FREE TEACHING RESOURCE / 3–5 / 03

Sounds You Can See

CULTURE & SOURCES • context, care & extension

Why this place, why this lesson?

New Orleans public culture includes brass bands, second lines, street musicians, church choirs, bounce music, and quiet sounds from daily life. Each has distinct origins and social contexts; no single sound stands for the whole city.

Broader perspectives

Students may choose a family sound, neighborhood sound, silence, home language, or an audio clip from an artist with permitted classroom use. Avoid requiring religious music or performing a cultural tradition.

A culturally responsible teaching protocol

Name the makers — Identify artists, communities and cultural bearers by name where sourced and relevant.

Differentiate study from appropriation — Students may analyze techniques and contexts without copying sacred, ceremonial, or culturally restricted imagery.

Avoid a single story — Offer multiple identities, geographies and points of view, including everyday life rather than only festivals.

Give students agency — Students can choose a different relevant subject and retain the same artistic learning goal.

Check the record — Distinguish primary testimony, museum interpretation, observation and speculation; cite the actual source.

Ask permission — Obtain permissions for interviews, photographs, student work displays and public sharing when required.

Lesson-specific caution

Do not treat second lines as generic party music. Attribute specific artists and contexts. Respect audio rights and let students choose nonpublic or personally meaningful sounds.

Verified starting points for teachers

- **Louisiana State Museums: Black masking cultural contexts and oral history**
https://louisianastatemuseum.org/exhibit/mystery-motion-african-american-spirituality-mardi-gras

- **Louisiana Department of Education, Louisiana Arts Content Standards**
https://doe.louisiana.gov/docs/default-source/academic-curriculum/louisiana-arts-content-standards.pdf?sfvrsn=4

- **Studio Thinking framework: Eight Studio Habits of Mind**
https://www.studiothinking.org/the-framework.html

Student reference log

Who created the image, object, quote or source?

When and where did the work or event occur?

What does the source actually say or show?

Which elements are my own interpretation?

Do I have permission to reuse the material?

Extension for advanced or returning artists

Create a diptych showing how one sound could be experienced from two different viewpoints or locations.

About the instructional design

This lesson is a free original adaptation of the teacher-provided 2026 Artistic Investigations document. Its ten-stage inquiry structure and reflective goal-setting are preserved. The accompanying author resource, Fostering Artistic Growth: A Teacher's Guide to Instilling Studio Habits of Mind, informs the studio-habit emphasis. The full text of that published book was not supplied or reproduced.

The eight Studio Habits of Mind originate with Project Zero / Studio Thinking research. This independent resource does not imply endorsement by the book publisher, Louisiana Department of Education, cultural organizations, or Studio Thinking.