

moosebutter

educational programs

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moosebutter music education mission statement:

The purpose of **moosebutter's educational programs** and **moosebutter's** educational outreach and residency efforts is:

- To inspire music students to pursue further education in the fine arts, and to prepare themselves for a future in the music industry and music education.
- To inspire non-music students to take advantage of music opportunities in their schools and to be supportive of peers involved in the fine arts.
- To teach valuable character and life-enhancing concepts through entertaining and educational programs.
- To reinforce concepts taught by teachers in all subjects by inspiring students to learn and by providing helpful learning experiences for teachers to use in the classroom.
- To provide a positive entertainment and education experience for every person in attendance at a **moosebutter** performance, with specific attention to students of all learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, aural) and by providing learning experiences from each area of the national standards of music education:

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

moosebutter educational program topics

Of the myriad topics **moosebutter** could address in any single educational experience, the following are the topics they have successfully taught in the past. Additional topics can be requested, and suggestions on effective teaching strategies are always welcome.

moosebutter is a comedy a cappella group, best known for their **comedy music programs** – excellent for public shows as well as school reward assemblies or for special occasions. Though no specific educational topic is discussed in their normal program, the men of **moosebutter** sing great music, entertain the audience in their own special way, and provide a positive, inclusive concert experience for all ages.

All of the following topics are taught with the same whimsical and exciting outlook on life, and are adaptable for any grade level. **moosebutter** uses humor, musical examples and close audience interaction to teach musical and values concepts to students. Educational or entertaining, **moosebutter** will be something your students will not soon forget!

Musical elements – using visual aids and music examples, **moosebutter** explains and demonstrates the following musical elements:

Melody, Harmony, Rhythm, Tempo, Pitch, Timbre

Multi-lingual elements – short introductions may be done in Spanish and Mandarin Chinese; school script and specific learning activities can be requested in advance for translators or shadow-signers. Portions of the program may be presented by **moosebutter** in Spanish or Chinese if arranged in advance.

Music department and academic encouragement – by sharing their experiences in secondary and post-secondary institutions, **moosebutter** shares the positive effect formal education had on their lives, their experiences in music programs and how it prepared them for their current careers, and encourage students to continue with their education.

Literature exploration – using songs such as *Harry Potter*, **moosebutter** talks about parodies and the interplay between arts (literature and music).

Additional topics: additional topics selected from or in addition to below will be included in **moosebutter**'s performance; you make specific requests for your school.

Where do composers come up with their ideas?

How do we appreciate composer's work?

Respect and interaction required in an ensemble – respecting each other's voices, using your strengths and relying on the strengths of others.

Everyone's voice is valuable

Music used to express ideas and tell stories – classical and popular music examples; also comedic examples expressing typical stresses and worries of students (grade-level specific).

Type of music you make is dependent on time and culture you live in, including technology and economics.

Stylistic differences of music – why performing one type of music in the style of another is awkward and ultimately unrewarding.

Song sing-a-longs – audience singing with **moosebutter** for segments or all of songs

History of music medley – no talk, just show kids how music evolved. 5-10 minute medley.

Chant – explain chant, demonstrate. Chant discussion: sang in ultra-echoey chambers. 20th century streetcorner singers, stairwells, anywhere with that 'ring.'

Explanation of all pieces of sound equipment visible (and invisible) – speakers, monitors, wires, mics, mixer... have different mics/speakers to compare? EQ?

Illustration (aural) of ranges – how does bass differ from tenor; different voices suited to different music.

Examples of styles of music – classical, pop, rock, r&b, bluegrass, barbershop, country...

Where do we find music in the world around us? Radio, ads, grocery stores, church, movies...). Why? Let the kids name the wheres while we provide examples of what they list (discussion on the power of music, just in disguise).

Take a kid's song & sing it with them straight. Then show them how you add different things, one at a time, until it's Really Cool. Culmination of Elements of Music discussion.

