



## The Teamwork Behind the Beatles (Elementary Version)

### OVERVIEW

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How did the input of manager Brian Epstein and record producer George Martin help The Beatles develop and refine skills that aided the band in presenting their music and personalities to a mass audience?



#### OVERVIEW

When The Beatles emerged as international superstars in 1964 their fans saw a cohesive unit in both sound and image. Their vocal harmonies were close and carefully arranged. They seemed tight as a band and as four friends. They wore matching suits, shared a similar sense of humor, styled their hair in the same fashion and moved with a distinct and unified body language. Like any good team member, each Beatle seemed to have an innate understanding of how his individual talents contributed to the group's goals. To many fans, the concept of a "rock band" is defined by The Beatles' combination of raw musical talent and personal charisma, the "chemistry" of that particular group. However, even The Beatles had help. While they did not have the sizable entourage a 21st century pop star typically employs, The Beatles did receive crucial guidance from Brian Epstein, their manager, and George Martin, their producer at Abbey Road studio.

This lesson explores first the role Brian Epstein played in helping craft The Beatles' visual presence, group identity and team unity, the way he helped the group transition from successful nightclub act to international sensation. Though he was also from Liverpool, Epstein was a decade older and a social class above The Beatles. Yet, as Paul McCartney says in *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week - The Touring Years*: "He had a vision of us that was beyond the vision we had of ourselves." The lesson also investigates the ways producer George Martin, a self-described "schoolmaster" to the Beatles' as they recorded their first albums, helped The Beatles discover the creative potential of the recording studio, and move their music from the stage to the studio, finally reaching listeners across the globe.

Exploring the roles of Epstein and Martin encourages students to consider the myriad ways people—even those who appear uniquely exceptional—benefit from the guidance of "coaches" and the assistance of others. Throughout this lesson, students witness the power of teamwork by learning about The Beatles' focus on group unity, then work as "rock bands" in groups in order to experience some of the psychological experiences the members of The Beatles faced firsthand.

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

### 1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- How teamwork helped The Beatles attain success
- About press conferences as a form of publicity
- How The Beatles' manager Brian Epstein helped them develop a group image and team ethic
- How The Beatles' record producer George Martin helped the group learn to navigate the recording studio

### 2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE

- Students will be able to summarize the early accomplishment of the Beatles and analyze the contributions of Brian Epstein and George Martin in developing a cohesive image and promoting teamwork.

## ACTIVITIES

### MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Show your students **Clip 1, "The Beatles' Early Years."** Ask your students:

- What differences did you notice between The Beatles you saw on a large stage at the beginning of the clip and the early versions of the group described by John Lennon and captured in some of the still photos?
- What do you think distinguishes The Beatles as a "rock band"?
- If the same group was on stage but it was called "John Lennon," would it feel the same? Would you interpret the band's image differently?

### PROCEDURE:

1. Share **Handout 1 - Teamwork Behind the Beatles Vocabulary.**

2. Inform your students that although The Beatles were remarkably talented, their career was influenced by the guidance of their manager, Brian Epstein. **Play Clip 2, "The Role of Brian Epstein."** Ask students:

- What does Paul McCartney suggest Brian Epstein did for The Beatles?
- How did Epstein help The Beatles with their stage presence?

- Why do you think Epstein suggested matching suits for The Beatles? Can you think of other professions in which matching attire is required?

