

# BUILD A POP STAR!!!!!!

You are an assistant to a famous music talent scout/executive named Miss Daly. Daly Records discovers, produces, markets, and creates pop stars from any genre of music, from Rap to Classical.

These 10 hopeful pop stars have submitted audition videos to your company. Miss Daly is very busy and has tasked you with picking, developing, and marketing the company's next pop star. After watching each audition, choose the one person who you would like to develop into a pop star. Write a one to two-page memo to your boss as to why this artist has caught your attention and ears, the target audience to whom you will market this new pop star, and a brief proposed schedule/timeline of when the artist will be ready to market.

Consider some of the following questions when deciding how long it will take to develop your artist and make him/her ready for marketing:

- Will you need to create a new name/stage moniker for the artist?
- Will the artist need anything changed about him/her physically?
- Will the artist need dancing/vocal/stage coaching?
- How much money will it cost the company to market the star to the public?

Next, create a playlist on YouTube of five tracks for their first demo LP. Although you will be picking songs that have already been made famous by other pop stars, choose tracks that you think would best demonstrate your artist's voice and style, and reach your pop star's targeted audience. Write a short, two to three sentence blurb for each track that explains why you chose that song. Do you want your artist to be known for one style or genre of music? Or demonstrate his/her full musical potential versatility?

Lastly, construct a press kit for your newest client. You should include blurbs that create "buzz," "quotations" from fans and/or past venue owners, and an introduction that really lets venues know about the type of artist that you are marketing.



# Audition Videos

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yOSsmFvPEg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wwo05JOyVhU&list=PL9956D0E39603230B&index=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eH1Hir7F09I>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBsrUWKnlJg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FNNdkdD7AM>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=plpp&v=H7u8JSb5e3s>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVfN1mKavsg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ow1W28BU-cY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=plpp&v=KWtUhXe33GU>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63vVmfwNqKw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaRBGs5gz1I>

### GRADING RUBRIC

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
Rationale for picking your artist  30 pts	Fully developed response that is well defined, has specific criteria and is persuasive toward their opinion.	Full response, but may not cite specific criteria or persuade toward their opinion.	Response lacks definition and specific criteria. Not persuasive toward their opinion.	Undefined criteria with minimal to no persuasion.	No rationale is given for picking the artist.
5-Track Playlist  15 pts	Five tracks are suggested, and each has a corresponding blurb.	Four tracks are suggested, each with a corresponding blurb.	Four to five tracks are suggested, but some blurbs are missing.	Some tracks are suggested, but none have blurbs.	No tracks or blurbs are given.
Artist Development  20 pts	Considers many facets of how the artist will be developed, or provides a detailed account of why the artist will not be heavily developed.	Provides some suggestions to develop the artist, but cannot explicitly say <i>why</i> this development should/not happen.	Considers two or three ideas for development, but no supporting reasons are given.	Considers one facet of development with no support.	No developments or reasoning is given.
Press Kit  25 pts	Press kit includes all aspects found in the nubbytwiglet example.	Press kit includes most aspects found in the nubbytwiglet example.	Press kit includes some aspects found in the nubbytwiglet example.	Press kit does not make any reference to the nubbytwiglet example.	No press kit is handed in.
Overall Appearance/Neatness/Care  10 pts	The memo and press kit look professional, with thought to visual details and organization.	The memo and kit have a few visual inconsistencies, but details and organization are accurate/functional.	The memo and kit lack thought towards visual appearance and organization.	The memo and kit give no thought towards visual appearance and contain misinformation.	The overall appearance is poor, unprofessional, and lacks care.