We play the microphone just like others play their own instruments – good especially for advanced group presentation.

Name a musical style you think we can *not* sing

Requests

Dance contest

Rhythm section from the audience – percussion toys, vocal percussion, and/or hambone

Learning Experiences – Sample Topics and Classroom Ideas for Teacher Use

(edited/updated 4/15/06)

*The following are outlines of topics and ideas for classroom learning experiences. An example of a full version – Writing – is included in this document as the **Appendix**. Full versions of any of the following will be provided when you schedule moosebutter's visit, or by request.*

Science/Math

Discussion topics:

Why does a stage have a black curtain in the back?

What is that shrill screaming sound microphones make? Why do they do that and how can it be fixed?

How does a microphone work? Are there different kinds of microphones? Why does that one guy use different microphones sometimes?

What is all that electronic stuff the musicians have? What does it do? Who is that guy at the table in the back?

What is a sound check? Why do they do it? How do they do it?

What is amplification? Why do it? What are different ways of amplifying sound?

What is a sound wave? What does it do? How does a kazoo work?

Activity:

If pre-arranged, individual students or classes can come in early/stay after the show and watch moosebutter set up/take down their equipment or do a sound check.

Music

Discussion topics:

What is A Cappella music?

What is beatboxing or vocal percussion?

What is hambone?

How do the guys add percussion to the music?

What are the different voice parts (tenor, bass, etc.?)

What are different styles of music?

Activity:

If pre-arranged, individual students or classes can come in early/stay after the show and watch moosebutter set up/take down their equipment or do a sound check.

Many more topics are available for music classes if moosebutter visits a specific class.

Art

Discuss design principles. Watch the concert. Now design a poster or CD cover for moosebutter.

Analyze the visual aspect of the concert. What do you think of the colors? What do you think of the costumes? Why do you think they set the stage the way they did? What would you do different?

Design moosebutter costumes or T-shirts.

Drama/Film/Dance

Make a music video of one of the songs you heard (recorded samples available).

Write a skit using one of the songs as part of the skit.

Music performances aren't so different from dramatic performances—they use many of the same elements. Analyze the costumes, staging, choreography, etc. of the group. What did you like? What would you do different?

If pre-arranged, moosebutter will allow your dance class/team to perform a routine (a single song) to open their concert if the group dances to a moosebutter song. If it is possible, moosebutter can accompany the group live.

moosebutter normally doesn't actually "dance" in their show, but there is choreography and some dance elements, and many of the men have taken dance lessons (folk, latin, ballroom). Discuss the movement on stage. What dance elements did you see? What did you like? What could they do better? Write about it.

Social/Cultural Studies

The nature of humor: What makes something funny? Is the same thing funny to you as to the other people in your class? Is the same thing funny in different cultures? What things did moosebutter do that were funny? What was the funniest to you? How does being in a crowd affect how funny something seems? What else can affect how funny something seems (tiredness, alcohol, etc.). Many activities available: collect and tell jokes, write a funny skit or commercial to perform for the class, write a funny story, read funny stories (like Mark Twain, O. Henry, etc.).

Music is embedded in culture. What does that mean? How do people use music in your culture? What about in other cultures—pick and culture and do some research; write a report or present it to the class. Suggested resource: Smithsonian Music Video Collection.

Where do you hear music around you? Why do people use it in each of those places?

Music is power. What does that mean? How is music powerful and how is it used?

Can anyone make music? What is a talent? How can "musical talent" differ between people? Is it fair to judge other people based our own perceptions of them and their talents?

People use songs for different purposes. What are things people could use music for? Moosebutter has songs that try to prove a point through making people laugh, like one about stupid things people do on cell phones. Choose a song. What might they be trying to teach? Do you agree, or disagree?

We welcome suggestions—what topics do you want us to provide materials on? What learning activities have you seen or used that you'd like more information on?

