



**Happy Birthday, John Williams!** (b. February 8, 1932)  
**Four Ways to Celebrate!**

1. **John Williams Movie Theme Trivia.** Have students work in pairs to identify six of the well-known movie themes by John Williams. A word bank of eight choices provided. As they identify the movie, also have students think about what element of music clued them in: pitches, rhythm or instruments.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/4761ruxjhgryzjf/john%20williams%20quiz.wav?dl=0>

**Answer Key:**

1. Jurassic Park
2. Star Wars
3. Home Alone
4. Jaws
5. Harry Potter
6. Indiana Jones

2. **Read the short biography about John Williams** (reading level is grade 5-6.) As students finish the reading, have them complete three of the four tasks on the accompanying **Four Square** assignment.

Next, have students take their papers, stand up, and go find someone in the class to have a stand-up conversation with. In pairs, discuss what you each wrote about and share the pictures you drew. After about 4-5 minutes, have students find another partner. Repeat the discussion and then move to a third partner.

3. **View, describe, and compare *Air and Simple Gifts* and *Fanfare for Fenway*.**

- ***Air and Simple Gifts*** (2009): [https://youtu.be/FFALyKG\\_Bck](https://youtu.be/FFALyKG_Bck)
- ***Fanfare for Fenway*** (2012): <https://youtu.be/KXOLnut2pQ0>

4. **View, follow the listening map, and describe *Olympic Fanfare and Theme (1984)*:**  
<https://youtu.be/RZU7oryBgUI>

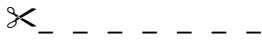


## John Williams Movie Theme Trivia Answer Form

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Word Bank	E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial	Harry Potter	Home Alone	Indiana Jones
	Jaws	Jurassic Park	Star Wars	Superman

This theme is from which movie?	<b>pitches, rhythm or instruments</b> Which element of the music is most recognizable?	Describe the element that helped you recognize the music
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

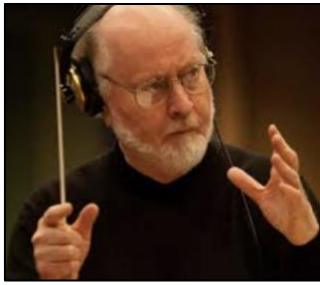


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## Happy Birthday, John Williams! (b. February 8, 1932)

John Williams – conductor, pianist, and the composer of some of the most well-known movie themes – turned 90 years old on February 8, 2022. Many people think of John Williams as “the king of movie music” and one of the greatest composers of our time.

John grew up in a musical family. His father, John Francis Williams, was a drummer in the CBS Radio Orchestra during the 1930s. (This was a time in history when music was often broadcast live from the radio studios.) The Williams family moved from New York City to Los Angeles where John attended high school and then UCLA.

He joined the U.S. Air Force at the age of 19, and was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Band. There he played piano and brass instruments and conducted and arranged music. Following his service in the Air Force, John studied at the Juilliard School and later the Eastman School of Music.



Williams returned to Los Angeles where he began working as an orchestrator at film studios and as a studio pianist and session musician. In the 1970s, he began his decades-long collaboration with movie director Steven Spielberg... who introduced him to director George Lucas.

John Williams’s scores are essential part of the *Star Wars* series, but he admits that he's never actually seen any of the films. "I have not looked at the *Star Wars* films and that's absolutely true. When I'm finished with a film, I've been living with it, we've been dubbing it, recording to it, and so on. You walk out of the studio and, 'Ah, it's finished.'"

In total, Williams has composed music for more than 75 films and several television series, and he’s not finished. As a nonagenarian, his latest projects include serving as music consultant to the film adaption of *West Side Story* (2021) and work on the fifth Indiana Jones film due out in 2023.



Williams’ film scores have been nominated for an Academy Award 52 times. He has won 25 Grammy Awards, 5 Academy Awards, and 4 Golden Globe Awards. The only person who has received more award nominations is Walt Disney.

In addition to his film music, John Williams has composed music for 4 Olympic Games. Watch this interview with John Williams at the 2014 Olympic Games, the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of “Olympic Fanfare and Theme.” <https://youtu.be/EALRJZmWY4>

Williams has composed more than 400 works for orchestra and 9 works for chamber groups. He served as conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra 1980-1993 and still maintains his association as Pops’ Laureate Conductor. He has conducted regularly with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and New York Philharmonic, and led many special performances.

All in the family! John’s brothers, Jerry and Don Williams, are percussionists, too. They have collaborated with John on occasion, but have also performed on their own in bands backing many popular vocal groups. John’s son Joseph was lead vocalist for almost 20 years in the group Toto. In addition, one of his most recognizable roles is the singing voice of adult Simba in Disney’s animated feature *The Lion King* (1994).

**Happy Birthday, John Williams!**  
**Four Square**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

After you have read the short biography about John Williams, complete your choice of three squares. Be ready to share your thoughts and connections with others.

<p>1. Copy 2 sentences from the reading that are interesting to you.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>2. Write one question you would ask John Williams if given the chance.</p> <p>Question? _____</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>3. Write about one piece of information in the reading that connects to something else you know.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>4. Draw a picture to represent part of the reading.</p>

**Air and Simple Gifts** – Composed for the Inauguration of Pres. Barack Obama, January 2009

**Fanfare for Fenway** – Composed for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox (2012)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

	<b><i>Air and Simple Gifts</i></b> <a href="https://youtu.be/FFALyKG_Bck">https://youtu.be/FFALyKG_Bck</a>	<b><i>Fanfare for Fenway</i></b> <a href="https://youtu.be/KXOLnut2pQ0">https://youtu.be/KXOLnut2pQ0</a>
What instruments are used in this piece?		
What dynamic markings does it sound like are written in the music?		
What articulation markings does it sound like are written in the music?		
What is the mood of the music?		
What else do you notice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li></ul>

Answer 1 of these questions. Explain your response using observations you wrote in the chart.

1. Which piece do you like best?

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2. Which piece do you think sounded most appropriate for the occasion it was celebrating?

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3. How are these pieces similar?

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**Olympic Fanfare and Theme**

Name \_\_\_\_\_



Listen to this performance of **Olympic Fanfare and Theme** performed by “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band and conducted by John Williams.  
<https://youtu.be/RZU7oryBgUI> (4:27) Listen at least two times.

Time stamp	Form	Write two observations in each box about the mood, dynamics, or articulation
0:00	<p><b>Fanfare</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brass</li> <li>• Timpani + Low brass pedal note</li> <li>• Snare drums</li> </ul>	
1:00	<p><b>Theme A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• French horns</li> <li>• Snare drums</li> </ul>	
1:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trumpets, woodwinds enter with part of the Fanfare</li> </ul>	
1:45	Energy picks up	
1:56	<p><b>Theme B</b> by Brass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodwinds Echo</li> </ul>	
2:07	Development – fragments	
2:20	<p>Theme B by Woodwinds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brass echo</li> <li>• Low woodwinds running notes</li> </ul> <p>Development – fragments</p>	
2:48	<p><b>Fanfare</b></p>	
3:02	Percussion + Low brass	
3:11	<p><b>Theme A</b> + fragments of <b>Fanfare</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodwinds fast notes</li> </ul>	
3:53	<b>Fanfare</b> ending	

John Williams wanted to convey a sense of effort, excellence, and pride in this piece. Do you get that feeling from the music? Explain why or why not by citing the melody, rhythm, dynamics and/or instruments.

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