

TEACHER'S GUIDE

MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRAIL



The Mississippi Arts Commission presents

The Mississippi Blues Trail *and Beyond*



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRAIL CURRICULUM PROJECT

The Mississippi Legislature established the Mississippi Blues Commission in 2004 and launched the Mississippi Blues Trail in December 2006 as a way to celebrate and explore the state's rich musical heritage. Since that time, over 170 markers have been dedicated, sharing the stories—many previously untold—of blues musicians, venues, communities and experiences. The Mississippi Blues Trail attracts blues fans from around the globe that are seeking a deeper understanding of the musical style that lies at the base of so many other forms of music. By drawing upon the tremendous amount of content on the individual markers, the Mississippi Blues Trail Curriculum project brings the blues to the classroom, where today's youth can learn more about this original art form as well as of the experiences of the men and women behind the music.

HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM IN THE CLASSROOM

The curriculum is based in an arts-integrated approach to learning. It is divided into six core areas: Music, Meaning, Cotton, Transportation, Civil Rights and Media. Three lesson plans are included for each core area, totaling 18 lessons. Ideally, a teacher will use the curriculum as a semester-long project (4 months), sharing one lesson per week. However, the curriculum is written so that lessons can be taught individually.

This curriculum was written with 4th grade Mississippi History students in mind. The frameworks and standards listed at the beginning of each lesson (Mississippi Studies, National Standards and Common Core), are specific to the 4th grade, but teachers can easily modify lessons to be taught through the 12th grade. The Mississippi Blues Trail website (www.msbluestrail.org) is an excellent resource for the curriculum, which includes images of the front and back of all markers, expanded content, maps, original films and more. A search function allows for easy exploration of themes, such as railroads or cotton. Teachers utilizing electronic tablets or smartphones may consider downloading the Mississippi Blues Trail app.

Media samples, including interviews, field recordings, songs and videos, are included for each lesson in the Resources section of the Appendix. Teachers are encouraged to utilize

libraries and the Internet for supplemental media. Teachers may consider partnering with a music specialist for the Music section of the curriculum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1 music - lesson 1

BLUES BASICS



National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
1 a b c e • 3 b d • 4 a b • 6 b c d • 7 b • 9 c d

National Standards for the Visual Arts
1 a b c • 3 a b • 4 a b • 5 a

Mississippi Framework (Music)
1 b c • 2 b c • 3 c • 4 b • 6 a • 7 a • 9

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 c • 4 b • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 d • 3 d

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

Disciplines explored:
Language arts: poetry & descriptive feeling
Visual arts: pattern, expression of feeling
Dance: percussive, expression of feeling

INTRODUCTION: BLUES BASICS

We may recognize it when we hear it, but it's actually quite difficult to come up with a concise definition of the blues. One of the reasons for this is that we can discuss blues both as: 1) a feeling or emotion and 2) a musical form. To complicate things further, we can observe that people often play the blues (the musical form) in order to get rid of the blues (the feeling).

The use of the word “blues” to refer to a sad or melancholy emotion apparently stems from the term “blue devils,” which first appeared in the English language in the 1700s. It later became common to speak of “having the blues” to refer to a feeling of sadness.

Bluesman **John Lee Hooker**, from Lambert, Mississippi, explained that, “The blues was here when the world got here. When Adam and Eve come from the garden. The blues was in them since they got together, man and woman.” Although

the feeling addressed by the blues does likely go back to the beginning of humankind, the musical form of “the blues” apparently emerged around 1900.

It's widely thought that the music first took form in Mississippi, though it might have developed in other parts of the South; we simply don't have conclusive evidence. One of the most famous early accounts was by **W. C. Handy**, an African American bandleader and songwriter who recalled that he first heard the music around 1902 or 1903, played by a guitarist at the train station in Tutwiler, Mississippi.

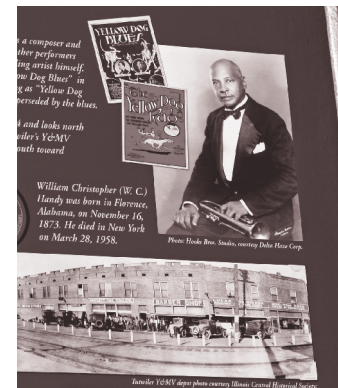
Although at the time Handy worked actively as a musician in the Delta, he had never heard the blues, and recalled that it was “the weirdest music I ever heard.” He later used the sounds he heard in Tutwiler in composing songs. The great sales of Handy compositions such as “Saint Louis Blues” eventually led to him being referred to as the “father of the blues” (though it's impossible to talk about a particular “founder” of the blues.)

The blues took off as a national craze in the 1910s, spurred by sheet music compositions such as Handy's, and since that time has been expressed in many different styles and influenced other forms of music, topics that we'll address later.

OBJECTIVES

① TSW demonstrate understanding of singing by performing on pitch and in rhythm with appropriate **timbre, diction, posture, and maintain a steady tempo**. TSW sing from memory a varied repertoire of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures; performed expressively with appropriate dynamics, phrasing and interpretation.

② TTW model an ostinato using **body percussion (BP): Bo Diddley** Rhythm Pattern (see notation). TSW demonstrate understanding of ostinato accompaniments by performing modeled patterns and improvising new combinations.



Close-up of W. C. Handy Blues Trail marker back

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

1 music - lesson 1

- 3 Given familiarity with *field hollers* and *work songs*, TSW improvise new lyrics to an existing tune and embellish the composition using a variety of sound sources.
- 4 TSW demonstrate understanding of the origins of Mississippi blues music by describing voices, instruments, expressive qualities and explaining the significance of the lyrics.
- 5 TSW explain, using appropriate music terminology, personal preferences for specific musical works and styles.
- 6 TSW identify various uses of music in daily experiences and describe characteristics that make music acceptable for use and explain the roles of musicians in various music settings and cultures.
- 7 TTW lead students.
 - Each group will improvise/create a rhythm pattern using BP to accentuate the steady-beat/firm pulse of the song.
 - Each group will create movement/interpretive dance or a tableau to enhance the lyrics, message, and mood of the song.

PROCEDURES

- 1 TTW share with students information on the AAB pattern of blues lyrics.

A very clear example of how this pattern is used can be found in the song “Hound Dog” by Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, which was popularized by both **Big Mama Thornton** and **Elvis Presley**.

A - You ain’t nothin but a hound dog, cryin’ all the time
 A - You ain’t nothin but a hound dog, cryin all the time
 B - Well, you aint never caught a rabbit, and you ain’t no friend of mine

Although the AAB form is typical of the blues, it is by no means the only one that can be used. The traditional song “Goin’ Down the Road Feelin’ Bad,” for instance, uses an AAAB pattern.

A - I’m going down this road feeling bad
 A - Oh, I’m going down this road feeling bad
 A - I’m going down this road feeling bad, lord, lord
 B - And I ain’t gonna be treated this a-way

These are examples of individual blues stanzas. An entire blues song often consists of a series of similar stanzas that follow one another, very often emphasizing the same basic theme. In “Hound Dog,” for instance, another popular stanza is:

A - When they said you were high class, well, that was just a lie
 A - Yeah, they said you were high class, well, that was just a lie
 B - Well, you ain’t never caught a rabbit, and you ain’t no friend of mine

TTW lead students in creating a color pattern that represents AAB pattern, AAAB pattern

- 2 TTW sing each phrase of “The Homework Blues” (adapted by Mark Malone) asking students to repeat (teachers may use the CD). Repeat call-response for clarity and accuracy of pitch, rhythm, and lyrics.

M Media Resource - “Homework Blues”

Homework Blues Adapted By Mark Malone

- 3 TTW model an ostinato using *body percussion (BP)*:

M Media Resource - The Bo Diddley beat

The Bo Diddley beat

and lead the students in adding this accompaniment to the singing of “The Homework Blues.”

1 music - lesson 1

④ TTW lead the students in a brainstorming activity to determine answers to the following questions:

- What is the meaning of the lyrics of the song?
- How does the song writer cope with problems or situations?
- How does the music seem to express the song writer's feelings?

⑤ TTW post the elements of music: pitch, melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, **timbre**, medium, form, style, texture, and briefly discuss the meaning of each.

⑥ TTW share information on the origins of the blues by discussing **field hollers** and **work songs**.

Field holler: an unaccompanied song that individual African American agricultural laborers sang while working in the fields. These don't have a set form or a steady beat, and the vocal approach often includes moans, bending of the pitch, and dramatic vocal shifts up or down the scale. Music experts have pointed to similarities in West African music, including the Muslim calls to prayer. The **field holler** was often a **lament**, or mournful song. Their vocal style is thought to be a main element of the blues.

Lament: to express or feel sorrow

Work song: songs sung by groups of laborers while performing jobs, often those that required precise timing, such as adjusting railroad tracks. The firm pulse often establishes a rhythm of work; swinging a sledge-hammer, scythe or other implement to complete a task or job. They are often performed in call and response style.

