Music Appreciation Research Session Goals

- Use background and overview articles in authoritative reference works to identify major biographical information about a composer.
- Identify the difference in authority and audience between different source types, and when you might use each to support your group’s chronological outline.
- Locate sources in print in the library and online using database collections or websites on composers’ major works, influences, and biographical details.

Step 1: Find your class guide:

- From the Library main page, click on “Find a Research Guide” > “Art”

Step 2: Explore Your Composer & Find Background

If you don’t have an artist in mind yet, go to “Biography in Context” > “Browse People” > “Musicians” and choose an artist to practice researching for this session.

Use the box below to write down your artist and where you found more biographical information (the Encyclopedia / Database title - so you can find it again).

Your Composer’s Name: ____________________________

Encyclopedia / Database Title: ____________________________________________________________

Step 3: Keywords are the important words or short phrases that you can use to search on your topic. Your keywords can be words drawn from your topic, as well as synonyms, related terms and other more general or more focused terms.

Related Keywords / biographical details you want to research further:

Step 4: Your goal is to figure out what information to include in your outline. Use this worksheet to track and evaluate your research as you go along:

Resource 1: (include the title, where you found it, and why it’s useful – can use your background source.)

Example: Bob Dylan, Contemporary Musicians, it has a great overview of Bob Dylan’s life, career, and musical influences.
Resource 2: (include the title, where you found it, and why it is useful to you.)
Example: chapter on Bob Dylan from ‘Icons of Rock’ encyclopedia, details how Bob Dylan’s music was strongly connected with the American Folk Song tradition.

Resource 3: (include the title, where you found it, and why it is useful to you.)

Stories about your artist: (include the source!)
Example: “In 1979, Bob Dylan announced he was a born-again Christian” and the album he released featuring only his born-again inspired songs, Slow Train Coming, won his first Grammy award. – Rolling Stone Bob Dylan bio – http://www.rollingstone.com/music/artists/bob-dylan/biography

Illustrations/Multimedia: (Include content/ title/source- this is so you can keep track and find the source again!)

Discography: (Include source & dates for musical works / performances – use a reputable source!)
Suggested Research Resources to try for biography info:

**Start with Reference.** Reference books provide basic background information, such as definitions, key concepts and terminology, and basic explanations. The goal of reference is evidence-based fact.

- **Biography in Context** – Look up biographical information, news stories, magazine features, images and more for your musical artist or composer.
- **Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL)** – Background information & bio. facts from encyclopedias.
- **Print Encyclopedia** collection (see your online research guide for suggestions)

**Use the key concepts/terminology you gather from reference articles to search for more specific information in other library tools.**

**Article & Music Databases** (additional relevant databases are listed by subject – check our research guide):

- **Academic Search Premier & History Resource Center**: Read magazine, news, editorial, and peer reviewed scholarly articles here.
- **ProQuest Combined Databases**: Read magazine, news, editorial, and peer reviewed scholarly articles here.
- **JSTOR**: Scholarly music criticism – highly specific; make sure to use EXACT search phrases.
- **Freegal Music**– Available as a supplemental resource through KCLS, contains mostly contemporary music with some classical performances. Log in using “GRC+your email username before the @” (ex: GRCjsmith2) and the last 4 if your username as your password. (ex.: “ith2”). Usage: “Limit of 5 downloads a week/12 hours of streaming daily.”

**Books**: Search the Primo library catalog for books. Books can go in depth into a topic; provide history; collect essays and viewpoints; and more. Books may be scholarly or more popular. You can use part of a book if appropriate, even if the whole doesn’t all fit!

**Websites**: Use **Google Advanced Search and limit the “Domain: .edu”** to find websites created as part of academic institutions (but still review these—they may be the work of fellow students). You can also limit the domain to “.org” to help find museum / nonprofit websites (which may feature digital recordings or collections).

**Films on Demand**: A collection of educational videos from documentaries, television news and journalism, TED Talks, and more. Some biography documentaries are available here – reliable and equivalent to magazines.

**YouTube and Finding Official Videos** - YouTube can be searched by **keyword** (so: artist name, song title, performance location…) but be aware that NOT all music videos on the site are ‘official videos’ – look for videos from major producers’ accounts or labeled “official video.”

If you are researching a historically famous composer or musician- try a YouTube search anyway. You can often find documentary footage of performances or live performances of famous works.