Interactive Learning Experiences

Take advantage of **moosebutter**'s visit by providing a once-in-a-lifetime interaction for your students. Specific classes can interact with **moosebutter** if arrangements are made in advance. Interactions can happen the day of the performance, or more extended visits, residencies and collaborations can be arranged.

Music

Have one of your ensembles perform a piece with **moosebutter**, a piece by **moosebutter**, or one of your own at the **moosebutter** performance – by singing in front of the school or community you can raise the level of stature of your program, recruit new musicians, and encourage more participation and support for your programs.

Assemblies and fundraising concerts.

Ensembles

Choirs: learn a song that **moosebutter** knows, or arrange in advance for **moosebutter** to learn a song you are learning – male ensembles could do the same 3-part male arrangement as **moosebutter**; treble groups could, also. Or, each could learn a different arrangement of the same song. Then perform the songs for each other and contrast the arrangement (if different), performing choices, interpretation, vocal quality, and other musical considerations.

Classroom visits

Bands and orchestras: arrange to accompany **moosebutter** on a song or songs – with enough advanced warning ensemble arrangements of original **moosebutter** songs can be arranged; arrangements of the original versions of **moosebutter** parodies may already exist. **moosebutter** can also perform classical or standard pops repertoire, by arrangement.

Classroom or performance

Dance with the moose – your dance department or ballroom dance program can perform a program with **moosebutter**'s music – with **moosebutter** providing the music live! Or, you could perform one song to open **moosebutter**'s performance, or dance an improvisation while **moosebutter** improvises the music. With advanced arrangement **moosebutter** could arrange and perform a song that you already dance to. Recorded music can be provided royalty-free for rehearsal purposes.

Assembly, concert, classroom

Multi-media, Art and Advertising classes

Your media students have just been given their first ‘professional’ assignment – **moosebutter!** Depending on the resources available, your students can:

Design a sample advertising campaign for **moosebutter**

Create a promotional video to advertise **moosebutter**’s visit

Create a music video of a **moosebutter** show

Film or photograph **moosebutter**’s performance, then edit or prepare the images for exhibition

Design album covers for specific **moosebutter** songs or albums

Create art projects inspired by **moosebutter** music

moosebutter does most of their promotional material and music business advertising themselves – and one of the singers has a Design and Marketing degree. Bring them to your class to talk about music promotion!

Concert, assembly, and classroom

Technical Arts

With advanced arrangement, technical and stage arts students can accompany and even assist **moosebutter** as they set up their sound and stage equipment.

moosebutter could lead a discussions about sound design and live-sound mixing – with moosebutter as guinea pigs! An excellent opportunity for younger students to try their hand at mixing.

Arrange in advance for students to design **moosebutter**’s lighting for their performance. **moosebutter** can provide stage plots and set lists.

Students could be given the chance to mix **moosebutter**’s show, if house equipment and student experience is adequate.

moosebutter equipment tour and discussion – why we use what we use, differences in microphones, speakers, mixers, etc.

Pre-performance, performance, and classroom

Workshops and Masterclasses

The singers in **moosebutter** love interacting with students at the classroom level. Their collective musical experience, involvement in the music industry, and love for music education make them a unique asset to your music teaching. **moosebutter** has workshopped ensembles, given demonstration performances, conducted improvisation sessions, acted as personal coaches, and answered questions in a panel forum at schools and educational programs around the United States. Students are attracted to **moosebutter**'s hilarious music and electric performing personalities, and consequently are open to encouragement and assistance from the visiting musicians.

moosebutter is equally dedicated to classical and contemporary arts, and classroom visits are a rare chance for them to show off their classical skills – often eye-opening to students who have only experienced their rhythmic, rollicking comedy show. Having sung with some of the greatest choral artists of the modern era – Mack Wilberg, Ronald Staheli, Larry Kaptein, Joan Conlon, Andre Thomas, and more – the men of **moosebutter** bring refined backgrounds and passion for music to their classroom presentations.