Call and response: musical form where members of a group echo a phrase called out by the group leader. This form, found widely in Africa, is expressed in African American religious music, work songs, and the blues, where instruments often "answer" vocal lines

The blues: a musical form created by African Americans in communities in the South in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The blues built upon earlier musical forms, including the field holler and the work song, and featured elements that derived from both African and European cultures. The term "blues" likely has its roots in the concept of "blue devils," which refers to sadness or a feeling of melancholy

M Media Resource - field hollers and work songs

TTW stand and move in a swinging, rhythmical fashion to get the feeling of repetitive work and add call and response.

⑦ TTW ask students to describe what is heard to elicit understanding of presented material: **call and response**, steady-beat/firm pulse, music to provide work efficiency/smoothness. TTW lead students to label the music **a cappella** as well as to decode the lyrics and label the mood expressed by the performance.

A cappella: singing performed without aid of melodic/harmonic accompaniment

⑧ TTW lead students in "The Homework Blues" and make the following assignment.

TSW create new lyrics to "The Homework Blues" or a new composition.

- Form small groups of 4-5 students
- Each group will determine a struggle/difficulty encountered by fourth grade students and create lyrics to fit the melodic/rhythmic scheme of "The Homework Blues" or create something new
- Each group will improvise/create a rhythm pattern using BP to accentuate the steady-beat/firm pulse of the song
- Each group will discuss the addition of movement (choreography) or the creation of a tableau to enhance the lyrics
- Each group will practice the composition for an in-class performance

⑨ TTW invite each group to perform for the class.

TTW lead the students in "Fire! Fire!" by Barbara ⑩dress, encouraging students to explore **vocal inflection** (see appendix - material pg. 1).

M Media Resource - "Fire, Fire!"

TTW encourage the students to describe the two performances in terms of: content, personal expression, mood, no accompaniment and focus on the use of the voice to achieve inflection (sliding up and down/flexible pitch).

TTW lead students in brainstorming a list of individual ⑫uggles fourth grade students might encounter and assign each person to choose one of the listed items and begin to

1 music - lesson 1

“**lament** on paper” by writing down phrases that come to mind expressing sadness because of the problem/struggle in life. Encourage the students to experiment with **vocal inflection** to “**lament**” through singing the written phrases or talking/wailing and create a “**field holler**.” (*these will be the basis for an accompanied blues composition in the next lesson).

13 TTW lead a discussion on Pablo Picasso’s Blue Period (1901-1904). TTW show examples of the work, including “The Old Guitarist.” Ask students to describe and perceive the works (*see appendix - material pg. 2*).



Pablo Picasso's
“The Old Guitarist”

VOCABULARY

Timbre: the various sounds of voices and instruments

Diction: pronunciation of words specifically focusing on beginning/ending consonants and vowels

Posture: standing tall with weight equally distributed on both feet, shoulders back, and head aligned with the body in preparation for singing

Maintain a steady tempo: ability to perform music within a specified speed indicated either audibly or within the context of instrumental accompaniment

Body percussion: using the body to create sounds: Traditionally the four main body percussion sounds (in order from lowest pitch to highest in pitch) are:

- 1) Stomp: Stamping the feet against the floor or a resonant surface
- 2) Patsch: patting either the left, right or both thighs with hands
- 3) Clapping hands together
- 4) Click/ snapping: clicking with the thumb and middle fingers

Field holler: an unaccompanied song that individual African American agricultural laborers sang while working in the fields.

Lament: to feel sorrow; a song that expresses this feeling

Work songs: songs sung by groups of laborers while perform-

ing jobs, often those that required precise timing, such as adjusting railroad tracks.

Call and response: musical form where members of a group echo a phrase called out by the group leader.

A capella: singing performed without the aid of melodic/harmonic or instrumental accompaniment

Vocal inflection: alteration in the pitch or tone of the voice

MATERIALS

- Elements of music posted for reference
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use
- “The Homework Blues” printed composition
- “The Homework Blues” CD (Mark Malone)
- “Fire! Fire!” By Barbara Andress

ASSESSMENT

TTW utilize the following rubrics for evaluating student compositions:

WORK SONG IMPROVISATION

0-5 Points awarded for each item

27-30 = A; 26-24 = B; 21-23 = C; 18-20 = D; 0-17 = F

- _____ Struggle/difficulty evidenced by lyrics created
- _____ Word-inflection preserved or rhythm improvised
- _____ Movement/creative dance/tableau creativity
- _____ Over-all creativity/originality
- _____ Group effort in creation process
- _____ Ability of the group to perform the composition

FIELD HOLLER LYRICS

0-5 Points awarded for each item

27-30 = A; 26-24 = B; 21-23 = C; 18-20 = D; 0-17 = F

- _____ Struggle/difficulty evidenced by lyrics created
- _____ At least three lines of text evident for each verse
- _____ At least three verses/or three ideas expressed
- _____ Indications of direction of possible vocal inflection for each line of verses (ascend, descend, stay-the-same)
- _____ Movement/creative dance/tableau creativity
- _____ Overall creativity/originality

1 music - lesson 1

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson can be shortened by presenting Procedures 1-6 during an initial learning period and Procedures 7-13 at a successive time.

Students can be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students can find books in the library that further illustrate Mississippi blues or use a search engine to explore performances by noted blues artists.

Successive lessons in the curriculum project will achieve these two options.

For those students with visual impairments—music examples can be enlarged.

For those students with aural impairments—visual clips are important and a visual demonstration of steady-beat with movement is imperative.

1 music - lesson 2

SINGING AND PLAYING THE BLUES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Arts Education (K-4)

1 a b c e • 2 a b c e f • 3 c d • 4 b c • 5 b d
6 c • 9 a b c d e

National Standards for Dance

2 a b c d e • 4 a

Mississippi Framework

1 a b c f • 2 a b c d • 3 a • 4 c • 6 a • 7 b • 9 b

A FEELING INSTEAD OF A STORY

Blues songs typically involve description of a general feeling rather than the telling of a story that—unlike ballads, for instance—has a clear beginning, middle and end. Because this is the case the various lyrical stanzas don't necessarily have to be in a particular order. In the various stanzas of “Hound Dog,” for instance, the singer is simply stating various ways that they want to be treated.

One aspect of the fact that blues songs generally don't have a set storyline—a very definite beginning and end—is that many times singers can simply lengthen the song by taking stanzas from other songs or improvising new ones on the spot. One common theory for the emergence of the AAB form is that repeating the first line twice provided the singer with extra time to think of an answer line!

HOW ARE THE BLUES DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FORMS OF MUSIC?

The fact that blues—unlike ballads—generally don't tell a story is just one way they're different from other types of songs. The distinctiveness of blues songs' lyrical structures—such as the repetition of AAB stanzas—becomes clear if we compare them with other forms of music. In religious hymns, for instance, the same refrain is used between each unique stanza. In “Amazing Grace,” the refrain is:

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see*

Similarly, many pop songs have a chorus that reoccurs throughout the song, usually after several stanzas. A good example is the Beatles' classic “Yesterday.”

1st Stanza

*Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away,
Now it looks as though they're here to stay,
Oh, I believe in yesterday.*

2nd Stanza

*Suddenly, I'm not half the man I used to be,
There's a shadow hanging over me,
Oh, yesterday came suddenly.*

Chorus

*Why she, had to go I don't know, she wouldn't say.
I said something wrong, now I long for yesterday.*

OBJECTIVES

① TSW demonstrate understanding of singing by performing on pitch and in rhythm with appropriate **timbre**, **diction**, **posture**, and **maintain a steady tempo**. TSW sing from memory a varied repertoire of songs representing genres and styles from diverse cultures performed expressively with appropriate dynamics, phrasing and interpretation.

② TSW demonstrate understanding of playing instruments by performing on pitch and in rhythm easy melodic and chordal patterns independently and in groups. Using various instruments TSW perform melodic and harmonic music representative of Mississippi blues culture.

③ Given the framework of a **blues scale** and 12-bar blues TSW demonstrate the ability to improvise a blues melody and provide a 12-bar blues accompaniment on various instruments. Given familiarity with the **blues scale** and the 12-bar blues accompaniment, TSW be able to analyze and notate and explain melodic and harmonic structure of blues melody and harmony.

④ TSW demonstrate understanding of singing the blues by identifying and explaining the use of the music in daily experiences, the roles of musicians in this cultural expression and appropriate audience behavior for listening to this genre after experiencing aural examples.

1 music - lesson 2

PROCEDURES

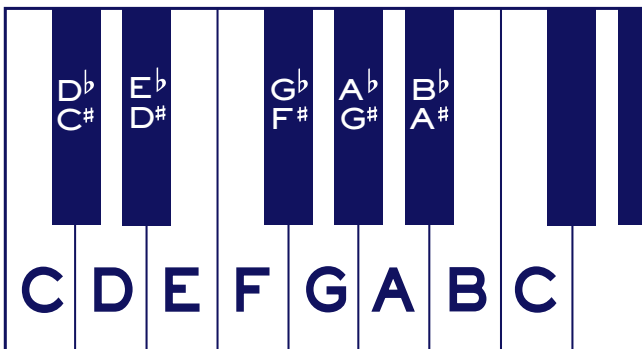
1 TTW play examples of melody and harmony and ask the students to describe what was heard eventually leading the students to define **melody**: one note followed by another, and **harmony**: two or more notes sounded together.

