



Resource Guide for Educators and Students Grades 4–12

What is traditional music? It's music that's passed on from one person to another, music that arises from one or more cultures, from their history and geography. It's music that can tell a story or evoke emotions ranging from celebratory joy to quiet reflection. Traditional music is usually played live in community settings such as dances, people's houses and small halls.

In each 30-minute episode of Carry On™, musical explorer and TikTok sensation Hal Walker interviews a musician who plays traditional music. Episodes air live, allowing students to pose questions. Programs are then archived so you can listen to them any time from your classroom or home. Visit Carry On's [YouTube channel](#) for live shows and archived episodes.

[Episode 3, Tatiana Hargreaves](#)

Tatiana Hargreaves is a **fiddler** from Corvallis, Oregon, part of a younger generation of old-time, bluegrass and progressive acoustic musicians. She has performed, toured and recorded with a number of prominent musicians. Her bluegrass fiddling can be heard on the GRAMMY-nominated album [The Hazel and Alice Sessions](#). Tatiana holds a bachelor's degree in ethnomusicology and teaches fiddle at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Bluegrass and old-time are related styles of music. Old-time came first, with roots in traditional music from Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, colonizers and settlers from the British Isles (England, Scotland and Ireland), Spain, France, Germany, Scandinavia, and other European regions. Although old-time is considered traditional music of North America, it's often associated with the rural areas and mountains of the southeast US. The music includes tunes for dancing; ballads that tell stories; and songs about faith, nature and life. African influence appears in use of the banjo (an instrument of African origin), musical phrasing and syncopation.

Old-time, along with blues and jazz, set the foundation for bluegrass music, a style that arose in the late 1930s with The Blue Grass Boys, a band named for founder Bill Monroe's home state of Kentucky (the Bluegrass State). Bluegrass is more polished-sounding style meant for performance rather than dancing.

Voice and stringed instruments are prominent in both old-time and bluegrass. The violin's size and portability made it an instrument of choice for musicians who used it to "fiddle" (play traditional music) for dances, social occasions and pure pleasure. The first fiddle contest in the

US was held in 1736. Henry Ford, inventor of the Model T, [inspired a revival of contests in the 1920s](#). There are now contests around the country every year. Tatiana has participated in many, winning first place at the Clifftop Appalachian Fiddle Contest—only the second woman to do so.

In our episode, Tatiana plays mostly old-time fiddle tunes on a five-string violin. Tatiana often switches back and forth between old-time and bluegrass styles. In bluegrass, more of the length of the bow might be used in a smoother stroke; in old-time, bow strokes might be choppy. Old-time players often use "double stops"—playing on two strings at once, one with the melody, one providing a drone. Alternative tunings can be used, like Tatiana uses on the tune "Cluck Old Hen."

Vocabulary

Bluegrass music – A fast-tempo style that arose in the late 1930s with the radio, which provided a way for people all over the country to listen. It was "invented" on the stage and was meant to be performed for audiences. It has a number of influences: old-time, country, blues and gospel. Bluegrass is played by a band of stringed instruments, usually fiddle, banjo, mandolin, guitar, steel or dobro guitar and bass. Singing in high harmonies is part of bluegrass, and each player often showcases their virtuosic instrumental skills, taking solo "breaks" like jazz players often do.

Cross-tuning – Tuning an instrument differently than it is meant to be tuned. Tatiana employs cross-tuning for her last tune, "Cluck Old Hen," explaining that this AEAE tuning gives the instrument resonance.

Fiddle and violin – two names for the same instrument, a portable four-string instrument made of wood with pegs for tuning the strings. The main difference between them is the style of music played on the instrument—it's a fiddle if you play traditional or folk-based music; it's a violin if you play classical music on it.

Harmonics – On a stringed instrument, touching the string lightly at key points (instead of firmly pressing against the neck). This produces an "overtone" of the base note. Overtones (also called harmonics) are part of every musical note, but you don't hear them separately unless you isolate them. Dividing the string into two with a light touch isolates the second overtone, an octave above the base note. Harmonics produce a high, glassy-sounding note—a kind of "ghost" of the string's original frequency. Tatiana uses them on "[Farewell Whiskey](#)."

Old-time music – A traditional music style of North America, particularly the mountainous regions of the southeast US, that comes from music and cultures of indigenous peoples, settlers from Europe and enslaved Africans. Old-time music is sung or played live on acoustic instruments, often fiddle alone or with banjo, guitar and sometimes string bass. Many songs and tunes were imported by arriving immigrants, but many are purely North American.

Resonance – Musical instruments create sound by making objects vibrate. Objects can include strings and the body of the instrument, as well the air inside the instrument. Vibrations cause sound waves to start moving. Resonance amplifies sound waves when an instrument responds

to sound waves of certain frequencies. For example, when different strings are tuned to similar or sympathetic frequencies, the strings resonate with each other, making the instrument "ring."

Activities and Questions for Students

Before you watch the episode—Locate the following places on [Google Maps](#) or a large map:

Countries: The United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Ireland), Spain, France, Germany, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe.

