

George Gershwin

Unit Study



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I have included the resources necessary for a complete unit study, as well as a sample plan of study for you to follow with your children. This sample plan is just a guide... feel free to learn all about Gershwin and go beyond what I have suggested.

This study is geared towards upper elementary and middle grades children, but feel free to let your littlest ones do what they are able. Gershwin's music appeals to all ages!

In our homeschool we keep a Notebook of Composers which is a combination of notebooking, lapbooking, and other printables. It may also include drawings, copywork, and lists of repertoire.

A THOROUGH study of Gershwin can be done for free using the suggested materials online.

I hope you and your children enjoy learning about George Gershwin.

Mary @
[Homegrown Learners](#)

Biographical Information/Lessons Online:

- [Gershwin's Biography](#) from Classics For Kids
- [Hey Kids! Meet George Gershwin](#) from Making Music Fun
- [George Gershwin, Composer](#) by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra
- [George Gershwin](#) from PBS American Masters
- [George Gershwin](#) from Classical Net
- George Gershwin: [A Music Appreciation Lesson for Kids](#)

Books:

- [Getting to Know The World's Greatest Composers: George Gershwin](#)
- [Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue](#) (includes an audio CD)
- [Lives of the Musicians - Good Times, Bad Times \(and What the Neighbors Thought](#)

Musical Selections:

- George Gershwin [YouTube Channel](#)
- George Gershwin on [iTunes](#)
- [Create a Gershwin Pandora Station](#)

Notebooking/Lapbooking/Coloring Resources:

- Lapbook Element minibook – [The Modern Era](#)
- [George Gershwin Notebooking Paper](#)
- [George Gershwin Notebooking Set](#)
- [Composer Notebooking Page](#) from The Notebooking Fairy
- [George Gershwin](#) word search
- Meet The Composer [Job Application](#)
- [Grand Piano Coloring Page](#)

Day 1

Objective:

EXPOSE your students to the music!

- Begin introducing Gershwin's music in your home. Do this by playing it in the background while children are working or playing. Use [Rhapsody in Blue](#) and [An American in Paris](#). If possible, play it while you are in the car.
- Ask children what they think of his music. Encourage a discussion about the music. What instruments are you hearing? Is the music exciting? Do you think it tells a story?



Did You Know?

This photo is of George and his brother, Ira. George was known as “Mr. Music” and his brother was “Mr. Words”. They collaborated on many successful Broadway songs.

Day 2

Objective:

Become familiar with the life of Gershwin.

Become familiar with one of his compositions for piano.

- Listen to [Classics for Kids](#) “About George Gershwin” biography or try to obtain [Getting to Know The World's Greatest Composers: George Gershwin](#)
- Have children watch [this performance](#) of Gershwin's Piano Prelude No. 1. Encourage them to watch it a few times and talk about the music. It is a fast and lively piece (quite difficult to play!) - sounds like jazz!
- Depending on the age of the student, choose an activity:

[George Gershwin Notebooking Paper](#)

[Grand Piano Coloring Page](#)

- While notebooking, etc... listen to the George Gershwin [YouTube Channel](#).

Did You Know?

*George and his brother, Ira, had matching penthouse apartments in NYC.

Day 3

Objective:

**To learn about Gershwin's most famous piece:
Rhapsody in Blue**

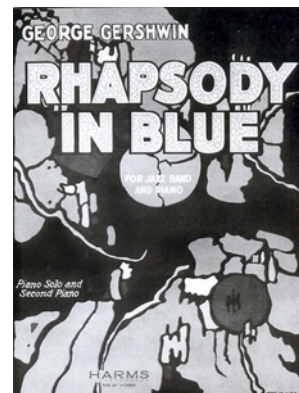
- If you can obtain a copy of [Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue](#) (includes an audio CD) this is ideal. Read the book and then listen to the accompanying CD.

OR

- Listen to [Classics for Kids Radio Show](#) (“Rhapsody in Blue” and “What is a Rhapsody?”)
- Play Rhapsody in Blue again and this time let your children create their own drawings based on what they hear in the music. Talk about what they hear in the music while they are drawing... draw instruments, city scenes... be creative!

Did You Know?

Rhapsody in Blue is one of the most popular of all American symphonic works.



Day 4

Objective:

**To learn about Gershwin's significance
as a composer in American MODERN ERA**

- If you keep a timeline, place Gershwin on the timeline. He was born in 1898 and died in 1937. He is a part of the MODERN ERA of music (generally considered 1920-today).
- Complete the Lapbook Element minibook – [The Modern Era](#)
- Listen to the George Gershwin [YouTube Channel](#)
- Complete the copywork on the following page.

Did You Know?

George Gershwin was also an accomplished artist!
Do some research and see if you can
locate some of his art.
His self portrait is quite good.

Day 5

Objective:

**To learn about George Gershwin,
the BROADWAY and FILM composer**

- In addition to his more “classical” works, Gershwin wrote many show tunes. He wrote them for Broadway, as well as films. Listen to some of these:

“[Summertime](#)” from Porgy and Bess

“[I Got Rhythm](#)”

“[The Man I Love](#)”

“[Let's Call the Whole Thing Off](#)” (this is a favorite!)

- Choose one of the above songs, research it more thoroughly, and complete a notebooking page (s) about that song. Students could even research Ella Fitzgerald or Louis Armstrong as part of this day. Again, be creative!

Did You Know?

Gershwin called Porgy and Bess a “folk opera” - a folk tale in which people sing folk music. It wasn't widely popular until the 1970s, nearly 40 years after his death.