## Resource Page

1. YouTube playlist of the “auditioning” pop stars (see links above)
2. [http://www.ifpi.org/content/library/investing\\_in\\_music.pdf](http://www.ifpi.org/content/library/investing_in_music.pdf)  
This is a pdf article that describes and provides stats on the cycle of developing an artist.
3. <http://nubbytwiglet.com/2007/12/26/successfully-selling-yourself-how-to-build-a-press-kit/>  
This blog post describes building a press kit, step by step.
4. <http://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/pop-shop/1550426/20-hit-songs-meant-for-other-singers>  
This article lists 20 songs that were turned down by pop artists, only to be made famous by other artists.
5. <http://michaelbrandvold.com/blog/2012/02/the-importance-of-visual-identity-the-rock-star-branding-podcast-episode-3/>  
A podcast discussing the importance of visual identification in pop stars.
6. [http://kesha.wikia.com/wiki/Ke\\$ha](http://kesha.wikia.com/wiki/Ke$ha)  
A wiki devoted to Ke\$ha. Includes many songs that are unreleased, including a few that are outside of the pop genre she is known for.
7. <http://joanca.hubpages.com/hub/10-Great-Unreleased-Songs-by-Keha>  
A list and videos of Ke\$ha’s surprising unreleased songs.
8. Ke\$ha: My Crazy Beautiful Life  
Her own TV show. Episodes detail many parts of her private, behind-the-scenes life.
9. <http://diymusician.cdbaby.com/2009/09/podcast-spotlight-episode-002-lisa-lepine/>  
An interview with a music consultant/mentor who talks about helping artists define themselves.
10. <http://www.powerpresskits.com/>  
A DIY-site for creating press kits.
11. *Merchants of Cool*  
A documentary detailing the behind-the-scenes people who define what is “cool” in pop culture. A few sections are devoted specifically to music stars.
12. Sara Bareilles’ “Love Song”  
This song is actually a reaction to her record label pressuring her for a love song.

13. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2011/07/05/137530847/how-much-does-it-cost-to-make-a-hit-song>

An article detailing the cost of how much money is spent to market Rihanna.

Student Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Caitlin Daly \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level 9-12 Subject Music Industry  
Date of lesson \_\_\_\_\_ Length of lesson 45 mins \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson Topic:** Song marketability

**Overall Goal:** (Broad statement using non action verbs) “Students will understand that....”

Students will understand that music executives have the final say in the release of an artists’ music.

**Learner Background:** (This addresses why the lesson is being taught.) Describe the students’ prior knowledge or skill related to the learning objective(s) and the content of this lesson, using data from pre-assessment as appropriate. How did the students’ previous performance in this content area or skill impact your planning for this lesson?

These students have just finished watching *Merchants of Cool*, a documentary about the behind-the-scenes people that help market “cool.” This lesson is intended to help them understand that music executives have the final say in what musical material gets released, and the implications for us as music consumers. They will be able to keep this in mind as they develop their own “pop stars” later in the unit.

**Curricular Standards:** Identify the primary state standard(s) this lesson is designed to help students attain. (If required, include the national and/or local standards as well.)

NAfME standards:

MU:Pr4.1.T

MU:Re7.2.T

MU:Cn10.0T

MU:Pr5.1.T

MU:Re8.1.T

MU:Cn11.0.T

MU: Re7.1.T

MU:Re9.1.T

CCSS E/LA standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful

CCSS. ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g. the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

**Student Learning Objective(s):** Identify specific and measurable learning objectives for this lesson. Use action verbs. “Students will be able to...”

1. Students will be able to form an opinion on how much power music executives should have over which musical selections from their artists are released and unreleased.

**Assessment:**

**Part I:** How will you check for student understanding during the lesson? (Formative)

During the small group meetings, I will circulate around the room and coach as necessary. I will be listening for phrases such as “If I were the executive...,” or “I think this song was more marketable because...” If a student seems more quiet than other group members, I will make sure to prompt him/her for a response.

**Part II:** How will you ask students to demonstrate mastery of the student learning objective(s)? Attach a copy of any assessment materials you will use, along with assessment criteria/rubric. (Formative or summative)

Students will write at least a one paragraph blog post on the class blog, taking a stand about how much power music executives should have, making specific references to the songs discussed in class.

**Materials/Resources:** List the materials you will use in each learning activity **including any technological resources.** Ke\$ha’s unreleased song, “Goodbye,” lyrics and music to Sara Bareilles’ song, “Love Song,” 12/6/2007 newspaper article from the *Eureka Times-Standard*.

**The Lesson**

**Initiation:**

**Part I** - Briefly describe how you will introduce the lesson, engage students in the lesson and connect it to previous learning. (This is intended to motivate students.)

Students will have a “do now” upon entering the room. An unreleased Ke\$ha song, “Goodbye,” will be playing over the sound system as they enter the room. Students will be directed to note down if they like the song, who they think sang it, and how much money they believe it will make for the record label.

After a few share-outs, students will be told that it is an unreleased song by Ke\$ha. Students will have a short class-wide brainstorming session about why they think it was unreleased, and whether or not they think it should be released.

**Part II** – (This is intended to bridge to the lesson: set expectations for learning, articulate to learners what they will be learning in this lesson and why this is important).

Explain to students that this is what we will be discussing today. By the end of class, they will be able to form an opinion on how much control a music executive should have over the release of their artists’ music.