M Media Resource - melody and harmony

2 TTW ask the students to sing a C major scale using solfege with Kodály hand signals, eliciting from the students there are eight notes in this unit and then defining **scale**: a series of pitches arranged in consecutive order either ascending or descending. TTW choose eight students to play the C major scale using Boomwhackers®. TTW label the notes of the scale as C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C and ask students to describe the scale in terms of notes and their aural familiarity. TTW lead the students to label the notes as 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8 and to indicate that the first note of the scale is most important and called: the root and that melody and harmony seem to revolve around this note.

M Media Resource - C major scales

3 TTW write the notes of the C major scale on a blank piano keyboard and indicate how to locate C on a keyboard (notice groups of black notes in groups of threes and twos; find the group of two black notes, place finger on left black note, slide down to the white note on the left = C. TTW direct students to label notes of C scale on their own blank piano keyboard (*see resource page*).



4 TTW indicate that the distance between two notes is called an interval. The basic intervals are a half-step: the distance from one note to its nearest neighbor and whole step: two half steps. The distance from a white note C up to the black note is ½ step and from the black note to the next white note D is also ½ step. The distance from C to D is then a whole

step. TTW indicate that the black notes on the keyboard are either sharps or flats and define each as: sharp (#): raises the pitch of a note ½ step and flat (♭): lowers the pitch of a note ½ step. By raising C ½ step, that black note is known as C-#. TTW go on and ask the students' input to raise the rest of the white notes ½ step creating D#, F#, G#, A#, and lower the white notes ½ step creating D♭, E♭, G♭, A♭, B♭. TTW indicate that the direction of the note determines flat or sharp; raising a note (going up from left to right) creates a sharp and lowering a note (going down from right to left) creates a flat.

5 TTW play a chromatic scale asking students to start on C and move their fingers up to a black note when the pitch changes, then down to a white note, etc., as the chromatic scale ascends and descends. TTW ask the students to sing a **chromatic scale** either on the syllable "la" or using the Kodály symbols (i) for ascending and (e) for descending (i.e. Do-di-Re-ri-Mi-Fa-fi-So-si-La-li-ti-Do and Do-Ti-te-La-le-So, se, Fa, Mi, me, Re, ra, Do). TTW lead the students to label the 12 note scale as a **chromatic scale**.

M Media Resource - chromatic scale

6 TTW display the notes of the most commonly used blues scale using notation on a staff (see notation), lead students to recognize the flat 3, 5, and 7 notes, and have the students sing the blues scale on a neutral syllable "la." TTW choose seven students to play the blues scale using Boomwhackers, tone bells, piano, or Orff instrument.

M Media Resource - blues scale



Pentatonic scale: Before it was widely recognized that African American music had strong roots in Africa, it was often regarded as strange sounding in comparison with music that had European roots. One of the reasons for this is that many forms of African American music, including the blues, are built upon the **pentatonic scale**.

7 TTW teach the song "John the Rabbit" via rote sing-backs and can add a drone with autoharps/Boomwhackers by having the students play a C minor chord on the first beat of each measure. TTW display the melodic notation for "John the Rabbit" and ask the students to determine the scale used (*see resource pages*.)

1 music - lesson 2

M Media Resource - "John the Rabbit"

8 TTW present information on the background of the blues emphasizing:

- Melody that employs the blues scale
- How blues music was used in daily life
- The appropriate audience etiquette and the response when hearing the blues performed

THE BLUES AS A FEELING

If you ask blues musicians to define the blues, they almost invariably describe a state of mind—"the blues is a feeling," "the blues is a good man feeling bad," etc.—rather than refer to technical terms such as "AAB," "12-bar" or "pentatonic scale." Their answers tend to be very subjective and reflect the particular musician's experiences.

While musicians often talk about the "blues" as being a negative feeling, they often couple this idea with a potential solution—that if you play the blues you can help overcome this negative feeling, at least momentarily. In this sense the action of playing the blues—or, just as importantly, listening to the blues—can be seen as having the potential of healing or catharsis, the purging of emotions through art.

Descriptions of the blues in song lyrics often refer to loneliness: "just like a bird without a feather, I'm lost without your love" - **R. L. Burnside**; frustration "got the blues, can't be satisfied" - **Mississippi John Hurt**; and even physical possession. **Son House**, for instance, sang: "You know the blues ain't nothin' but a low-down shakin' achin' chill / Well if you ain't had em honey, I hope you never will."

Blues artists also acknowledge in their lyrics how the process of singing helps them get rid of the blues. **Walter Davis**, born in Grenada, Mississippi, sang: "People if you hear me hummin' on this song both night and day / I'm just a poor boy in trouble tryin' to drive these blues away."

M Media Resource - examples of Mississippi blues

EXPANDED LESSON 9-20 *Enrichment or by Music Specialist*

9 TTW demonstrate improvisation using the **blues scale** at the piano. In groups of four-five TSW experiment with and create a short melody employing the blues scale (specifically using any of these notes: C, E-flat, F, G-flat, G, B-flat, Octave C) on piano keyboards, Boomwhackers, tone bells, Orff instruments,

or any suitable melodic instruments. Groups may use previously created lyrics (*see Lesson One*) for this assignment or may create new lyrics.

M Media Resource - improvisation using blues scale

10 Each student group will perform their blues melody for the class over a static C minor chord produced on the instrument of the group's choice.

11 TTW play **triads** and **chords** (Teachers may use the CD) asking the students to describe what is heard, eventually leading students to tell the difference between the two (triad = three-note chords = two or more notes). TTW define triads/chords.

M Media Resource - triads and chords

12 TTW lead the students in singing a **major scale** using scale numbers (1,2,3, etc.) and instruct the students that the most basic harmony is made up of triads, three-note chords that usually skip a note in between (i.e. notes 1-3-5 make up the first chord in any key). Using this information TTW lead the students in creating chords from the C major scale built on the:

First note of the scale=I chord (notes: C, E, G)

Fifth note of the scale=V chord (notes: G, B, D)

Fourth note of the scale=IV chord (notes: F, A, C)

13 TTW choose students to play one note of these chords using Boomwhackers, piano keyboards, tone-bells, Orff instruments, hand-chimes, etc.). In this manner, three students function as the I Chord, two other students, along with the student playing G function as the V Chord, and two other students, along with the student playing C will function as the IV Chord. For ease of performing the chords, the best placement of students is as follows:

F A C C E G G B D

14 TTW explain that in music the chords move or progress throughout the music to provide harmony to the main idea of the music, the melody. A simple chord progression (the successive movement of chords in a sequence) is I, IV, V, I. TTW have the students play the chords. I, IV, V, I is the basic chord progression for popular/rock music. However, the chord progression for blues music is more extended.

M Media Resource - 12-bar blues progression

1 music - lesson 2

TTW indicate a basic 12-bar blues chord progression with these symbols and have the students play along:

I, I, I, I,
IV, IV, I, I,
V, IV, I, I

M Media Resource - 12-bar blues progression

A variation of this chord progression is:

I, IV, I, I,
IV, IV, I, I,
V, IV, I, I

M Media Resource - 12-bar blues progression

Sometimes, the progression may be:

I, I, I, I and finish with I, I, I, I
IV, IV, I, I IV, IV, I, I
V, IV, I, V V, IV, I, V

15 TTW ask the students to comment on the first part of the last progression, leading them to conclude that ending on the V chord does not sound finished, complete. Ending on the I chord (the chord built on the tonal center) does sound finished/complete and is the basis for music in the Western hemisphere.

16 TTW ask students to play the most common 12-bar blues chord progression when the students begin counting 1, 2, 3, etc.

17 TTW notate on the staff the typical moving notes on the 12-bar blues chord progression
C-E-G-A while I chord is played
F-A-C-D while IV chord is played
G-B-D-E while V chord is played

Choosing more students and assigning more notes with Boomwhackers, keyboards, etc., TTW have students play these notes in the context of the 12-bar blues chord progression.

18 TTW will return to media examples of Mississippi blues (link at end of Procedure 8), and ask students to decode the 12-bar blues chord progression. In addition to the provided media, the students can also watch the short Mississippi Blues Trail films on **Little Milton, Muddy Waters, Son House, B.B. King, and Robert Johnson.**

M Media Resource - Mississippi Blues Trail films

19 TTW listen to recordings of Mississippi blues artists and ask students to:

- 1) Group decides which 12-bar blues chord progression(s) to use
- 2) Group plans sequence of 12-bar blues chord progressions
- 3) Group notates the planned sequence
- 4) Group practices the composition for presentation to entire class

MATERIALS

- Boomwhackers, or tone-bells, keyboards, Orff Instruments
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use
- Classroom Teacher CD

ASSESSMENT

TTW utilize the following rubric for evaluating student compositions:

BLUES SCALE MELODIC COMPOSITION

0-5 Points awarded for each item

27-30 = A; 26-24 = B; 21-23 = C; 18-20 = D; 0-17 = F

- _____ Blues scale evident in created melody
- _____ Created melody fits lyrics
- _____ Notation of composition
- _____ Over-all creativity/originality
- _____ Group effort in creation process
- _____ Ability of group to perform the composition

12-BAR BLUES CHORD

PROGRESSION COMPOSITION

0-6 Points awarded for each item

27-30 = A; 26-24 = B; 21-23 = C; 18-20 = D; 0-17 = F

- _____ 12-bar blues chord progression(s) clearly evident
- _____ Notation of composition
- _____ Over-all creativity/originality
- _____ Group effort in creation process
- _____ Ability of the group to perform the composition

1 music - lesson 2

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/ video viewing device
- CD player
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT ACCOMMODATIONS

Lesson can be shortened by presenting Procedures 1-8 during an initial learning period and Procedures 9-19 at a successive time.

