



Girard School District

CURRICULUM MAP AND PACING GUIDE

Content Area:	Foundations of Ukulele	Teacher(s):	Armitage & Staaf
Grade Level:	Grades 5-8	Unit Duration:	30 classes/semester or 60 classes/full year
Grade Level Focus:	Foundations of Ukulele is an introductory performance-centered general music course. Students progress from instrument care and basic technique through chords, rhythm, fingerpicking, ensemble playing, and an original composition, culminating in a final performance. The sequence assumes no prior string-instrument experience.		
			Board Approval Date: August 2026
Essential Questions:	How does proper instrument care and playing posture affect sound quality and long-term skill development? How does changing key or chord choice affect the mood of a song? How does consistent right-hand technique create a steady, controlled sound? How does rhythm shape the feel and style of a piece of music? What physical and mental skills are required to change chords smoothly while keeping a steady beat? How does fingerpicking change the texture and expression of a song compared to strumming? How do new chord shapes and progressions expand musical possibilities? How does notation, such as tab, help musicians learn and share melodies? How does understanding an instrument's cultural origins deepen our appreciation of the music we play? How do musicians work together to create a unified performance? What does it mean to take ownership of a musical idea from creation to performance? How does preparation and reflection contribute to a successful performance?		
Standards:	9.1.5.A/9.1.8.A: Know and use the elements and principles of music (rhythm, pitch, dynamics, form) to create and perform works.		
	9.1.5.B/9.1.8.B: Recognize, know, use, and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts vocabulary.		
	9.1.5.C/9.1.8.C: Know and demonstrate music techniques (instrumental technique, posture, tone production).		
	9.1.5.E/9.1.8.E: Know and demonstrate composition/arranging skills to create a musical work.		
	9.1.5.G/9.1.8.G: Explain the function and benefits of rehearsal and practice sessions.		
	9.1.5.H/9.1.8.H: Identify and use fundamental vocal/instrumental production, performance, and exhibition.		
	9.1.5.J/9.1.8.J: Distinguish informal and formal presentation of a musical work.		
	9.1.5.J: Apply traditional and contemporary technologies for producing, performing and exhibiting works in the arts or the works of others.		
	9.2.5.A/9.2.8.A: Explain the historical and cultural context of a given musical work.		
	9.2.5.G/9.2.8.G: Relate genres of music to a time period and geographic location.		
	9.3.5.A/9.3.8.A: Know similarities and differences in works of music..		
	9.3.5.C/9.3.8.C: Know and use appropriate vocabulary for critical response to music.		
	9.4.5.A/9.4.8.A: Explain meaning of a musical work based on knowledge and personal experience..		
9.4.5.B/9.4.8.B: Explain how personal experience influences interpretation of a musical work.			
Learning Targets:	I can identify the parts of ukulele and demonstrate proper care, posture, and hand position. I can read and clap basic rhythm notation. I can play with appropriate dynamics and follow a conductor's cues. I can perform a reggae strum pattern and switch between multiple strum styles within a song (*60 day course).		
	I can tune my ukulele and play a steady downstroke and upstroke strum. I can perform a variety of strum patterns, including the island/calypso strum. I can compose an original piece by choosing chords and a strum pattern, then rehearse and perform it for an audience with proper etiquette. I can play an arpeggio pattern and combine fingerpicking with strumming in a full arrangement (*60 day course).		
	I can read a chord diagram and play clean C and Am chords, switching between them while keeping a steady beat. I can play a basic fingerpicking pattern. I can play Dm and A7/E7 chords and describe the difference between major and minor sounds (*60 day course). I can read tab notation, play a simple melody, and combine it with chord accompaniment (*60 day course).		
	I can play clean F an G7 chords and perform the progression C-Am-F-G7. I can listen and adjust my volume to blend with an ensemble. I can transpose a song to a new key or use a capo (*60 day course). I can describe the ukulele's origins and its role in Hawaiian culture, and compare playing styles across genres (*60 day course).		
Curriculum Resources & Materials			
class set of soprano or concert ukuleles	Whiteboard/projector for chord diagrams	Printed chord charts, lead sheets, and rubrics	felt/rubber picks
clip-on chromatic tuners or a free tuner app	Bluetooth speaker or classroom sound system	recording device for playback/self-assessment	Music stands or table space for handouts
metronome			



