

# History of Jazz Ensemble

## 1. Question & Research Task

Jazz is a musical art form which originated in the United States in the late 1800's. The music was a combination of influences including black American music, African rhythms, American band traditions and instruments, and European harmonies and forms.

Two key elements of jazz are improvisation and syncopations. Improvisation raises the role of a soloist from performer and reproducer of influences to a composer as well. Improvisation gives jazz a fresh excitement at each performance. Syncopations are the transformations of even and regular patterns broken into uneven accents put in unexpected places in the music.

The earliest Jazz was performed by black Americans who had little training but drew on a strong musical culture from black life. As jazz grew in popularity, it became influenced by musicians with formal training, absorbing influences from folk and classical music of Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world. The development of instruments with new and different characteristics also influenced the sound of jazz.

[Click here to read more about the sound of jazz.](#)

Sources: Tirro, F. (2018). Jazz. In World Book Advanced. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbookonline.com/advanced/article?id=ar286540>

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

**How do musicians develop the identity of a musical movement?**



Watch this video on blues, ragtime and Dixieland; identify how a jazz group can render different styles of music.

Image Source: Discovery Education, by subscription

## 2. Information Sources

**Choose several of the information sources linked here to complete the Student Activity on Slide 3.**

[Article- Black Music on the Radio During the Jazz Age:](#) A preview of the article which appeared in the Summer 1995 is presented in which the author discusses the radio broadcasting of African American music. He mentions the use of live music by local radio stations, the appearance of African American musicians despite discrimination, and the African American audiences.

[The Birth of Jazz:](#) (Discovery Ed)

[Video- The History of Jazz](#) (YouTube video): A student-made overview of influential artists through the development of Jazz since the 1930s.

[Video- History of Jazz pt.1](#) (YouTube video): Jazz great Billie Taylor explains the origin of jazz in the United States.

[Jazz in the 1950s](#)

\*If you are prompted to log in, go to the BCPS Digital Content page in the [Apps Portal](#), open the app, and then return to the direct link.

# 3. Student Activity

As you read, view, and listen using the information sources on Slide 2, take notes about the following topics:

1. Famous artists and their influence on jazz's development
2. Styles and themes of jazz through out the ages
3. Time periods of jazz styles
4. Qualities of the music of the time: How do you know what decade you are listening to? What changes are evident as jazz develops?
5. What makes jazz different than other music styles of the time?

You will be using this information to complete the Assessment Activity on Slide 4.



Mary Lou Williams was an American jazz pianist, arranger, and composer during 1920-1981. Click the Image to learn more about women in jazz.

Image Source: [Wikipedia](#)

## 4. Assessment Activity

### How do musicians develop the identity of a musical movement?

**Choose an option below to demonstrate your understanding in response to the inquiry question:**

Choice 1:

Write an essay that describes the momentum of the history of jazz and how it came to be as we know jazz today. Include musicians and their influence, the sound and qualities of the music, and how jazz transformed the cultural landscape of music.

Choice 2:

Create a video that describes an artist of the jazz movement, their influences and style, and includes a dissection of one of their top songs in terms of the qualities, intent, and how it made you feel.

Choice 3:

Using the research you collected, create and compose a progressive evolution of jazz song that demonstrates the styles through the decades. Watch [this video](#) for an example (YouTube video).



Count Basie and band, with vocalist Ethel Waters, from the film *Stage Door Canteen* (1943). Click to learn more about Jazz Bands.

Image Source: [Wikipedia](#)

# 5. Enrichment Activities



Jazz trumpeter Miles Davis (1926-1991) stands on the balcony of his apartment overlooking Central Park.

Image Source: Discovery Education

1. Read the Discovery Encyclopedia Article on [Miles Dewey Davis](#), an American trumpeter and composer, who pioneered “cool” or understated jazz. As you read, take notes on how the events in his life and how they provided context to his music. What were some of his methods and influences and how did they change and become his style over time?
2. Listen to Miles Davis [play Blue in Green](#). How would you describe the qualities of his music? Do you like this sound, and if so, why? If not, why?
3. How does Miles Davis compare to one of his contemporaries, Thelonious Monk [playing 'Round Midnight](#). Would you consider them equals, or do think one is stronger than the other? Explain your reasoning.
4. Finally, Read the article [The demons and obsessions of jazz genius Thelonious Monk](#). How did the article’s context change your opinion of the two players? What were some of their influences in the development of Jazz?

# 6. Teacher Resources

## Learning Standards Alignment

### Maryland Fine Arts Standards for Music

**Anchor standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.**

**Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences wo make art.**

**Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.**

### [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: 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

## SLIDE NAVIGATION

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## High School Music

**Objective:** Students will conduct brief, focused research in order to discover the history of instrumental jazz ensembles and the artistic influence.

**Time Frame:** (1-2) 90-minute class period

### Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- Have students use learning supports provided in any BCPS-licensed Digital Content from the [Apps Portal](#) included in this lesson. Refer to [Digital Content Snapshots & Support resources](#) for guidance as needed.
- Consider using the Schoology Assignment Apps feature to assign Microsoft and Google documents and files for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.
- You will need to view the videos prior to giving to students, to verify the links fit your unit, are still working, and are appropriate for your specific class or student.