As part of a larger residency series, in conjunction with a school assembly, or as an independent visit to your class, use **moosebutter** to inspire and instruct your students!

Appendix:

Sample Lesson Plans (Writing)

*These are examples of lessons for use before and after a **moosebutter** concert, as prepared by Rebecca Wilson Jones, BA English, Brigham Young University, 1996.*

*Learning experiences and lesson ideas for other subjects will be provided when you schedule **moosebutter**'s visit, or are available by request.*

WRITING EXPERIENCES

Writing is essential in every field. It is valuable for students to learn how to express their ideas and *moosebutter*'s activities at your school are a great catalyst for thought and expression. Any of the discussion questions in our educational packet can be used as writing activities: ask the questions and have the students write the answers before they discuss them. Here are some additional writing experiences your students can have in conjunction with *moosebutter*'s visit to your school.

Learning Experiences: Discussion

The structure of writing is always parallel to its purpose. "Form follows function" is a common phrase in architecture, but it applies to writing, too. Discuss: What does "Form follows function" mean? How can that apply to writing?

Learning Experiences: News Writing

Before moosebutter's visit:

Discuss: What is the purpose of news writing? (To convey information quickly and efficiently). The structure of news writing reflects this purpose. How can we most effectively convey information quickly? What kinds of things do you write first? What kinds of things do you put in last? What kinds of details do people want and need to know in a news story?

News writing is traditionally discussed as having an "inverse pyramid" structure. The most important, broad facts go first, followed by more and more detail. This is done partially so readers can get the most important information quickly. It is also because of space constraints in newspapers—a story may need to be cut shorter, and if the least important facts are last, those can easily be cut.

Discuss: What kinds of information do you put into a news story? (Generally, you answer the "5 Ws": who, what, where, when, why, and how.) Discuss what kinds of things you cover to answer each of those questions.

Discuss: Where do you find this information? (Personal experience, interviews with people, traditional research sources, etc.).

Discuss: What does a reporter do? (Collects information and tells people about it). What kinds of reporters are there? (Any subject people want to know about has a reporter somewhere assigned to that type of story. Some common ones that you could mention are foods, book/music/theater reviewers, courts and law, crime, local events, news, politics, opinion, lifestyles, and human interest.)

Activity: Have the students look at a local paper. What kinds of articles are there? In each kind of article, what kind of information did the reporter put first? Which of the "5 Ws" did

they cover? What are the differences in writing styles between different types of articles? This can be done on a worksheet or, better, through the following learning experience:

Group Project: Divide the class into as many small groups as there are sections in a local paper. Give each group a section of the paper and have them look at the type of articles in that section. What kinds of information did the writers include? What did they put first? What else could they have covered? Who is the “intended audience” for this section (who probably will read these articles)? How did that affect how the articles were written? Describe the writing style (is it casual? Abrupt? Friendly? Etc.). Once the students have discussed with each other the characteristics of the section they are looking at, have them present the information to the class, focusing on answering the question: What makes your section unique? Following all the presentations, discuss as a class what the common characteristics were and what the differences were. Why are there differences between the different sections in the paper?

Writing Experience: Assign the students to attend *moosebutter*'s presentation (concert, workshop, etc.) as reporters. Before the event, they should choose or be assigned the section of the paper they are reporting for (reviews, lifestyles, entertainment, news, etc.). Discuss why they need to know beforehand what section they are writing for (it changes the kinds of facts you pay attention to, who you interview and what questions you ask, and what kinds of notes you take). Discuss what reporters do when reporting an event (take notes, pay close attention to details, get permission to quote people, do interviews before and after).

After moosebutter's visit:

Have the students write a news story about *moosebutter*'s visit to their school or class. Remind them to keep in mind the audience and the section of the paper they are writing for as well as the general structure of news writing. Allow them to share their stories with each other, publish them in a class or school paper, or email them to *moosebutter*.