Enrichment:

TTW notate on the staff the typical Boogie-Woogie bassline on the 12-bar blues chord progression and indicate that this was an outgrowth of the blues style:

C-E-G-A-B-flat-A-G-E (in eighth notes)
while I chord is played
F-A-C-D-Eflat-D-C-A (in eighth notes)
while IV chord is played
G-B-D-E-F-E-D-B (in eighth notes)
while V Chord is played

Choosing more students and assigning more notes with Boomwhackers, keyboards, etc., TTW have students play these notes in the context of the 12-bar blues chord progression.

Students can be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website (www.msbluestrail.org) to view videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students can find books in the library that further illustrate Mississippi blues or use a search engine to explore performances by noted blues artists.

Successive lessons in the curriculum project will also continue to achieve these two options.

For those students with visual impairments, music examples can be enlarged. For those students with aural impairments, visual clips are important and a visual demonstration of steady-beat with movement is imperative.

1 music - lesson 3

INSTRUMENTS OF THE BLUES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Arts Education (K-4)

2 a b c d e f • 3 c d • 4 b c • 5 d • 6 c d
9 a b c d e

Mississippi Framework

2 a b c d • 3 a • 4 a • 6 a b • 7 b • 9 b

National Theatre Standards

1 a b • 2 a b c • 3 a b • 4 a • 5 a

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)

2 d • 3 d

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)

1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

WHERE DID THE BLUES COME FROM?

African Americans most likely created the blues in the southern United States around the 1890s or early 1900s. Although it's commonly thought that blues—so commonly associated with complaint—came from slavery, the music actually developed decades after the end of slavery. That said, we can still see how the difficult working and social conditions (ex. sharecropping, Jim Crow) faced by African Americans at the time shaped the nature of the blues.

As an African American music the blues can ultimately be traced back to African traditions. Between the early 1600s and early 1800s over 600,000 Africans were forcibly brought to what is now the United States through the slave trade. Most of these people came from West Africa, which contained a wide diversity of cultures and languages. Upon arriving in North America enslaved Africans were often separated from others who spoke their same language. This was done in order to prevent rebellion, and for the same reason slaves were discouraged from playing drums.

Drums were central to the original African cultures of the enslaved, but their usage was largely banned in the United States during much of the slavery era. This was due to slave owners' concerns that slaves might use drums to communicate with one another in order to organize and incite rebellion. Drums were in fact associated with a noted slave



rebellion in South Carolina in the 1730s.

In the absence of being able to play standard drums, slaves were able to carry on the rhythmic traditions of their homelands through creative means. They improvised by creating percussive instruments out of common items such as sticks or bones, household goods such as spoons and washboards, as well as their own bodies. The style of creating rhythms by lightly hitting parts of your body was called “slapping juba” and, later, “hamboning.”

One popular rhythm was the “Bo Diddley Beat.”



The one major exception to the ban against drumming was in New Orleans, which had been ruled by the Spanish and French until the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. There, slaves and black freedmen gathered on Sundays at Congo Square—located next to the French Quarter—for dances that were accompanied by African-style drumming. The Congo was an area of west-central Africa, and the source of many slaves who were sent to the Caribbean and South America. Today Louis Armstrong Park, named after the great New Orleans jazz trumpet player, occupies the original site of Congo Square.

Slaves that were brought to North America came from a diversity of African cultures, and because of this (and the lack of a detailed historical record) it's impossible to pinpoint direct connections between the blues and African traditions. That said, we can talk about very general ways in which the blues (and other forms of African American music) are connected with African music. Some of the important ideas we might discuss are:

1 music - lesson 3



TBD

Source: National Library of France

Griots: In a number of West African societies the griot (pictured above) was a musician who was often hired by wealthy people to sing songs that praised them. The griot also served the role of a historian, preserving stories that often went back hundreds of years. The blues artist is sometimes compared with the griot in the sense that they also comment on social life through their songs.

Oral tradition: In African societies oral traditions—consisting of knowledge that wasn't necessarily written down—were preserved not only among the griots, but also among all ordinary people. While books might preserve knowledge about religion or science, everyday sorts of knowledge, values and cultural traditions, including music, were passed along from person to person across generations.

Enslaved people who were brought to the United States from Africa had their physical possessions taken away from them, and they were often separated from their friends and family. They were nevertheless able to maintain many of the oral traditions that they had in their heads, though, and used this knowledge in adjusting to a new land and culture.

The African Americans who first created the blues in the late 1800s/early 1900s inherited many of these traditions. Although the blues are often not stories in the traditional sense (having a beginning, end, and a clear moral), the songs of the blues artists did describe the African American experience (and the human experience more generally). In this sense blues artists, like the griots, could be viewed as oral historians, particularly when their songs were recorded and could be heard by later generations.

Popular imagery of Africa during the slave trade era suggests that slaves were all from simple villages in the jungle and

were without formal schooling. In fact, many slaves came from the area in West Africa long occupied by the Mali empire, a kingdom that grew wealthy from the trade of gold and other goods. The city of Timbuktu, which today is located in the country of Mali, was an important center for scholarship, particularly the production of scientific and religious manuscripts. Many of the slaves were no doubt Muslims, as the religion was dominant in many parts of West Africa.

Call and response is a musical pattern in which a line or musical phrase is initially sung or played by a leader, who is then answered with a similar line or musical phrase by a group. In the blues the “response” role is often fulfilled by an instrument.

AMERICAN ROOTS OF THE BLUES

In the centuries prior to the emergence of the blues, some of the important forms of African American music included the *field holler* and the *work song*, which we discussed earlier in this lesson, as well as the *spiritual* and the *blues ballad*.

Spirituals were Christian songs sung by African Americans both before and after slavery. Although many of the songs were written by white Americans or Europeans, African Americans changed the songs through their distinctive performance styles. They also chose songs that spoke to the conditions they faced—many “Negro spirituals,” as they were called, drew on biblical stories about the Jews under slavery in Egypt or stories about the triumph of underdogs, such as David and Goliath. Musically, the blues owes relatively little to the *spirituals*, but many blues musicians performed the songs.

Blues ballads are songs of African American origin that came immediately before the blues and celebrated the stories of African American heroes and badmen. They are important because they are some of the first secular, non-work songs created by African Americans after the Civil War. Several of the best known of these songs address the new technological developments in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The song “Casey Jones” is about a train engineer who lost his life in a train wreck in Vaughan, Mississippi, in 1900, while the song “John Henry” is the story of a railway tunnel worker who competes against a steam-driven hammer to build a tunnel through a mountain.

M Media Resource – spirituals and blues ballads

1 music - lesson 3

OBJECTIVES

- 1 TSW demonstrate understanding of blues instrumentation by visually and aurally identifying the instruments of the blues (guitar, dobro, diddley bow, harmonica, and improvisatory instruments such as the washboard, jugs, and bones/spoons).
- 2 TSW demonstrate understanding of playing blues instruments by performing rhythmic patterns independently and in groups.
- 3 Given an understanding of instruments used to perform the blues, TSW demonstrate ability to improvise a rhythmic composition using unpitched percussion instruments.
- 4 TSW demonstrate understanding of the instruments of the blues by identifying and explaining the use of the music in daily experiences, the roles of musicians in this cultural expression and appropriate audience behavior for listening to this genre after experiencing aural examples.
- 5 TSW demonstrate understanding of the impact of the blues on Mississippi culture by writing a reflection that:
 - 1) Explains blues music
 - 2) Identifies specific instruments
 - 3) Indicates the impact on the life of both performers and consumers/listeners.

PROCEDURES

- 1 TTW introduce the instruments of the blues with a narrative. Demonstrations of all instruments can be seen and/or heard in the media section

M Media Resource - instruments of the blues

The *diddley bow* is a one-stringed guitar-like instrument that is often pointed to as connecting the stringed instrument traditions of Africa and African Americans. In both continents it's often a children's learning instrument and is usually played by using one hand to pluck the string and the other hand to move an object up and down the string to create different notes. Other names for the instrument are: the one-string, the jitterbug, and the monochord zither.

TTW will introduce **Lonnie Pitchford** of Lexington, Mississippi, indicate the location on the Mississippi map.