3. Tell your students that part of Brian Epstein's role was what Paul McCartney just described as keeping the band "together as a team." **Play Clip 3, "Four Votes: The Unity of the Beatles,"** and ask your students:

- In what ways do you think The Beatles' team mentality might have helped them succeed? (*Encourage your students to think widely. It kept them together*)

*musically, it allowed them to manage their business as “one” rather than four individuals. It also helped them present a unified, positive image to the press.)*

- Do you think you could be in a band that functions as a unit that requires a unanimous vote to proceed with any decision? Why or why not?
4. Define the term “Press Conference” for students. Inform your students that during the height of “Beatlemania” The Beatles held press conferences in nearly every city they performed. Ask students:
- What is a press conference?
  - Why do you think people hold press conferences?
  - Why do you think The Beatles held so many press conferences? How else would they have communicated with the public in 1964? (*Encourage your students to think of all the ways artists have to speak to an audience in the present in contrast with the forms of media available in 1964. The Beatles spoke to “the press,” and the press then interpreted the event and wrote stories about The Beatles. Social media allows artists to bypass “the press” and speak directly to their fans.*)
5. Play **Clip 4, “I Feel Fine”** from The Beatles +1 collection. Ask students:
- Are there drums in this video? What is Ringo Starr, The Beatles’ drummer, doing instead of playing drums?
  - What is George Harrison singing into in this video? Does it seem like he’s singing the words to the song?
- Overall, how would you describe the tone of this video?
  - Do you get a “message” from The Beatles behavior in this video? How does it make you think about them as people?
6. Now play **Clip 5, “The Role of George Martin.”** Discuss with students:
- Why do you think the The Beatles’ and George Martin’s shared love of comedy was helpful to their relationship in the early years? (*Encourage your students to see how this connection enabled the two parties to work comfortably in spite of the power dynamic created by the differences in their ages and Martin’s status as a gatekeeper at a record label versus The Beatles’ as hopeful recording artists.*)
  - The Beatles had been performing nonstop for several years, why do you think in this particular situation Martin describes himself as a “schoolmaster teaching” them?
7. Distribute **Handout 2 - Excerpt from Melody Maker Magazine**. Read aloud the paragraphs as a class, and examine the photographs. Ask students:
- What do you think George Martin did for The Beatles in this instance that they could not have done themselves?
  - Do you think George Martin acted in a way that other music industry people might not have at the time?
  - Do you think George Martin had any specialized music knowledge that The Beatles did not have at this time?
  - What do the two photos suggest about The Beatles’ feelings toward Martin and

why? How do you think he fit into their ensemble?

8. Have each group report their findings to the class. Once all five groups have reported ask the class to consider the five paragraphs together and discuss:

- Overall, what do you think George Martin's most important contributions to the early Beatles were?

- How do you think The Beatles felt about Martin? (*Encourage students to consider his basic instinct to trust The Beatles and guide them without forcing them to do anything in particular. Martin granted The Beatles access to the recording process, and helped them tailor their music to that format's specific requirements. The Beatles seem to have trusted Martin. In the photos he is comfortably within the circle of the group, as both a listener and a contributor.*)

### SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Divide your class into groups of 3-5 students each, making five groups if possible. Display **Image 1, Imaginary Band Activity**. Each group should name one member the "scribe" who will record their group's answers to the questions presented in the image. Inform the class that their group will pretend to be a "rock band," and their task will be to develop a plan for success.

- What is your band's name? (*Note to teacher: if you feel naming the "band" will become a distraction to your students, skip this step.*)
- Who will play and sing what instruments in your band?
- Where will you play your music?
- Who is your target audience?
- How will these people know to come see you?
- Do you hope to be heard and seen by people outside of your city or town? Where?
- How will you reach these people? (The radio, YouTube, playing on the street, etc)
- How will you get these people to take the time to watch or listen?

2. Have each group read their answers to the class and keep track of them on the board. Discuss with the class:

- How did your group come to conclusions for each question? Did you all agree or was negotiation involved? Are there still disagreements?
- Will your band need to seek outside assistance to achieve its goals? From who?
- Imagine yourself an anonymous viewer who stumbles across your band's video on YouTube, what do you see? Do you look "professional"?

- Based on what you have seen and heard of The Beatles, do you think they considered how they looked and how they sounded?

