

The Blues

1. Question & Research Task

The roots of much of today's rock, jazz, R&B and hip hop and country music can be traced back to Blues music. In fact, Elvis Presley's "Hound Dog" follows the blues format and made the crossover from blues to rock.

What is that format? Where did Blues music come from and how did it evolve?

Jimi Hendrix once said, "Blues is easy to play but hard to feel." Would you agree? Would you recognize a Blues song if you heard one?



Image Source: [Discovery Education](#)

Select the image above to watch a video from Discovery Education about the Blues.

In this Slam Dunk, you will conduct brief, focused research to respond to the inquiry question:

How is blues music an expression of personal experience?

2. Information Sources

What does Blues music sound like?

- [12 Bar Blues Structure: PBS](#)
- [BrainPop video- Blues](#)
- [Blues: Gullah Music](#) PBS Learning Media

History of Jazz and Blues music:

- [Blues: World Book Student](#)
- [Blues: Scholastic GO](#)
- [What is the Blues? - PBS](#)

***If you are prompted to log in to access a database or digital content links, your teacher/librarian can provide login information.**

Important Blues Musicians

Select the names linked below to read a biography about that musician.

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bessie Smith | Robert Johnson |
| B.B. King | Mamie Smith |
| Eric Clapton | W.C. Handy |
| Leadbelly | Ma Rainey |



Musician James Cotton once played with the famous Muddy Waters. Click the image to launch an interview with Cotton.

Image Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

3. Student Activity

Review the videos and resources about the Blues on Slide 2.

Choose a Blues musician from the table on Slide 2 to research. Click on the musician's name to read their biography. Gather notes about your musician and the Blues genre. Look for events in the musician's life that may have influenced their music.

If you need more information about your musician, try one of these databases from the BCPS Digital Content tile in the [Apps Portal](#).

- ProQuest eLibrary, SIRS Discoverer, World Book Advanced or World Book Student.
- BCPL – Biography In Context database (use your Student ID # and password 0000).

Use this [graphic organizer](#) to organize your notes.



Image Source: National Public Radio

[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

Musicians Eric Clapton and Keith Richards were both influenced by the music of Robert Johnson. Click the image to launch an interview Clapton gave where he discusses Johnson.

4. Assessment Activity

How is blues music an expression of personal experience?

Reflect on your learning about Blues music and a Blues musician.

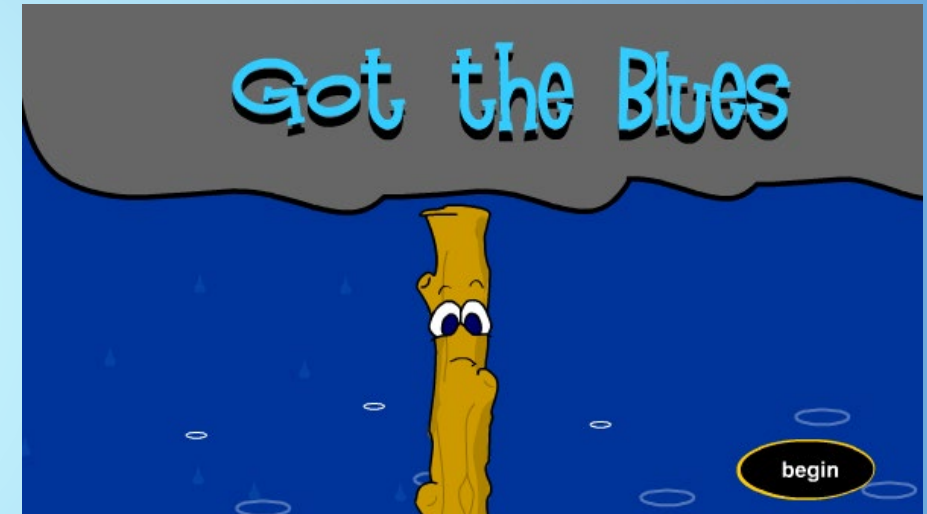
Review the [12 Bar Blues Structure](#) from PBS to recall how a traditional Blues song is structured.

Now you will compose your own Blues song! You will use the 12 bar blues structure and write your lyrics using an AAB pattern. Your Blues song should also reflect what you learned from your research on Blues music and a Blues musician.

Use the interactive song writing site linked at the right for ideas to help you get started on composing your song.

Use this [Blues Lyrics Organizer](#) to organize ideas for your song.

You will perform your song for your teacher when finished. You can sing the lyrics [a capella](#) or play instruments along with them.



Select the image above to try an online melody maker.

Image Source: KnowItAll.org

5. Enrichment Activities



Legendary Blues musician B.B. King performs “Why I Sing the Blues” with a group of notable musicians. Select the image to view and listen.

Image Source: YouTube

Extension Activity:

Create a brief biographical presentation about the Blues musician you chose to research, to inform future students in American Music class about the musician and his/her music.

Here are some digital tools that you could use:

- [Google Slides](#)
- [Discovery Ed Board Studio](#)
- [Microsoft PowerPoint](#)

Cite your sources using [Noodle Tools](#).

6. Teacher Resources

Learning Standards Alignment

Maryland Fine Arts Standards for Music

Indicator 7A: Select musical programs for listening, and demonstrate connections to interests, experiences, and purposes.

Indicator 7B: Demonstrate, describe, and compare the structure, use of musical elements, and context (social, cultural and historical) in a variety of musical pieces.

Indicator 8A: Describe and support personal interpretations of music and analyze how use of musical elements, attention to context, and artistic qualities convey intent.

Indicator 9A: Describe and support personal evaluation of musical works or performances based on existing or developed criteria, using appropriate musical vocabulary.

Indicator 11A: Describe and justify how music is a form of personal, societal, cultural, and historical communication and expression.

Indicator 11B: Describe and explain factors that impact the role of music in the lives of people.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

P21 Framework: 21st Century Student Outcomes

3. Information, Media & Technology Skills: Information Literacy: Access information efficiently and effectively; Use information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand.

ICT Literacy: Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate and communicate information.

Last updated: July 2023 Report broken links to BCPS Library Media Programs using the [Library Media Broken Links Form](#).

BCPS Slam Dunk Research Model, Copyright 2018, [Baltimore County Public Schools](#), MD, all rights reserved. This lesson may be used for educational, non-profit school use only. All other uses, transmissions, and duplications are prohibited unless permission is granted expressly. This lesson is based on [Dr. Jamie McKenzie's Slam Dunk Digital Lesson](#) model.

SLIDE NAVIGATION

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|

Grade 8 American Music

Objective: Students will conduct brief, focused research in order to answer the question “How does music express personal experience? “

Time Frame: 2 -4 50-minute class periods

Differentiation strategies for this lesson:

- Have students use learning supports provided in any [BCPS-licensed Digital Content in the Apps Portal](#)included in this lesson. Refer to [Digital Content Snapshots & Support resources](#) for as needed.

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- Browse the [Mississippi Blues Trail](#) website for more lesson ideas; the site includes a [Curriculum](#) and Media files (audio and video).
- Consider using the [Schoology Assignment Apps](#) feature to assign Microsoft/Google Docs for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.