Lonnie Pitchford with a homemade diddley bow

Source: Axel Kustner, 1980

- 2 TTW give visual and aural demonstration of the *diddley bow* by procuring pictures and recordings and guide the students in creating a *diddley bow* using simple items like cigar boxes. Instructions for making diddley bows/one-string guitars can be found on the Internet.
- 3 TTW introduce the *acoustic guitar*. The guitar gained popularity in the early 1900s when it became mass-produced cheaply and available for sale through mail-order catalogs. Prior to this time, many African American musicians played the banjo, an instrument with roots in Africa. Many blues guitarists used a metal or glass slide (sometime the broken-off neck of a bottle) to play the instrument.
- 4 TTW introduce the *electric guitar* using provided video; TTW explain that the electric guitar became popular first in the 1940s, and that electricity still wasn't common in many rural Mississippians homes at this time.
- 5 TTW introduce **B.B. King**, the most influential bluesman of all-time, and indicate the location on the map of Berclair (where he was born), Kilmichael (where he spent most of his youth), and Indianola, his "hometown" and the site of the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center.
- 6 TTW introduce the *harmonica*, a free wind instrument used in the blues and American folk music that is played by blowing air in and drawing air out when one's lips and/or tongue are placed over one or many holes (called "reed chambers"). Other names include mouth-organ, blues-harp, and the Mississippi saxophone.

1 music - lesson 3

7 TTW will give an aural demonstration of the harmonica using a harmonica, images, or provided video. Important Mississippi harmonica players acknowledged with Blues Trail markers include **James Cotton**, **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2**, and **Howlin' Wolf**.

8 TTW introduce **Chester Arthur Burnett, a.k.a Howlin' Wolf**, from White Station, near West Point, Mississippi, which they will locate on the map.

9 TTW introduce **fife and drum bands**, which usually feature one musician playing the fife (similar to the flute or piccolo, made out of cane) and two or three others playing the marching-style bass, tom or snare drums. This style has influences from both Africa and North American military bands; it is thought to have emerged as style of social music shortly after the Civil War, particularly as slaves were banned from playing drums. The tradition is particularly popular in the North Mississippi counties of Tate and Panola.

TTW introduce percussion instruments, and give visual and aural demonstrations. Explain to the students that smaller instruments were more common prior to the rise to prominence of the standard drum kit.



Otha Turner Blues Trail Marker

10 TTW will discuss improvisatory instruments (made from common household items) that were used by many musicians in the early days of the blues and country music.

The **washboard** is played by rubbing sewing thimbles or other metal objects against the ribbed metal part of the washboard (such instruments are still used widely in Cajun and Zydeco music in Louisiana).

Another form of percussion is creating by hitting together **bones, spoons or sticks**, which are held together in the same hand. Improvised bass instruments include the **jug**, which

when blown into creates a low sound. “Jug bands” featuring improvisatory instruments alongside conventional stringed instruments including the guitar and banjo were popular in the 1920s, particularly in Memphis.

11 TTW lead students in brainstorming folk percussion instruments (tables, pencils, etc.) as well as traditional blues improvisatory percussion instruments such as washboard, jugs, spoons, etc. to use in creating a classroom blues percussion composition. Providing each student with an instrument TTW model short rhythm passages asking students to copy. TTW will encourage students to “take-a-turn” and improvise a rhythm for the class to copy.

12 TTW indicate student groups that will create a rhythmic composition using available “Blues” or at-hand percussion instruments. Students must devise a format for notating the composition, practice the created piece, and perform the created-work for the class.

PROJECTS

Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 to brainstorm a storyline that will introduce the instruments of the blues. Characters can either be the instrument, be the one to play the instrument, or creatively explain/display the blues instruments. Each group may decide how to portray/create the instruments for use in performing the story, as well as plan costuming ideas. Previous rhythmic and melodic compositions can be utilized before, during or after the theatrical presentation. Once a script has been written, each group should be given the opportunity to rehearse and share the performance with the class.

VOCABULARY

Improvise: to make something up on the spot

Genre: a category of artistic work

Spiritual: songs created by African Americans during the slavery era that were often based on stories from the Old Testament. These songs often had hidden meanings regarding the desire to escape slavery.

Blues ballad: a song that tells a story via successive verses

1 music - lesson 3

MATERIALS

- Traditional blues percussion instruments, un-pitched percussion instruments, or at-hand percussion instruments.
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use
- Classroom Teacher CD

ASSESSMENT

TTW will utilize the following rubric for evaluating student compositions:

BLUES PERCUSSION COMPOSITION

0-6 Points awarded for each item

27-30 = A; 26-24 = B; 21-23 = C; 18-20 = D; 0-17 = F

- _____ Minimum of three different percussion instruments utilized
- _____ Notation of composition
- _____ Over-all creativity/originality
- _____ Group effort in creation process
- _____ Ability of the group to perform the composition

LISTENING TEST

Using the media links, label the instruments heard in aural demonstrations.

- _____ 1) acoustic guitar
- _____ 2) jug
- _____ 3) diddley-bow
- _____ 4) washboard
- _____ 5) electric guitar
- _____ 6) fife and drum blues band
- _____ 7) harmonica
- _____ 8) spoons
- _____ 9) jug band

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/ video viewing device
- CD player
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

2 meaning - lesson 1

THEMES OF THE BLUES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 b • 8 b • 9 c d

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 c • 3 a • 4 b • 5 a c e • 6 b c

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 8 c • 9 b

National Theatre Standards
2 c • 4 a

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
4

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c
4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

1 TSW demonstrate understanding of the life of a sharecropper by writing a fictional first-hand narrative that explains housing, treatment, work, travel and feelings. Although blues was influenced by the music that developed during slavery, blues is thought to have developed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when sharecropping was the main system for organizing agricultural labor.

2 TSW demonstrate understanding of the blues by listing verbally and in writing common themes portrayed through blues lyrics, such as:

- Expressing experiences of the individual
- Political isolation
- Freedom of travel
- Dissatisfaction
- Segregation/unequal education for African-Americans
- Humor
- Domination by spouse
- Poor financial choices
- Listener empathy
- Self-assessment
- Good fortune/joy

PROCEDURES

1 TTW will have students imagine living under *segregation* and the sharecropping system during the early days of the blues.

- What are the ways that plantation owners treated sharecroppers? What opportunities did sharecroppers have to move or find new work? Where do they live/ how do they eat? What do they do? What rights do they have? What do they own?

2 TTW will describe the transition from slavery to the sharecropping system after the Civil War, and describe the differences and the similarities in the two situations.

3 TTW discuss different types of financial arrangements for farmers, including ownership, leasing, and sharecropping

4 TTW have students imagine a scenario: living without electricity, with unpaved roads, TV and computers were not yet invented, few/if any schools, limited or prohibited access to a telephone.

5 TTW ask questions and have the students brainstorm:

- What would it be like to live in a house in terms of cooking, bathroom, sleeping in summer/winter, etc.?
- How would you travel? (expect students to answer: train, boat, car)
- What would be the work possibilities? (expect students to answer: agriculture, fishing, building trades, domestic service—back-breaking labor)
- Where to buy things? (lead students to answer: general store, traveling salesmen or mail-order catalogs)

6 TTW briefly describe life after the Civil War using the following narration.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The blues is thought to have emerged in the late 1800s or early 1900s, a time when the most Mississippians didn't yet have electricity, most roads were unpaved, the telephone was not yet common, and television and the computer had yet to be invented. Still, the conditions weren't as primitive as many people imagine. Trains connected the tiniest towns in the state with the rest of the country, the automobile was beginning to become commonplace, and rural residents could buy

2 meaning - lesson 1

a wide range of goods from mail order catalogs from stores such as Sears.

The difficult working and living conditions faced by many African Americans in the late 1800s and early 1900s are often compared to slavery, which ended in 1865 with the conclusion of the Civil War. Most African Americans worked in agriculture, often under the system of sharecropping, which involved working in someone else's fields in return for keeping some of the profit. And although ownership of other human beings was no longer legal, the system of "Jim Crow" segregation severely restricted the rights of African Americans.

SHARECROPPING

During the slavery era plantation owners used slaves that they owned as property to work the fields, and provided them with basic needs such as shelter, food and clothing. Following the Emancipation Proclamation (the government order to end slavery) and the end of the Civil War, plantation owners needed to find a new system for agricultural production, as workers now needed to be paid for their labor. One solution was sharecropping.

In this system workers, often organized in family units, made arrangements to provide a large portion of their crops to the plantation owner in exchange for usage of the land, housing and basic supplies. Plantation owners often provided basic supplies, such as food, on credit, to be paid back after the crops were harvested. In practice, many farmers were taken advantage of under this system, paid too little for their crops and charged high prices for goods. Sometimes farmers would even end the year owing money to the plantation owners.

JIM CROW

"Jim Crow" refers to a system of state and local laws that were established following the Civil War with the intention of limiting the rights of African Americans. These included the creation of separate educational institutions for whites and African Americans, the segregation of public facilities such as movie theaters, restaurants, buses, water fountains, and bathrooms, and voting laws that effectively denied African Americans the right to vote.



