



Exploring Music | Participation Activity: Defining Music

Group Members:

Read the different definitions of music in the box. As a group, discuss each of the questions below the box and summarize your thoughts in writing.

"vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion" – Google Dictionary

"the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity" – *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, online edition

"humanly organized sound" – Edgard Varese, composer

"Music is everything that one listens to with the intention of listening to music"
– Luciano Berio, composer

"The border between music and noise is always culturally defined... By all accounts there is no *single* and *intercultural* universal concept defining what music might be" – Jean-Jacques Nattiez, musicologist

1. Which definition makes the most sense to you? Why?
2. Why do you think other people might disagree with your chosen definition? Is something important left out?
3. What's one definition you don't like? Why?