should you have lots of short notes or more long notes? Should you use staccato or legato?
  2. Your piece will be in 4/4 time and must be four measures long.
  3. You will write in the treble clef and only use the notes G, B, and D. Our recorders cannot play the same notes as a bugle, so we will use these three notes.
  4. Your piece must start and end on a G.
  5. Only use these note values:





Allow students to use their recorders while composing, but encourage them to use good technique and avoid playing loudly.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

- Have students perform their compositions on their recorders. Some options:
  - Split class into small groups of 3-5 students and ask students to take turns introducing their call's purpose and playing their compositions for each other.
  - Ask for volunteers to play their composition for the whole class.
  - Make copies or project each call for the class to play together. Ask each student to introduce their call's purpose and describe the compositional choices they made.
- Listen to additional bugle calls on the U.S. Army Band website:  
<https://www.bands.army.mil/music/buglecalls/>

## PLANNING A VISIT TO ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY?

While at the cemetery, you can use the Arts at ANC walking tour to learn more about musicians and artists buried in the cemetery. You may hear Taps being played at military funerals during your visit; please show respect by not approaching the funeral service.

## SOURCES

"Bugle Calls." Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield. Accessed February 22, 2022.

<https://home.army.mil/stewart/index.php/my-fort/soldiers/bugle-calls#:~:text=REVEILLE%20%2D%20Signals%20the%20Soldiers%20to,assemble%20at%20a%20designated%20place.>

"Bugle Calls." U.S. Army Band. Accessed February 22, 2022.

<https://www.bands.army.mil/music/buglecalls/>

"Call to Quarters." U.S. Army Band. Accessed February 22, 2022.

<https://www.bands.army.mil/music/buglecalls/calltoquarters.asp>

"First Call." U.S. Army Band. Accessed February 22, 2022.

<https://www.bands.army.mil/music/buglecalls/firstcall.asp>

"Mess Call." U.S. Army Band. Accessed February 22, 2022.

<https://www.bands.army.mil/music/buglecalls/messcall.asp>

"Reveille." U.S. Army Band. Accessed February 22, 2022.

<https://www.bands.army.mil/music/buglecalls/reveille.asp>

"Taps." U.S. Army Band. Accessed February 22, 2022.

<https://www.bands.army.mil/music/buglecalls/taps.asp>



## IMAGES

**Slide 1:** Elizabeth Fraser, National Veterans Day Observance 2019, November 11, 2019, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://flic.kr/p/2hJtWtQ>

**Slide 3:** Bugle in C, Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/504065>

**Slide 3:** Rachel Larue, All-female veteran honor flight visits Arlington National Cemetery and Women in Military Service for America Memorial, September 22, 2015, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://flic.kr/p/yYw836>

**Slide 3:** William Morris Hunt and Dominique C. Fabronius, Bugle call / painted by Wm. M. Hunt ; lith by D.C. Fabronius., 1863, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/pga.03708/>

**Slide 3:** Elizabeth Fraser, Modified Military Funeral Honors are Conducted for U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Belch, April 14, 2020, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://flic.kr/p/2iQC5Nv>

**Slide 5:** Elizabeth Fraser, 68th National Veterans Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery, November 11, 2021, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://flic.kr/p/2mJc91a>

**Slide 7:** Elizabeth Fraser, 243rd U.S. Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary at Chaplains Hill, July 27, 2018, Arlington National Cemetery, <https://flic.kr/p/28s9Utu>