Source: Esther Bubley, Library of Congress

The name "Jim Crow" originated in a popular song from the 1830s, and soon became a popular term used to make fun of African Americans. The Jim Crow laws remained in effect until the Civil Rights movement, when they were gradually overturned as the result of court orders, new laws, and pressure created by Civil Rights activists such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

It's also important, though, to recognize some of the positive changes that took place after the end of slavery. Although African Americans were restricted in many ways under Jim Crow segregation, some of the important new freedoms they did experience included the ability to:

- 1) move from one place to another
- 2) find new jobs if they weren't satisfied with their working conditions, and
- 3) find their own romantic partner and create their own families.

These new experiences all contributed to a new way of thinking about life that centered on the needs and desires of the individual, and we can see this clearly in some of the music's common lyrical themes.

7 TTW instruct each student to write a first-person narrative from the perspective of a sharecropper who was at one time a slave.

Rubric:

- 1) Write a letter to a friend (choose a name for yourself and a name for your friend.)
- 2) Explain your new status; be sure to include previous position.
- 3) Describe where you now live; be sure to include previous living situation.
- 4) Tell about new freedoms.
- 5) Describe what work you do as compared to what you did as a slave.
- 6) Tell how you felt about slavery and how you now feel.
- 7) Explain your thoughts about your future.

8 TTW describe a scenario: A teacher comes into class and tells you, the students:

- You must remain in your desks for at least two hours at a time during the school day.
- There will be no recess or physical education/all work at your desk.

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- You can count on staying after school every day.

How would you react? Lead students to explore ways to express feelings of a difficult existence such as telling others and receiving their *sympathy/empathy*, writing about one's feelings, singing about frustration.

- 9 TTW continue the narrative:

THEMES OF THE BLUES

One of the most notable things about the blues as a new form of music was the fact that it was mostly sung in first person—that is to say that the singer was singing about something that had happened to herself or himself. Today that doesn't seem very remarkable—most songs that we hear on the radio are about the experiences of the singer (real or imagined), but the songs that came before the blues usually were not.

For instance, in the spirituals the lyrics were often about what people in the Bible experienced. A popular spiritual was “Go Down Moses,” which was based on the Old Testament story about Moses leading the Israelites away from slavery in Egypt.

*When Israel was in Egypt's land, Let my people go
Oppressed so hard they could not stand, Let my people go
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land
Tell old Pharaoh: Let my people go.*

- 10 TTW continue the narrative:

Many of the secular (non-religious) songs sung by both African Americans and European Americans during the 1800s were ballads, or story songs, sung in the third person—that's to say that the singer wasn't singing about their own experiences, but took the voice of someone else. And many play and dance songs used nonsense lyrics, such as “Turkey in the Straw.”

*Went out to milk and I didn't know how
I milked the goat instead of the cow
A monkey sittin' on a pile of straw
A winkin' at his mother-in-law*

and “Polly Wolly Doodle”:

*Oh My Sally is a spunky gal,
Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day.
With curly eyes and laughing hair,
Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day.*

*Behind the barn, down on my knees,
Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day,
I thought I heard a chicken sneeze,
Sing Polly Wolly Doodle all the day.*

- 10 TTW explain how qualities of movement also exemplify how a person feels, especially when feeling the burden of problems. TTW explore qualities of movement and energy to express different feelings. For example: happy=explosive, sad=sluggish, depressed=lethargic

- 11 TTW introduce **Pinetop Perkins**, show pictures of the Perkins Blues Marker, and locate Belzoni on the Mississippi map, as well as emphasize that blues music expresses the experiences of individuals before continuing the narrative:



Pinetop Perkins Blues Trail Marker

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

What was unique about the blues as a new form of music is that its lyrics usually described what the singer felt like while experiencing life, often—but not always—focusing on problems. **Pinetop Perkins** from Belzoni described the general condition of the blues.

“Blues is just something that you’re worried about something or another, you can’t get it off your mind. When you were born ‘round the Mississippi Delta, you were born with the blues down in there. That’s where the blues come from. You can’t get what you want to, or what you want, and it seems like everything is going wrong. You got the blues even if you can’t sing them. Like when I was little coming up; I didn’t know nothing about no girls or nothing like that. But when I did get up big

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enough to get a girl and you like her and she goes off and leaves you, man you got the blues so bad then it's terrible. No if you were to marry and your wife quits you, oh man, you got the blues even if you can't sing 'em."

(Source: Interview from Barry Lee Pearson's *Jook Right On*)

The fact that the blues expresses the experiences of individuals might also be seen as important in the sense that its lyrics are a form of folk poetry that express the sentiments, experiences, etc. of a people who otherwise did not have ways of publicly expressing these feelings.

12 TTW emphasize that blues music expresses the political isolation of African Americans and continue the narrative:

During the early years of the blues [1890s – early 1900s] African Americans in the South were often not literate, and did not have access to media such as newspapers to express their views. Given this situation we can see how blues—a music that communicated the feelings of African Americans—played an important role in helping a previously “silent” group give voice to what it felt like to be an African American. Blues singers told their stories to live audiences and also made records that could reach people far away. These recordings were particularly important given the fact that blues—and African American culture more generally—was typically not taken seriously as an art form at the time.

SOME THEMES OF BLUES MUSIC

13 TTW will show pictures/discuss **Robert Johnson**, **Son House**, and **Muddy Waters** markers, and emphasize that common topics of early blues include expressions of the desire to travel or leave, having a worried mind, and feeling mistreated by a loved one before continuing the narrative:

M Media Resource - themes of the blues

As noted above, one of the major freedoms experienced by African Americans in the post-slavery era was that of the freedom to travel, although there were still many dangers in the segregation era. The idea of travelling, as a way to get away from one's problems, is common in early blues songs, such as “Rambling on My Mind” by **Robert Johnson**.

*I got ramblin', I got ramblin' on my mind
I got ramblin', I got ramblin' all on my mind
Hate to leave my baby, but you treats me so unkind*

In one of the most popular songs from the Delta, “Walking Blues,” artists including **Son House**, **Robert Johnson**, and **Muddy Waters** sang about waking up in the morning and feeling overtaken by the blues:

*Woke up this morning, I looked 'round for my shoes
You know I had those mean old walking blues
Yeah, I woke up this morning I looked 'round
for my shoes
Girl, I had those, ooh, mean old walking blues*

*Some people tell me that worried blues ain't bad
It's the worst old feeling I ever had
People tell me that worried blues ain't bad
It's the worst old feeling, ooh child, I ever had*

Another popular theme is that of a general feeling of dissatisfaction. In his song “Can't Be Satisfied,” **Muddy Waters** sang:

*Well I'm goin' away to leave, won't be back no more
Goin' back down South, child, don't you want to go?
Woman I'm troubled, I be all worried in mind
Well baby I just can't be satisfied, and I just can't keep
from cryin'*

In “Born Under a Bad Sign,” **Albert King** speaks about having blues his whole life, although the last lines of the couplets suggest the humor in his song.

*Hard luck and trouble is my only friend
I been on my own ever since I was ten
Born under a bad sign
I been down since I begin to crawl
If it wasn't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck at all*

*I can't read, haven't learned how to write
My whole life has been one big fight
Born under a bad sign
I been down since I begin to crawl
If it wasn't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck at all*

The same sort of humorous exaggeration is found in some of the lyrics of **B.B. King**.

*Nobody loves me but my mother, and she could be
jivin' too
Nobody loves me but my mother, and she could be
jivin' too
Now you see why I act funny baby, when you do the
things you do*

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Other songs are more specific about the source of sadness, such as **Muddy Waters'** "Long Distance Call."

*You say you love me, darling, please call me on the phone sometime
You say you love me, darling, please call me on the phone sometime
When I hear your voice, ease my troubled mind*

14 TTW emphasize how blues music can express listener empathy and continue the narrative:

Although the blues often concern one person's problems, the singer is often appealing to the emotions of others who have had similar problems. In "Five Long Years," Clarksdale native **Eddie Boyd** makes it clear that his particular experience of being mistreated can be understood by any other person who has been mistreated.

*If you've ever been mistreated, you know just what I'm talking about
If you've ever been mistreated, you know just what I'm talking about
I worked five long years for one woman, and she had the nerve to put me out*

15 TTW emphasize how blues music can express self-assessment/metacognition and continue the narrative:

In "My Fault," **Muddy Waters** doesn't blame the woman for his problems, but instead expresses his regrets at losing her because of his bad behavior.

*It's my own fault, I don't blame you for treating me the way you do
It's my own fault, I don't blame you for treating me the way you do
When you was deep in love with me at that time, little girl,
I didn't love you*

In another song, "Help Me," **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2** isn't afraid to plead with his woman, though he does threaten to leave her if she doesn't help him:

*You got to help me, I can't do it all by myself
You got to help me, baby, I can't do it all by myself
If you don't help me, darling, I'll have to find somebody else*

16 TTW show pictures of **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2** Blues Trail marker, locate its place on Mississippi map, and emphasize that while blues often appears to be sad, many times it expresses joy, before continuing the narrative.

In many other blues songs, the singer boasts about his or her good fortunes, such as in **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2's** "Eyesight to the Blind," one of his most poetic compositions.

