

Wabash Cannon Ball

VERSE **G**

1. From the coast of the At - lan - tic to the wide Pa - ci - fic
 2. There are ci - ties of im - por - tance that is known by one and
 Spring - field and De - ca - tur and Pe - or - ia, Mon - tre -

C **D7**

shore, From the warm and sun - ny South - land to the
 all, It's the West - ern com - bi - na - tion called the
 way, Chi - ca - go and Saint - Lou - is and Rock
 al, On the West - ern com - bi - na - tion called the

D7 **G** **D7** **G**

isle of La - bra - dor, There's a Wa - bash Can - non Ball.
 Is - land, San - ta Fe, And

REFRAIN **G** **C**

Just lis - ten to the jin - gle, the rum - ble and the roar Of the

D7 **G**

might - y lo - co - mo - tive as she streams a - long the shore, Hear the

G **C**

thun - der of the en - gine, hear the lone - some whis - tle call, It's the

D7 **G**

West - ern com - bi - na - tion called the Wa - bash Can - non Ball.

Lyrics:

1. From the coast of the Atlantic to the wide Pacific shore,
From the warm and sunny Southland to the isle of Labrador,
There's a name of great importance that is known by one and all,
It's the Western combination call the Wabash Cannon Ball.

Refrain: Just listen to the jingle, the rumble and the roar
Of the mighty locomotive as she streams along the shore,
Hear the thunder of the engine, hear the lonesome whistle call,
It's the Western combination called the Wabash Cannon Ball.

2. There are cities of importance that are reached along the way,
Chicago and Saint Louis and Rock Island, Santa Fe,
And Springfield and Decatur and Peoria, Montreal,
On the Western combination called the Wabash Cannon Ball.

(Repeat Refrain)

SINGING

At one time in American history the railroad dominated transportation and commerce. This song is representative of that time in history. Discuss with the children the lyrics of the song. Relate it to American history and to their own experience with trains. After listening to the song, have the children learn the refrain. The music has a natural locomotive feel that they need to capture in their singing. After they are secure at singing the refrain learn the verses one at a time until they have the whole song learned.

PLAYING

Unpitched percussion instruments are great at generating train sounds. Have the children explore new ways to play instruments to create interesting "train" sounds. Try stirring the sand blocks to get the impression of steam escaping. Overlay two or three quick, short rhythm stick patterns to get the feeling of the wheels moving along the tracks. Use a train whistle to represent the conductor giving the OK to "let 'er roll!" Light fingers on a drum head accentuated by metal instrument sounds gives the rhythmic pattern of "creeks and bumps" in the railroad cars as they move along the tracks. Experimentation can surely produce more innovative sounds.

CREATING

After the children feel accomplished on their instruments, have them create an arrangement of the song that begins slowly (as the train pulls out of the station) increases in tempo (as the train gathers speed) and then includes the song lyrics (as the passengers go merrily on their journey). Have the students include an interlude (or two or three if they wish) and a coda at the end of the song to bring a conclusion to their creative product.

LISTENING

Have the students write simple 4 beats rhythmic patterns on 4 x 6 cards. Have each student practice clapping their own pattern. Have them extend their pattern by adding another 4 beats from a neighbor's pattern. Add more 4 beat patterns until each student has memorized a 16-beat pattern that is uniquely theirs. Have two or three students clap their 16 beat patterns together. Have the class listen to the interesting rhythmic texture that each new combination creates. After listening to several combinations, have the class pick one or two patterns to play along with the singing of the refrain to add extra interest and sound texture.

INTEGRATION (Social Studies)

Within the song there are several geographical locations and cities named as the train "roars" along. Find these on a map of the United States. Identify several other important cities or popular places to visit along any imagined train route. Make sure that any train route created allows for mountains, rivers, lakes, and deserts when traveling from place to place. Include a discussion of the unique happening at Promontory Point and tracks across the Great Salt Lake.