Learning Experiences: Parody

Before moosebutter's visit:

Define or Discuss: What is a parody? (A piece of writing, often a song or poem, that mimics the style or content of another piece but changes it, usually to make a humorous point.)

The most common kind of parody is a parody of an individual work, in which you change the words in a particular poem or song to make it funny or amusing. Some of the most famous of this type of parody in literature come from Lewis Carroll, who also wrote *Alice in Wonderland*. For example:

The Original Piece: “The Old Man’s Comforts and How He Gained Them,” by Robert Southey

You are old, father William, the young man cried,
The few locks which are left you are gray;
You are hale, father William, a hearty old man,
Now tell me the reason, I pray.

In the days of my youth, father William replied,
I remember’d that youth would fly fast,
And abused not my health and my vigor at first,
That I never might need them at last.

You are old, father William, the young man cried,
And pleasures with youth pass away;
And yet you lament not the days that are gone,

Now tell me the reason, I pray.

In the days of my youth, father William replied,
I remembered that youth could not last;
I thought of the future, whatever I did,
That I never might grieve for the past.

You are old, father William, the young man cried,
And life must be hastening away;
You are cheerful, and love to converse upon death,
Now tell me the reason, I pray.

I am cheerful, young man, father William replied,
Let the cause thy attention engage;
In the days of my youth I remember'd my God!
And He hath not forgotten my age.

The Parody: "You are Old, Father William," by Lewis Carroll:

"You are old, father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door—
Pray what is the reason for that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his gray locks;
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment—one shilling the box—
Allow me to sell you a couple?"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaw is too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak—
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life."

“You are old,” said the youth, “one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose—
What made you so awfully clever?”

“I have answered three questions and that is enough,”
Said his father. “Don’t give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I’ll kick you downstairs!”

People sing parodies all the time. Have you ever made up new words to “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star?” or “Jingle Bells”? That’s a parody. Most playground songs (“Deck the halls with Gasoline,” “My eyes have seen the glory of the burning of the school,” “Happy Birthday to you; You live in a Zoo,” or “Jingle Bells, Batman Smells,” for example) are parodies. (You may or may not want to bring this up.)

Another kind of parody is when you write something in the style of something else. While you may not have a specific opera in mind, for example, you can write a parody of “opera” that mimics the style and characteristics of opera without mimicking a specific piece.

Moosebutter sings both types of parody: parodies of individual songs and parodies of styles of music.

Activity: Assign the students to watch for parodies in the presentation as they attend *moosebutter*’s event (concert, workshop, etc.). As a teacher, you may want to email *moosebutter* or talk to them before the show to let them know you have discussed parody with your students so they will be sure to include parody in their performance, especially if they are doing workshops rather than concerts at your school.

After moosebutter’s visit:

Discuss: What parodies did *moosebutter* perform? Were they stylistic or individual piece parodies or both? What did you think of the parody or parodies you saw?

Individual or Group Activity: Have the students write and perform a parody for the class.

Learning Experiences: Creative Writing

Creative writing is extremely individual. Everyone approaches it differently, and there is no right way to do it. Sometimes it is nice to have a starting point to get you writing. Here is a list of suggestions for creative writing that are effective as a follow-up for your *moosebutter* experience:

Writing experience: Write a definition of “*moosebutter*.” What is it and where did the word come from? Why do these guys call themselves “*moosebutter*”? (There really is no answer to the question, “What does ‘*moosebutter*’ mean?”, so encourage your students to be creative.)

Writing experience: Write a short story using the “guys” from *moosebutter* as main characters. Include yourself as a character if you want. Feel free to make this more specific if your students need it—for example, “What happened when the guys in *moosebutter* showed up at your birthday party?”

Writing experience: Write a funny song or poem.

Writing experience: What are ten different ways to express like or dislike for a certain food?

Writing experience: Why do the men in *moosebutter* wear track suits on stage? Write a story explaining it.

Writing experience: Write a story about what *moosebutter* did before or is going to do after they visit your school.