*You're talking about your woman, I wish to God you could see mine
You're talking about your woman, I wish to God you could see mine
Every time the girl start to loving, She bring eyesight to the blind*

*Man I declare she's pretty, And the whole state knows she fine
Man, I declare she's pretty, God knows I declare she's fine
Every time she starts to loving, whoo! She brings eyesight to the blind*

One of simplest expressions of joy in the blues is found in "I Feel So Good" by **Big Bill Broonzy**.

*I got a letter, it come to me by mail
My baby says she's comin' home
And I hope that she don't fail*

*You know I feel so good
Yes I feel so good
Now I feel so good
I feel like ballin' the jack*

17 TTW discuss the difference between sacred music and secular music, explaining how blues falls in the latter category. The social division between these forms of music is captured in the idea of "Saturday night and Sunday morning." In order to illustrate this idea they can show the Mississippi Blues Trail films "Gospel and the Blues" and "Saturday Night Blues."

M Media Resource - Mississippi Blues Trail films "Gospel and the Blues" and "Saturday Night Blues"

18 TTW wrap-up by asking students to take short quiz.

2 meaning - lesson 1

VOCABULARY

Therapeutic: used in maintaining health

Cartharsis: emotional release

Stereotyped: oversimplified conception of a person, place, thing or idea

Empathy: understanding of another's feelings

Segregation: enforced separation of groups

Spirituals: religious songs created by African American slaves that often contained hidden meanings about their desire to escape slavery.

Nonsense lyrics: words or lyrics that seem to have no meaning

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

A. Use words to describe the following:
(5 points each = 50 points)

SLAVERY

- 1) rights
- 2) housing
- 3) treatment
- 4) work
- 5) travel

FREE

- 1) rights
- 2) housing
- 3) treatment
- 4) work
- 5) travel

B. Was there much of a difference between slavery and emancipation for African-Americans? Why/why not?
(50 points)

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT ACCOMMODATIONS

Lesson can be shortened by presenting Procedures 1-8 during an initial learning period and Procedures 9-17 at a successive time.

Students can be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students can find books in the library that further illustrate Mississippi Blues or use a search engine to explore performances by noted blues artists.

2 meaning - lesson 2

EMOTIONS OF THE BLUES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 b • 8 b • 9 a c d

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
3 a • 4 b c • 5 c • 6 b c

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 8 c • 9 b

National Theatre Standards
2 a b c • 3 b • 4 a

OBJECTIVES

- 1 TSW demonstrate understanding of the emotions of the blues by explaining, both verbally and in writing, the difficult life of an African American in the early 1900s specifically referring to hard work, poverty, lack of money, and poor housing.
- 2 TSW demonstrate understanding of the *therapeutic* effect of verbal/music expression by explaining, both verbally and in writing, the following:
 - letting off steam
 - *catharsis*
 - emotional outlet
 - “laughing to keep from crying”

PROCEDURES

- 1 TTW separately present four colors (red, green, yellow, blue) to students asking each time:
 - What the color represents in their opinion and what makes them say so.
 - How the color makes students feel and why, eventually leading them to understand what it means to “get the blues.”
- 2 TTW present the following narrative:

EMOTIONS OF THE BLUES

As we noted in the first lesson, people sometimes play the blues (the music) in order to get rid of the blues (the feeling). As we’ve seen in many of the examples above, the source

of the blues is some source of frustration, often with a loved one. Blues is sometimes *stereotyped* as being negative because of the fact that it often addresses sad topics, but this idea ignores the social and emotional role of the blues.

The blues emerged at a time when life was tough for African Americans in the South, and in many ways the topics it sometimes addresses—hard work, poverty, a lack of money—reflect those times. But it’s also important to see that a major social function of the blues was to serve as an emotional outlet for frustrations of different sorts, as a way for people to “let off steam.”

- 3 TTW introduce **Willie King**, show pictures of the Black Prairie Blues marker on which he’s honored, and locate it on the Mississippi map before continuing narrative:



“Black Prairie Blues” Blues Trail Marker

Willie King, from Noxubee County, spoke of the blues as being heaven-sent as a way of helping African Americans cope with hard times, but he also sees how the blues can help everyone.

“If you don’t participate in the blues then the blues will ride you. No matter where you come from, or how much money you have. They will take you under. But, now, you participate in the blues, it will help get the blues off of you, help get that worry off of your mind.”

“The blues was a gift of God for mankind, but it was only sent down through the African American. It was sent down through the blacks because of the hard oppression at the time, to help calm your mind down some. But it was a gift for the world, for anybody that’s living under oppression.”

(Source: From an interview in *Living Blues* magazine)

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

2 meaning - lesson 2

In discussing the emotional role of the blues, it's important for us to express the idea of the blues performance as **catharsis**—that it serves to purge or cleanse the emotions by directly confronting the problems one faces via music. One of the ways that the blues approaches problems is captured in the phrase “laughing to keep from crying,” found in many songs including this one by Doc Watson.

*I'm going to the racetrack to see my pony run
If he won some money gonna take my good gal some
Yeah, you don't know, you don't know my mind
When you see me laughing, I'm laughing just to
keep from crying*

*When I asked my mama, “Can you stand to say
goodbye”
She said, “Yes, sweet papa, if you can stand to see me
cry, Lord”
You don't know, oh, my mind
When you see me laughing, honey, laughing just
to keep from crying*

*I got a hand full of nickles, got a hand full o' dimes
Got a house full of youngens and no one minds
Lord, you don't know, you don't know my mind
And when you see me laughing, I'm laughing just
to keep from cryin'*

④ TTW lead students in brainstorming a list of challenges facing current fourth grade students followed by ranking each in order of importance. TTW assign students to groups to achieve **catharsis** on paper by composing phrases explaining the reason for “the blues.” TTW encourage students to go one step further by suggesting a solution in the final verse/phrase.

The students may be further engaged by creating movement, adding props/costumes and developing a “surprise” to enhance the solution in the final verse/phrase.

⑤ TTW invite each group to perform the creative work.

VOCABULARY

Therapeutic: used in maintaining health

Catharsis: emotional release

Stereotyped: oversimplified conception of a person, place, thing or idea

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

TTW utilize the following rubric for evaluating student work:
(0-6 points awarded for each item)

27-30 = A; 26-24 = B; 21-23 = C; 18-20 = D; 0-17 = F

- ___ Challenge to fourth grade students evidenced by lyrics
- ___ Word-inflection preserved or rhythm improvised
- ___ Over-all creativity/originality
- ___ Group effort in creation process
- ___ Ability of the group to perform the composition

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ ACCOMMODATIONS

Students can be encouraged to add a melody to the created lyrics, as well as movement, dance, staging, costuming for extra effect.

2 meaning - lesson 3

WOMEN AND THE BLUES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 b • 8 b • 9 c d

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
4 b c • 5 b c

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 8 c • 9 b

OBJECTIVES

- 1 TSW demonstrate understanding of the roles of African American men and women in the early 1900s by listing and explaining expectations for each *gender*.
- 2 TSW verbally and in writing compare/contrast expected roles of African American men and women in the early 1900s with men and women in the early 21st century.

PROCEDURES

- 1 TTW lead a discussion of *gender* encouraging students to list all pre-conceived notions about males and females, both past and present. The teacher may present information concerning struggle of females for political/social equality with males to the present.
- 2 TTW present the following narrative:

WOMEN AND THE BLUES

Today the blues is often associated with men playing the guitar, but the first stars of the blues were women. Although the blues likely developed in the late 1800s or early 1900s, it wasn't until 1920 that the first African American recorded a blues song, "Crazy Blues," by Cincinnati's **Mamie Smith**.

Although both men and women often sing about similar topics, such as missing a loved one or having a broken heart, the details of their songs often vary because of the different experiences encountered by women and men. In the early 1900s, for instance, women were often expected to stay at home and take care of the household (cooking, cleaning, child-rearing), while men were encouraged to leave the home in search of

work and otherwise to provide for themselves. Because of this, it was easier for a man to pursue a career in music, which often involves extensive travel.

Many male blues artists recalled leaving home as a young teenager to go out on the road as a musician, sometimes with their parents' permission. **David "Honeyboy" Edwards** of Shaw, for instance, went out on the road to play music with **Big Joe Williams** of Crawford when he was just fourteen. Such stories are much less common among female blues artists, although many did start out at a young age.

Just as is the case today, becoming a musician often involved a decision not to have a "normal" life—going to work in the morning and coming home to the same place most days. Instead, musicians often have to go where there is money to be made. This often means working late at night on the weekends, and also going out on the road.

The differences in these experiences are reflected in how male and female performers approach the same topics.

For instance, while many men sing about leaving or going out on the road in search of better opportunities, many women would sing about being left behind in the household when their man left them. In her song "Freight Train Blues," for instance, **Clara Smith** sang:

*When a woman gets the blues she goes to her room
and hides
When a woman gets the blues she goes to her room
and hides
When a man gets the blues he catch the freight train
and rides*

Many women's blues songs, though, have a much tougher tone, and female blues singers were able to use the blues to express their independence and express their thoughts on many topics.