Africa: West Central Africa, home of Africans brought to the US as slaves, and of their instrument that later became the banjo. Modern-day countries are Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of the Congo and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

US: Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia (southeastern states with mountainous regions).

After you watch the episode—Complete assigned activities and questions from this list, which progresses from simpler to more complex.

1. Tatiana mentions people who've taught and influenced her—violin teachers, musicians who've taught her songs and styles, and musicians of the past. Pretend you're being interviewed about your "personal influencers," people who've had a positive impact on your musical life, or your life in general. Who would you mention? What effect have they had on your life?
2. Tatiana is an ethnomusicologist. Read about ethnomusicology on the [Society of Ethnomusicology's website](#). If your life's work was learning about traditional music, how would ethnomusicology help you? What part of it would you enjoy the most? The least?
3. When you're learning to play music by ear, you listen to learn—just like when you're a baby learning to talk, you listen to people talking. Lots of old-time musicians learn by ear. What song is "in your ear" that you can sing from memory?
4. [Listen to Tatiana explain](#) why she is tuning her instrument differently and read the definitions of Resonance and Harmonics above. Experiment with tapping pencils against the edge of dinner plates of the same size, and then plates of different sizes. Some taps will sound like they're in tune, and some will clash. Which makes the sound resonate, or "travel," more? Why do you think that is?
5. Tatiana is interested in the combination of tradition and innovation, in putting her own spin on traditional music. If you could "innovate" a tradition, what spin would you put on it? For example, make a drawing of your reinvented Easter eggs or July 4 fireworks, or take a traditional tune that you know well and put your own spin on it.
6. Did any of your ancestors play an instrument? If they played in a musical tradition, what was it?
7. If someone were interviewing you, how would YOU define a musical tradition?
8. Lots of old-time tunes are named after animals. Why do you think that is? (The above explanation of old-time music might help.)

9. Tatiana plays "[Cluck Old Hen](#)" in our episode. Compare her version with versions from [Alison Krauss](#), the [Oldtime Stringband](#), and a group from the [Berklee College of Music](#). Which version plays up the chicken sound? How? Which version or versions are more like bluegrass style? How?
10. What animals could your instrument imitate or portray? How? With trills, harmonics, plucks, tapping or other tricks? If you don't play an instrument, how could your voice imitate animals and sounds of nature?
11. You are a reporter for your school's newspaper. Write and illustrate a review of Tatiana's episode, what she talked about, and the music you heard. Describe the music, your favorite things about it, and what more you wish you could see or know about. Be sure to give your article a descriptive title!
12. Tatiana points out that every fiddler has a different way of holding the instrument. Compare the hold of [this old-time fiddler](#) from New York [with this fiddler](#) from North Carolina [with these fiddlers](#) and with classical violinist [Itzhak Perlman](#). Describe, please!
13. The Appalachian Mountain chain in the eastern US has different names along the chain. Do a little Internet research and list the "mini-ranges" you can find in the southeastern US, from West Virginia traveling south.
14. Tatiana plays a five-string violin. Most violins have only four strings. [Consult this website](#) and explain why a musician might want a five-string violin.
15. The first song Tatiana plays is "49 Cats in a Rain Barrel" that came from Orville Burns, an older fiddler in Texas. [Here's a version](#) of Tatiana and banjo player Allison de Groot playing the tune, and here's the version [Orville Burns](#) plays. What differences do you hear between the fiddlers on the two versions?
16. Analyze the structure of "49 Cats in a Rain Barrel" the way Tatiana plays it [on our episode](#). There are four measures in each section. Assign a letter to each distinct section, assigning the same letter to similar sections—for example, it starts out AA BB. Don't be thrown by variations that the fiddler throws in! What does your analysis tell you about the structure?

Additional Resources

Tatiana Hargreaves

Tatiana Hargreaves' [website and complete bio](#).

Tatiana's [faculty profile](#) for the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill.

Old-Time and Traditional Music

[Old-Time Music in North Carolina](#) (website) – About old-time fiddling in the North Carolina mountains.

[Black Stringband Resources](#) (website) – Links to African American performers and recordings.

John and Alan Lomax – Documentarians (father and son) of traditional music (including old-time) from many cultures in the US, Caribbean, Europe and Asia. The main collection of

their recordings and photographs is housed with [The American Folklife Center](#) of the Library of Congress. John Lomax was born in 1867; [his son Alan](#) continued his work into the 1990s.

Learning the Fiddle

[Old-Time Central](#) (website) – Links to fiddle lessons, both paid and free.

[Old-Time Fiddling Tips](#) (YouTube) – Bowing tips and techniques from fiddler Bruce Molsky.

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We want to make Carry On™ even more useful and enjoyable for students and educators across the country. [Send us your feedback!](#) Tell us what you liked and what we could do better. And please... tell other educators and schools about the show. Help us all carry on!

With the help of generous donors, [Carry On](#)™ is produced by the nonprofit [Northeast Ohio Musical Heritage Association](#) (NEOMHA). The show is programmed by [Laura Lewis](#), artistic director of NEOMHA's [Lake Erie Folk Fest](#). Carry On's resource guides are the work of writer and musician [Rita Lewis](#).

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