Writing experience: Write a story about the day you met *moosebutter* in the grocery store. What were they doing there? What did they buy? What did you buy? How did you meet?

Writing experience: What would it be like if *moosebutter* worked at your school? What jobs would each of the guys do? What would school be like?

Writing experience: Write a story about what happened when you became a member of *moosebutter*.

Writing experience: If you were going to perform at a school, what would you do? (Sing? Juggle? Play in a band?). What kind of group would you belong to? Who else would be in your group (People in your class? Famous people? *Moosebutter* men?)? After your performance at your school, where else would you go (anywhere in the world? Out of the world?)? What would you perform there?

Writing Experience: Write an imaginary biography of one of the *moosebutter* guys.

Learning Experiences: Advertising Writing

Before moosebutter's visit:

Discuss: What is the purpose of writing for advertisements? How does it differ from other writing?

Discuss: What kinds of things do you need to know before you start writing an advertisement? (The medium it will be presented in—radio, TV, magazine, newspaper, tacked to a grocery store bulletin board, classified section of the newspaper, etc; what you are trying to sell; who you are trying to sell it to).

Discuss/brainstorm: What are the different advertising mediums? What are the differences between them that would affect what you write?

Group activity: Identify a single object that everyone in the class is going to try to sell. Ideally, have the object available for the students to examine (a textbook, pencil, or chair that there are many identical copies of in the room is perfect). Define who everyone is trying to sell this object to. Divide the class into groups and assign each group a different medium to sell in. Have them produce an ad (TV or radio ads can be acted out) in their assigned medium and present it to the class. Discuss what influence the medium has on the message.

Discuss: What are different “audiences” for ads? Who do advertisers try to sell to? What are the differences between the ways advertisers must approach different groups (for example, when selling to kids, they also have to convince parents)? What aspects of the ad are affected by the audience? (All of them, but you could discuss specific aspects, like word choice, image choice, actors, or music).

Group activity: Identify one object that everyone is going to try to sell in an assigned medium. The more commonplace the object, the better. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group a specific audience they are going to sell the object to. Have each group produce an ad (TV and radio ads can be acted out) selling the object to their audience. Present the ads to the class. Then discuss how the ads differed because of the difference in audience. What mediums might be more effective for advertising to different audiences (for example, are newspaper ads effective at reaching 3-5 year old boys? What might be more effective?)?

Discuss: What things might an advertiser focus on when producing an ad for a particular object? What might they avoid mentioning? Strict laws prohibit advertisers from making up lies to sell their products. Any claim an ad makes has to be true, and advertisers always make the

strongest claim they can. Discuss the difference between “It works” and “It worked for me.” How does knowing this help you as a consumer? How would it affect how you view ads?

Group activity: Divide the class into groups. Have each group examine several advertisements from a newspaper or magazine. What is the strongest claim each ad makes? What does that tell them about the products being advertised? Have the groups choose the most effective ad in their set or magazine and the weakest ad. What makes each strong or weak? (Remember to evaluate not only how effective it is for the students but also for the ad’s intended audience.). Each group should present their findings to the class.

Group activity: Divide the class into groups. Assign the class a medium and an audience, but give each group a different object they must try to sell. Have the students produce an ad (TV and radio ads can be acted out) and present it to the class.

Writing experience: Have the students attend the *moosebutter* event at your school as ad writers. Tell them before the concert that afterward they will have to produce an ad for *moosebutter*. What things do they need to pay attention to? Some students will benefit by choosing both a medium and an audience before the concert, others will prefer to choose afterward.

After the concert:

Have the students choose an audience (their parents, another school or class, another student, etc.). What about *moosebutter* might they sell to their audience? For example, are they going to try to convince their parents to buy a T-shirt or CD, or are they going to try to convince another school to have a *moosebutter* concert? What medium will be most effective for their ad? Have the students produce an advertisement and share it with the class. They are also welcome to share it with *moosebutter* through the mail or internet.