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Pacing Guide					
Unit #	Unit Title	Unit Focus	Vocabulary	Suggested Activities	Checks for Understanding
1 (Days 1-5)	Instrument Care, Posture, & Parts of a Ukulele	Parts of ukulele; care and handling; proper posture and holding position; right-hand placement; tuning the ukulele; using a tuner; teh basic down-strum; keeping a steady beat; practice routine and strum-along to a steady tempo	<i>ukulele, soprano, concert, tenor, headstock, tuning pegs, nut, frets, bridge, sound hole, re-entrant tuning (G-C-E-A), strum, downstroke, steady beat, tempo</i>	1. Label the Ukulele scavenger hunt using real instruments 2. Posture and holding-position demo with mirror or partner check 3. Paired tuning practice with teacher circulating for support 4. Steady-beat clapping transferred to down-strums on open strings	Exit ticket: label the parts of a ukulele; teacher obseravtion checklist for posture and instrument hold; peer tuning check-off
2 (Days 6-10)	Right-Hand Technique & Steady Rhythm	Down-strokes and up-strokes; relaxed wrist motion; introducing string muting for rhythmic accents; reading simple strum patterns from notation; ear training-matching a played rhythm by echo; tempo-matching play-along; formative technique check	<i>downstroke, upstroke, strum pattern, muting, dynamics, beat, meter, tempo, marking</i>	1. Down/up strum drills at varying tempos 2. Muting exercises for rhythmic accents 3. Rhythm echo (call-and-response) games 4. Tempo-matching play-along	Teacher-observed strum technique checklist; rhythm echo accuracy check
3 (Days 11-15)	First Chords (C and Am)	Left-hand finger numbers and reading a chord diagram; the C chord shape; producing a clean, buzz-free sound; the Am chord shape; switching cleanly between C and Am with a strum pattern; playing a simple two-chord song; formative playing check	<i>chord, chord diagram, fret hand/strum hand, fingering, chord change/transition, clean tone</i>	1. Chord-shape drills (place, check, release, repeat) 2. Chord Change Challenge on a visual or verbal cue 3. Partner peer-check for clean chord tone 4. Slow play-along, gradually increasing tempo	Individual chord-change speed/accuracy spot-check; rubric-based playing check
4 (Days 16-20)	Expanding Chords (F and G7)	The F chord shape; the G7 chord shape; practicing the progression C-Am-F-G7; playing a full song using all four chords; small group performance with structured peer feedback	<i>chord progression, harmony, measure/bar, time signature, four-chord song</i>	1. Progression drilling with a metronome 2. Musical chairs chord-rotation game 3. Small group rehearsal time 4. Informal in-class performance	Group performance rubric; teacher circulation checklist
5 (Days 21-25)	Additional Chords & Playing in Different Keys	The Dm chord shape; the A7/E7 chord shape; comparing major vs. minor sound and mood; introduction to transposition/using a capo; change the mood mini improvisation activity	<i>minor chord, major chord, key, transposition, capo, mood/mode</i>	1. Major/minor listening comparison 2. Transposition practice with and without capo 3. Change the mood small group improvisation game	Aural discrimination quiz (major vs. minor); playing check in a new key
6 (Days 26-30)	Rhythm Notation & Strumming Pattern Variety	Reading rhythm notation (quarter, eighth, dotted rhythms); the calypso/island strum pattern; the reggae "skank" strum pattern; switching strum styles within one song;	<i>rhythm notation, quarter/eighth note, syncopation, calypso/island strum, reggae strum</i>	1. Rhythm dictation and clapping games 2. Strum-pattern relay race 3. Style-switching play-along	Written rhythm notation quiz; strum-pattern performance check
7 (Days 31-35)	Fingerpicking Technique	Introducing the P-i-m-a fingerpicking pattern; finger-isolation drills for accuracy; Arpeggio patterns over familiar chords; combining fingerpicking and strumming in one song	<i>fingerpicking, P-i-m-a (thumb-index-middle-ring), arpeggio, texture, fingerstyle</i>	1. Finger isolation drills 2. Arpeggio pattern practice 3. Combining pick and strum in a single arrangement	Fingerpicking accuracy playing check; self-recorded practice log
8 (Days 36-40)	Reading Tab & Playing Simple Melodies	Introduction to tablature (tab)notations; reading and playing single-note melody lines from tab; playing a familiar melody by ear vs. by tab; combining a melody line with chordal accompaniment; melody-reading and performance check	<i>tablature (tab), melody, single-note line, staff, fret numbers</i>	1. Guided tab-reading practice 2. Play-by-ear vs. play-by-tab comparison 3. Melody and accompaniment combination activity	Tab-reading quiz; melody performance check
9 (Days 41-45)	History & Cultural Context of the Ukulele	Origins of teh ukulele (the Portuguese braguinha/machete and Hawai'i); the ukulele in Hawaiian music and culture; the ukulele across genres (folk, pop, jazz); guided listening and compare/contrast activity; mini research share-out or class discussion	<i>braguinha/machete, Hawaiian culture, genre, folk music, cultural diffusion</i>	1. Guided listening and compare/contrast across styles 2. Short research mini-project or partner discussion 3. Class discussion connecting history to today's playing	Listening log/reflection; discussion-based formative check or short quiz



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10 (Days 46-50)	Ensemble Skills, Harmony & Dynamics	Playing in an ensemble (listening and balance); dynamics and tempo changes as a group; introducing simple two-part harmony; sectional rehearsal with assigned parts; full ensemble run-through with self/peer evaluation	<i>ensemble, balance, blend, crescendo/decrescendo, harmony, unison, conducting cues</i>	1. Call and response listening drills 2. Volume dial dynamics game with a student conductor 3. Sectional practice rotations 4. Full ensemble rehearsal with recorded playback	Ensemble rehearsal observation rubric; structured peer-feedback form
11 (Days 51-55)	Composition & Arranging Project	Elements of song form (verse/chorus); brainstorming original ideas; choosing chords, strum pattern, and structure for an original piece; small-group composing/arranging workshop; peer-coaching rehearsal and revision; recording session	<i>composition, arrangement, original work, verse/chorus structure, form</i>	1. Guided composition brainstorm (chord bank and strum pattern menu) 2. Small group arranging workshop 3. Peer-coaching rehearsal sessions 4. Recording sessions	Composition draft check-in; rubric for originality and craftsmanship
12 (Days 56-60)	Final Rehearsal, Performance & Reflection	Polishing the final composition/arrangement; full rehearsal with teacher/peer coaching; dress rehearsal and performance etiquette; final performance; portfolio reflection	<i>performance etiquette, audience, critique, portfolio, self-assessment</i>	1. Final rehearsal with targeted coaching 2. Dress rehearsal and performance etiquette discussion 3. Culminating performance for class or invited audience 4. Portfolio reflection writing	Final performance rubric (technique, rhythm, chord accuracy, expression); written self-reflection/portfolio; teacher summative assessment