

## Capoeira

Students will learn the music and dance moves of Capoeira. They will learn the history and prepare a performance.

Rationale: Capoeira is a martial art, a way to train athletes, it is a highly choreographed dance, and it is a specific musical form. The origination of capoeira is a story of a struggle for social equality. Capoeira is a struggle for freedom. This lesson ties together music, movement, and the historical struggle for freedom from oppression. Capoeira is an excellent topic of study because the middle school child is on a search for justice and freedom from socially contrived norms. Students in Middle school connect well to any lesson that has an emotional component as well as an academic and kinesthetic one.

### Objectives.

Students will learn to play and hear melody. Students will learn to play and hear rhythms. Students will learn to play and hear music forms. Students will learn to play and hear various musical timbres. Students will improvise melodies. Students will learn improvise rhythms. Students will learn manipulate traditional and innovative forms of music. Students will learn manipulate timbres of music. Students will sing and perform alone and with others. Students will perform on instruments alone and with others. Students will learn of music from other cultures. Students will compare the music of their own culture with the music of other cultures. Students will learn the place of music in history. Students will learn of possible careers in music. Students will work cooperatively. Students will learn independently. Students will learn kinesthetically. Students will exercise interpersonal skills. Students will exercise the skills pf

### Materials

Berimbau  
Attabaque  
Pandeiro  
Reco-reco  
Agogo  
Video of a game  
Recordings of Capoeira music  
Posters explaining the moves  
Narration of history for the audience

**personal craftsmanship. Students will create visual representations of music and culture. Students will reflect on the personal and emotional impact of the music, its aesthetic qualities. Students will show leadership. Students will participate in class discussions of music and culture. Students will use natural materials. Students will work as a community to create music. Students will share materials and help one another . Students will take pride in personal accomplishment  
Student will seek help from others.**

Procedure.

1. Show the video of players.
2. Explain the history and background of the art form
3. Get the kids on their feet and demonstrate the ginga
4. Demonstrate one the pontiera and the meia lua compasso
5. Partner up the kids and have them practice for a while
6. Over several weeks review the moves they now and add new ones
7. Choose several couples to work out routines.
8. Teach the rhythms to the class, instruments and clapping parts.
9. Form the Roda and play!

For performance:

1. Students will form the roda.
2. Narrators will explain the history and theory behind capoeira
3. Students will start the rhythms sigly and add each layer until the full rhythm is playing, add clapping.

special notes

Vocabulary of instruments and basic moves. Use the vocabulary, do not insist it be memorized, the concepts and movements are the focus.

4. Each pair of players will enter the roda with a handshake and a AU, the cartwheel.

5. After each game, the players will bow to each other with a chamada, or a hug.

#### Assessment

Students will try each of the moves, many require excessive athleticism, students will perform to the best of their physical ability. Each student will play a musical part in the roda. Either a complicated instrumental part, or successfully perform the clapping part.

Students will perform for an audience.

## Capoeira

A most marvelous art form comes from the beautiful country of Brazil. Capoeira is a combination of dance, martial arts, and a game. It is a story of self-discipline, physical grace and athleticism, and a reminder of a struggle from the past.

Long ago, Portuguese entrepreneurs landed on the coast of what we now call Brazil. It was a land with rich soil, exotic plants and abundant natural resources. They immediately set out to make it their own. The Portuguese settlers chopped trees, planted farms and began harvesting the riches that were found there. The soil had gold and diamonds in it. Coffee, tea and sugarcane grew fast and strong. The settlers tried at once to enslave the native tribes of Brazil to work on their plantations, but it didn't work. The indigenous people resisted and fled to the Amazon jungle or fought to their own deaths. The settlers were unable to manage their own industries without laborers, so, like many others, sought to enslave a people to be their work force. The Portuguese captured men and women in West Africa and brought them to Brazil to work the fields and mines.

The Africans that survived the long journey struggled for their freedom. Many of the Africans were clever, intelligent people and strong warriors. The warriors continued to train their bodies for fighting and carefully planned their escapes. The Portuguese most certainly forbade these men from training to fight. The cunning Africans came up with a plan. They constructed instruments from their homeland, the berimbau, the pandeiro, the reco-reco, the atabaque and the agogo. They developed a dance, a game, that would enable them to train themselves and their young sons right under the watchful eyes of the plantation masters. The slaves incorporated specific musical timbres and melodic phrases with energetic rhythms and created what we now call capoeira. Many of the slaves were able to fight and escape. They formed settlements called quilombos and continued to develop the art of capoeira. The game includes a series of approximately 40 kicks, spins, handsprints, and defensive moves that are played with a partner. Uniquely in the world of martial arts, there are no actual blows to one's partner in capoeira. The game is about the balance between attack and defense, about reading your partner and playing the game. There are no blocking moves in capoeira, only offensive kicks and the corresponding defense, which is escaping out of the way gracefully so you won't

get hit. Actually kicking your partner is frowned upon in capoeira, the skill is to show how it could be done without ever doing it.

After slavery was declared illegal in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, capoeiristas formed gangs and violence spread across Brazil. Extreme poverty and discrimination from each race of people to the other grew. In 1890, the Brazilian government outlawed the practice of capoeira and the martial art was only practiced in secret. By 1930, the Brazilian government recognized not only the existence of capoeira but legalized its practice and named it as one of Brazil's national art forms. Academies teaching capoeira sprung up all over the country and it continues today to be the sport of many young people in Brazil. There are two forms of Capoeira being taught and practiced in Brazil and over the world. Capoeira Angola is capoeira performed slowly and playfully. Capoeira Angola requires graceful controlled movements of strength and style. Capoeira Regional is a quick moving acrobatic style of dancing and kicks and spins, the game is played fast and furious. The moves practiced and performed in both styles are mostly the same, it is merely the tempo and the attitude of the players that is different.

Capoeira is a wonderful example of how art and culture are intertwined. The art of capoeira is the direct result of hardship and the struggle to survive. Capoeira combines the rhythms and melodies of African music with the struggle for physical conditioning in the disguise of a dance and a game. Capoeira is a game of balance and respect, a game of physical and mental prowess, an arena where people demonstrate their strengths, but remain in the constant give and take necessary to maintain a civilized engagement with others.

## Bibliography

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*(Capoeira Narrator)*

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