**Lesson Development:** Describe how you will develop the lesson: what you will do to model or guide practice and the learning activities students will be engaged in to gain the key knowledge and skills identified in the student learning objective(s). Include the questions you will ask, identify and explain the instructional grouping (whole class, small groups, pairs, individuals) for each lesson segment, and include the approximate times for each. **Include reference to Bloom's taxonomy to identify higher levels of thinking.**

1. (10-15 mins) Break class into small groups, roughly 4-6 people. Play Sara Bareilles' song, "Love Song," and pass out a verse to each group. Have them analyze the lyrics for a deeper meaning. Groups will share their analyses with the class. **(Analyzing)**

2. (5 mins) Students will read a short excerpt of the 12/6/2007 article in the *Eureka Times-Standard* that explains the meaning behind the song (A response to her music executives asking for a love song to make her more marketable). **(Understanding)**

3. (5-10 mins) In their groups, students will discuss the difference between Sara Bareilles' song being released (even though the lyrical content critiqued the very executives who released it) and Ke\$ha's unreleased song. Students should consider questions such as:

- Why was Sara Bareilles' song released but Ke\$ha's was not?
- Do you agree or disagree with this reasoning?
- Put yourself in the executives' shoes. What would you do?
- Should artists have more control over what gets released (of their music)?

**(Evaluating)**

4. (10 mins) Students will participate in a whole-class discussion focusing on the questions discussed in their small groups.

**Closure:** Briefly describe how you will close the lesson, help students understand the purpose of the lesson, and show how it will connect to future learning. (Rather than an administrative closure, interact with learners to elicit evidence of student understanding of purpose(s) for learning and mastery of objectives)

Explain homework and check for understanding.

Ask students what they learned today. I'm listening for answers centered around the notion that executives have the most control over what music gets released.

Remind them that this will help them make decisions in their final project, as they will be the ones in charge of deciding what music their artist will record (and later, release).



In this unit plan, students will study how the music industry shapes its artists, particularly its pop artists, into marketable pop stars that make money. This incorporates a few ideas that we have researched and discussed in this course; topics addressed range from media literacy to pop culture to advertising. The project at the end of the unit has the students developing their own pop star. As assistants to a major music producer/developer, they will pick their future star out of a play list of people who have “sent them” audition tapes, develop and mold them into a marketable commodity, and then build a press kit for their new artist so that other people may provide them venue spaces to perform. It is my hope that by developing the skills necessary to develop, promote, and market a pop star, they will better understand the pop music business as a whole. In so doing, they will develop a critical stance of pop music and culture, giving them the literacy tools necessary to decode the pop culture that is constantly surrounding them.

There are a few different courses that it could potentially fit into, as it is rather interdisciplinary in nature. While it does revolve around the music industry, it also has elements of a business class, a marketing class, psychological intricacies, as well as the strong Language Arts skills needed in order to properly market the artist. It encompasses four of the nine NAfME (National Association for Music Education) standards nicely:

6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
7. Evaluating music and music performances
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

This unit would fit into a course that came after taking a prerequisite general music course. In this prerequisite course, students would gain the critical listening skills

necessary to decode the actual music. Since music has many different strands (technology, performance, and its connection to other disciplines, such as philosophy or psychology), I could see creating a course centered around the music industry. Students would learn how to create, record, and polish their own tracks of music. Perhaps as a follow up to this unit, the class could write and record a pop song for “their” artists.

As for sequencing, students would need quite a few skills to both properly understand the music business and then develop their own stars. First, they’d have to study some psychological factors; Are some people “natural” stars? What separates them from the rest? This would help them pick their stars from the list. Next, they would need to think about musical elements; which songs would best suit their artist? Will they create a “signature style” of song for their artist? Or let them be free in their musical output? Finally, they would have to consider and learn about two strands of marketing—the physical aspects (what the public will see of the star), and the press kit (what the performing venue owners will see of them). This is the part that causes the most controversy among critics of the music industry; there is very little relevance to the actual *music*. Although the press kit will hold some musical descriptions, most of it will be carefully chosen words used to persuade venue owners that they should book the artist for monetary purposes.

In order to complete this project, students will have had to gain critical skills that encompass musical aspects (evaluating music performances, analyzing musical choices) as well as marketing and promotional aspects (how to take the music they have chosen and turn it into something that other people will *want* to listen to). It is my hope that when listening to future pop artists, they will remember how much work they put into

designing their own stars, and that the images they see may not be reality, but rather the careful managing of people behind the scenes.