3. Ask your students:

- Can you think of any other career paths in which a talented person or group is guided to success by the assistance of an outsider? What similarities or differences do you see to the teamwork of The Beatles with Epstein and Martin?
- Do you think your life could benefit from a partnership such as The Beatles had with Epstein and Martin?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- 1. Writing Prompt:** Do you feel that it is important to have someone coach or guide you when you are trying to meet your goals? Write about someone in your life who has been a coach or a guide to you.
- 2. Art Activity:** Create an infographic that shows how cohesive The Beatles were after working with Brian Epstein. Use some of the images on **Images of the Early Beatles**. Create an Infographic to create your own drawing of the Beatles, add written details to your infographic to describe ways in which the famous group members shows evidence of cohesiveness.
- 3. Group Project:** With your team, brainstorm names of current or past bands that show teamwork and cohesiveness. Do you see the influence of The Beatles on these bands? How are they similar and how are they different? Create a slideshow to present to your class as a team.

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (K-12)*

Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (K-12) (Extension Activities Only)*

Text Types and Purposes 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Text Types and Purposes 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language (K-12)*

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (K-12)*

Comprehension & Collaboration 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension & Collaboration 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. and orally.

Comprehension & Collaboration 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence

such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

## **NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)**

Theme 3: People, Place, and Environments

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 7: Production, Distribution, and Consumption

## **NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION (NAFME)**

### *Core Music Standard: Responding*

Analyze: Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response.

Interpret: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators' and/or performers' expressive intent.

### *Core Music Standard: Connecting*

Connecting 11: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding of evidence and rhetoric.

## **NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS**

### *Responding*

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

### *Connecting*

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standards 11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

## RESOURCES

### VIDEO RESOURCES

- The Beatles: Eight Days a Week – The Touring Years The Beatles’ Early Years
- The Beatles: Eight Days a Week – The Touring Years The Role of Brian Epstein
- The Beatles: Eight Days a Week – The Touring Years “Four Votes”: The Unity of the Beatles
- The Beatles 1+ – I Feel Fine
- The Beatles: Eight Days a Week – The Touring Years The Role of George Martin

### HANDOUTS

- Handout 1 - Teamwork Behind the Beatles Vocabulary
- Handout 2 - Excerpt from Melody Maker Magazine
- Image of the Early Beatles



# Lesson Materials





## Image 1, Imaginary Band Activity

**Scenario:** your group is a new rock band, and you are developing a plan for success. Together, answer the question below. Be prepared to share them with the class.

1. What is your band's name?
2. Who will play and sing what instruments in your band?
3. Where will you play your music?
4. Who is your target audience?
5. How will these people know to come see you?
6. Do you hope to be heard and seen by people outside of your city or town? Where?
7. How will you reach these people? (The radio, YouTube, playing on the street, etc)
8. How will you get these people to take the time to watch or listen?



## Handout 1 - Teamwork Behind the Beatles Vocabulary

Please learn each of these vocabulary terms on the left and draw a line to the sentence on the right where each word fits best.

### Charisma

Noun: a personal magic of leadership that helps someone to influence others.

Audiences everywhere loved the amazing \_\_\_\_\_ of the Beatles in their performances on stage and on TV.

### Cohesive

Adjective: two or more people or things that stick or work together very well.

When John, Paul, George, and Ringo's worked together and everyone did their share, they showed great \_\_\_\_\_.

### Stage Presence

Noun: a certain charisma and charm that draws an audience's attention to a performer or performers.

The Beatles had a special \_\_\_\_\_ that helped them to be leaders in Rock and Roll and influence popular music.

### Teamwork

Noun: working respectfully and effectively with a group and doing your share

Do you think that the Beatles had a \_\_\_\_\_ of how successful they would be?

### Unity

Noun: being together or at one with someone or something.

Because the Beatles were such a \_\_\_\_\_ team, they worked together very well and stuck together.

### Vision

Noun: a thought, concept, or object formed by the imagination

When the Beatles dressed alike and had the same haircuts, they were showing \_\_\_\_\_.