

Soundtrack My Story

Grade: 3

Content Areas: Writing, Computer Science

Time: 3–5 class periods (30–45 min each)

Tool: Sonic Pi

Learning goal	Students will use sound and simple code to enhance storytelling by creating a soundtrack or sound effects for their imaginative writing.
Standards	ELA • Write narratives to develop imagined experiences • Use descriptive details to show action, thoughts, feelings • Present writing to an audience Computer Science • Create a computational artifact • Test/debug and revise • Use technology creatively to communicate ideas
Essential Question	How can sound help tell a story?
Success Criteria	I can... • identify important moments in my story that need sound • experiment with Sonic Pi sounds • revise my code when something doesn't sound right • explain why I chose certain sounds
Materials	1. student imaginative writing draft 2. devices with Sonic Pi 3. headphones 4. sound planning sheet
Day 1	
Mini lesson	Ask: “If this story were a movie, what would we hear?” Read a short familiar story Examples: haunted house → creaks, thunder jungle → birds, rustling leaves spaceship → beeps, launch sounds Discuss: Sound helps create: • mood • setting • action • suspense
Student work	Students reread their own writing and identify 3–5 key sound moments.

	Planning sheet (page 1)
Day 2	
Mini lesson	Model very simple examples: • sample :drum_bass_hard • sample :ambi_choir • play :C4 sleep 1 play :E4 Allow exploration
Student work	Students test sounds and create a “sound bank” Challenge them to find: • 1 scary sound • 1 happy sound • 1 surprising sound • 1 background music idea
Day 3	
Mini lesson	How to organize sounds with timing sample :ambi_drone sleep 2 sample :drum_cymbal_open sleep 1 sample :elec_blip
Student work	Students begin coding the soundtrack Teacher role: • heavy conferencing • debug support
Day 4	
Work time	Students: • test soundtrack • adjust timing • remove sounds that don't fit • add stronger sounds Peer feedback: • Does the sound match the story? • What emotion does it create?
Day 5	
Share	Teachers choice: A. Live reading and soundtrack a. Students will read their stories to the class while playing their soundtrack

	B. Partner presentation a. Partner students and allow them to read their stories to each other while playing their soundtrack C. Record reading and soundtrack a. Allow students to record themselves reading their story while playing their soundtrack to share with classmates, other classes, and the community
Differentiation	
Support	For overwhelmed students provide a preselected sound menu with required written explanation (page 2) - "I chose this sound because..." Examples: Suspense :ambi_drone :drum_cymbal_open Happy :ambi_choir :elec_ping Action :drum_heavy_kick :elec_blip
Extension	
Advanced students	Have these students explore and experiment with: • layered sounds • loops • background music + effects • collaborative story soundtrack teams
Assessment	
Story connection Does sound match writing? Creativity Intentional sound choices? Persistence Tested/revised code? Presentation Shared clearly?	