



For educators: What questions do you want to answer in your class?

○ **Considerations –**

- **What is the age range of your students?**
- **What is the approximate length of time you will spend on this unit?**
- **How do you envision a musical study will enhance your classroom study?**
- **Choose 1 or 2 areas to focus on**

A. What is “The Blues?” (The Blues & social studies)

- a. **History** – how did the historical events of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s shape the circumstances of Black Americans and the evolution of The Blues?
- b. **Geography** – what geographical features played into the changing dynamics that shaped the destiny of many Black American families?
- c. **Economics** – how did the search for better job opportunities affect the Black American diaspora?
- d. **Multiculturalism** – what were the effects of segregation and integration on the role of Black Americans in mainstream American culture and society?

Questions to answer:

1. Where was The Blues was born?
2. What is the name of the river in that area?
3. Name two cities important to The Blues.
4. Name two jobs that the first Blues singers might have had.
5. Name one type of song that influenced Blues.
6. What does the Blues help express?
7. Which came first – Blues or Rock & Roll?
8. Which came first – Blues or Hip Hop?

B. How do we know the Blues? (rhythm & number sense)

- a. **Number sense –**
 - i. **Duplet rhythms (twos)** – use duplet rhythms to practice counting by twos
 - ii. **Triplet rhythms (threes)** – use triplet rhythms to practice counting by threes
 - iii. **Measures (fours)** – use counting measures/beats to practice counting by fours
- b. **Physical Coordination/motor skills –**
 - i. **Synchronous movement** – use rhythmic timing to initiate movement skill
 - ii. **Pacing** – vary tempo slow to fast to encourage skill mastery
 - iii. **Multi-limb coordination** – use multi-layered rhythm patterns to encourage limb coordination

Activities:

1. Clap four beats of straight notes (ti-ti or ti-ki-ti-ki).
2. Clap four beats of triplet notes (doo-bee-dah).
3. Clap four beats of swing notes (doo-dah).
4. Name and demonstrate the “backbeats.”
5. Demonstrate the upbeats.
6. Demonstrate a slow and a fast tempo.

C. Create your own Blues Song – (Language Arts, Literature)

- a. **Text and Writing –**
 - i. **Phonics/Phonetic Pronunciation** – use the rhythm of language in music to help sound out especially difficult words
 - ii. **Oral Recitation/Read Out Loud** – utilize a song’s text to practice reading whole sentences and paragraphs
 - iii. **Vocabulary** – examine the text of a song to find new vocabulary words
 - iv. **Slang/Idiomatic Expressions** – explore the use of contractions in slang
- b. **Poetry –**
 - i. **Rhyming** – find word pairs and word groups of different syllabic amounts that rhyme
 - ii. **Rhythm & Meter (Prosody)** – use 3- and 4-line stanza patterns to create a simple blues song
 - iii. **Compare/Contrast** – use metaphor and simile to highlight main ideas in text
 - iv. **Slang/Idiomatic Expressions** – use vernacular expressions to create a more dramatic effect



Get Your Blues Name

Take the name next to the letter using the initials of your actual first, middle and last name.

First Name

A = Fat
B = Muddy
C = Crippled
D = Old
E = Texas
F = Hollerin'
G = Ugly
H = Brown
I = Happy
J = Boney
K = Curly
L = Pretty
M = Jailhouse

N = Peg Leg
O = Red
P = Sleepy
Q = Bald
R = Skinny
S = Blind
T = Big
U = Yeller
V = Toothless
W = Screamin'
X = Fat Boy
Y = Washboard
Z = Steel-Eye

Middle Name

A = Bones
B = Money
C = Harp
D = Legs
E = Eyes
F = Lemon
G = Killer
H = Hips
I = Lips
J = Fingers
K = Boy
L = Liver
M = Gumbo

N = Foot
O = Mama
P = Back
Q = Duke
R = Dog
S = Bad Boy
T = Baby
U = Chicken
V = Pickles
W = Sugar
X = Cracker
Y = Toot
Z = Smoke

Last Name

A = Jackson
B = McGee
C = Hopkins
D = Dupree
E = Green
F = Brown
G = Jones
H = Rivers
I = Malone
J = Washington
K = Smith
L = Parker
M = Lee

N = Tompkins
O = King
P = Bradley
Q = Hawkins
R = Jefferson
S = Davis
T = Franklin
U = White
V = Jenkins
W = Bailey
X = Johnson
Y = Blue
Z = Allison

D. Funny comparisons – It's all about Style! (some things are definitely NOT the Blues!)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| a. Biscuits & Grits vs. Rice Pilaf | g. Guitar vs. Penny whistle |
| b. Barbeque ribs vs. Tofu | h. Saxophone vs. Oboe |
| c. Cadillac Eldorado vs. Toyota Prius | i. Black coffee vs. Snapple |
| d. Ford Mustang vs. Honda Civic | j. Muddy water vs. Mango smoothie |
| e. Memphis, TN vs. Portland, OR | k. Step on a rusty nail vs. Stub your toe |
| f. Chicago, IL vs. Kennebunkport, MN | l. Break yo' heart vs. Bump yo' funny bone |

E. Links to follow up:

Fruteland Jackson – America's preeminent Blues educator
<http://www.fruteland.com/>
Blues in the Schools
Course Guide
Blues links

PBS – The Blues
<http://www.pbs.org/theblues/>
Blues classroom
About the film series
Songs and artists
Road trip
Partners and resources

Delta Blues.org
<http://delta-blues.org/>
Blues links & PDFs
Mississippi Delta links
Recommended reads

Example Blues Song

Gotta Get To School Blues- by C. Heidelberg

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>(Verse 1) Jumped out of bed this morning Had to get my things prepared- (Line 1) Line 2 Repeat Line 1 The bus was coming up the driveway and I hadn't washed my hair! - (Line 3)</p> | <p>(Verse 2) Momma made me breakfast Oh she poured my bowl full- (Line 1) Line 2 Repeat Line 1 Only ate three bites 'Cause I had to go to school! - (Line 3)</p> | <p>(Verse 3) I've got the Get to School Blues Don't wanna leave my Mom & Dog! - (Line 1) Yes, I've got the Get to School Blues My teacher, sounds like a Frog! - (Line 2) The day is so long that I made up this song Called the Gotta Get To School Blues! (Line 3)</p> |
|--|---|--|



Virginia

The Blues Song Starter Kit

(Example)

(Use this when you step up to the microphone at your first Blues gig!)

Hi, my name is _____.
(use your Blues name)

And this is my song, "The _____ Blues."
(what is your song about)

---Verse 1---

Line 1

Well I _____ this _____ and _____.
(action) (time of day) (action phrase)

Line 2

Repeat Line 1

Line 3

The _____ was coming _____ and I _____!
(noun) (location) (action phrase rhyme with line 1)

---Verse 2---

Line 1

Well my _____ and _____.
(proper noun) (action phrase) (pronoun) (action phrase)

Line 2

Repeat Line 1

Line 3

I only _____ 'cause I _____.
(action phrase) (action phrase rhyme with Line 1)

---Verse 3---

Line 1

I got the _____ and I _____ my _____.
(Song name) (negative action) (noun)

Line 2

Yes I got the _____ and I'm/my _____.
(Song name) (noun) (rhyme with Line 1)

Line 3

The _____ _____ _____.
(noun) (ending phrase) (Song name)