This was particularly important from a historical perspective because the blues were one of the first ways through which African American women could provide a public voice to express their political and social problems.

Through performances and recordings, female singers could let other women know that they shared their problems, which often seemed unique to them because they were often experienced in the privacy of the home. Likewise, men listening

2 meaning - lesson 3

to their music might hear views, complaints, or dreams that the women in their lives were too shy or afraid to express.



Close-up from *Riverside Hotel Blues Trail Marker*

The first major star of the blues was vocalist **Bessie Smith**, who became the highest paid African American entertainer of the 1920s and travelled in her own railway car. She was originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee, and died in Clarksdale, Mississippi, in 1937 after an automobile wreck.

M Media Resource - Bessie Smith and Rose Lee Hemphill

One of **Bessie Smith's** first hits was “Down Hearted Blues,” which was written by fellow blues singer **Alberta Hunter**. Here we can see her expressing the common idea of being mistreated, but she's overcome the idea that she is the victim. Now it's her who is in control, holding the “stopper” in her hand.

*Gee, but it's hard to love someone
When that someone don't love you
I'm so disgusted, heartbroken, too
I've got those down hearted blues*

*Once I was crazy 'bout a man
He mistreated me all the time
The next man I get has got to promise
to be mine, all mine*

*Trouble, trouble, I've had it all my days
Trouble, trouble, I've had it all my days
It seems that trouble's going to follow me to my grave*

*I ain't never loved but three mens in my life
I ain't never loved but three mens in my life
My Father, my brother, the man that wrecked my life*

*It may be a week, it may be a month or two
It may be a week, it may be a month or two
But the day you quit me honey, it's comin' home to you*

*I got the world in a jug, the stopper's in my hand
I got the world in a jug, the stopper's in my hand
I'm going to hold it until you men come under
my command*

Ida Cox, another of the early female blues pioneers, suggested that she could get rid of the blues by being “wild,” and rejecting the idea that women should simply be submissive and follow the rules expected for women at the time.

*You never get nothing by being an angel child,
You better change your ways and get real wild,
I want to tell you something and I wouldn't tell you
no lie,*

*Wild women are the only kind that really get by,
'Cause wild women don't worry, wild women don't
have the blues.*

FEMALE BLUES IN PERFORMANCE

In addition to the strong ideas presented in their songs, many of the early blues women represented a glamorous lifestyle, one that seemed out of reach to many of their fans—African American women at the time often worked six days a week in jobs such as farm laborers or as maids. Becoming a blues singer wasn't a guaranteed way to become wealthy—only a few rose to the top—but the more successful singers could enjoy luxuries including fancy dresses, nice cars, and fine jewelry. **Ma Rainey**, for instance, was famous for wearing earrings and a necklace made from gold dollars.

Daphne Duval Harrison wrote a book about the early female blues singers called ***Black Pearls***. Here she describes how they served as role models to others:

“...Because they were such prominent public figures, the blues women presented alternative models of attitude and behavior for black women during the 1920s. They demonstrated that black women could be financially independent, outspoken, and physically attractive. They dressed to emphasize their symbolic importance to their audiences. The queens, regal in their satins, laces, sequins and beads, and feather boas trailing from their bronze or peaches-and-cream shoulders, wore tiaras that sparkled in the lights. The queens held court in dusty little tents, in plush city cabarets, in crowded theaters, in dance halls, and wherever else their loyal subjects would flock to pay homage. They rode in fine limousines, in special railroad cars, and in whatever was available, to carry them from country to town to city and back, singing as they went. The queens filled the hearts and souls of their subjects with joy and laughter and renewed their spirits with the love and hope that came from a deep well of faith and will to endure.

(Source: *Black Pearls*, pp. 221-222)

2 meaning - lesson 3

- 3 TTW introduce **Memphis Minnie**, show pictures of the marker, and use the Mississippi map to locate Walls before continuing the narrative:



Close-up from Memphis Minnie Blues Trail Marker

A popular image of the blues is of the lone guitarist, but there are few women who fit this stereotype. A notable exception was **Memphis Minnie** from Walls, Mississippi, who was one of the greatest of all blues guitarists. She left home at an early age, played at juke joints in north Mississippi and Memphis, and later travelled the country with the Ringling Brothers circus. She was known for both her beauty and toughness, and in her songs addressed many aspects of women's lives, including cooking, work and travel.

Minnie, who later settled in Chicago and became a recording star, sang in her song "Nothing in Rambling" about the tough life of travelling on the road as a hobo.

*I was born in Louisiana, I was raised in Algiers
And everywhere I been, the peoples all say
Ain't nothing in rambling either running around
Well, I believe I'll marry, oooo, wooo, Lord, and
settle down*

*I first left home, I stopped in Tennessee
The peoples all begging, "Come and stay with me"
'Cause ain't nothing in rambling, either running
around
Well, I believe I'll marry, oooo, wooo, Lord, and
settle down*

*I was walking through the alley with my hand
in my coat*

*The police start to shoot me, thought it was
something I stole
You know it ain't nothing in rambling, either
running around
Well, I believe I'll marry, oooo, wooo, Lord, and
settle down*

*The peoples on the highway is walking and crying
Some is starving, some is dying
You know it ain't nothing in rambling, either
running around
Well, I believe I'll marry, oooo, wooo, Lord, and settle
down*

*You may go to Hollywood and try to get on the screen
But I'm gonna stay right here and eat these old charity
beans
Cause it ain't nothing in rambling, either running
around
Well, I believe I'll marry, oooo, wooo, Lord, and settle
down*

VOCABULARY

Gender: the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with males or females

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

Investigate the lives of the earliest women who performed the blues and choose one or more of the following:

- Write a timeline of their lives or historical narrative
- Dramatize one or more portions of their lives with a specific script, characters, scenery, props, costumes
- Design movement and characterizations to bring to life the lyrics sung by women performing the blues

2 meaning - lesson 3

The following can be utilized as a quiz, in-class work, or a homework assignment:

THE BLUES AND GENDER

A. *Explain the difference between African American men and women in the early 1900s by listing at least two expectations for each gender:*

(20 points)

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
1	1
2	2

B. *Explain the following using complete sentences:*

(40 points)

- 1) non-musician's life in the early 1900s
- 2) blues musician's life in the early 1900s

C. *Compare and contrast expectations for men and women in the early 1900s with all men and women in the 21st century by using complete sentences.*

(40 points)

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, Podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ ACCOMMODATIONS

Students can be encouraged to explore the women's suffrage movement via books, videos, movies, Internet, et al.

Students can be encouraged to explore noted African American women in the antebellum years and the time following emancipation.

2 meaning - assessment 1

NAME _____

DATE _____

A. Use words to describe the following:

SLAVERY

1) rights _____

2) housing _____

3) treatment _____

4) work _____

5) travel _____

FREE

1) rights _____

2) housing _____

3) treatment _____

4) work _____

5) travel _____

B. Was there much of a difference between slavery and emancipation for African Americans? Why/why not?

3 cotton - lesson 1

GEOGRAPHY



STANDARDS

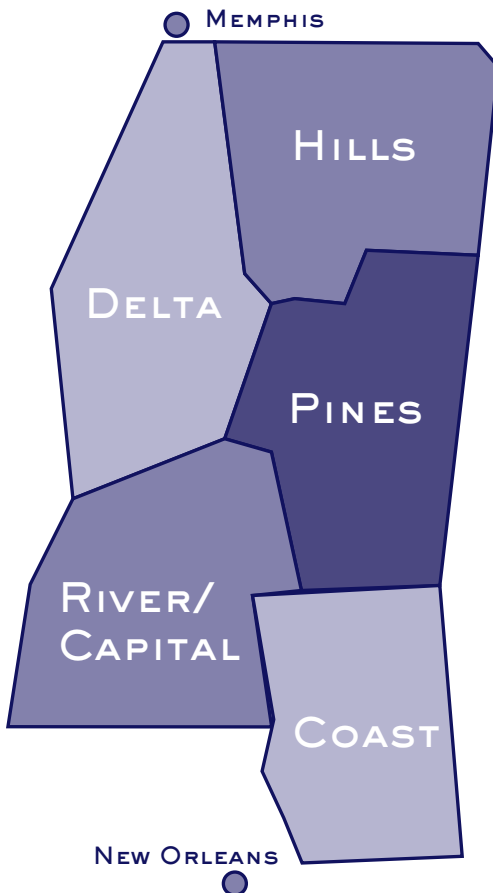
Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
3 a b

National Standards for Visual Arts
1 a c d • 2 c • 3 b

OBJECTIVES

1 TSW will geographically locate and label the following on the Mississippi map:

- The Mississippi Delta and the four other regions of the state: Hills, Pines, Coast, River/Capital
- Mississippi River
- Greenville
- Indianola
- Natchez
- Vicksburg
- New Orleans



PROCEDURES

TTW show the geographical items listed in the objective using a map of Mississippi, asking students to label each item on a blank paper map during the demonstration/teaching. The teacher may also ask students to draw a map of Mississippi exploring what the squiggly side represents (Mississippi River), what the crooked bottom represents (Gulf Coast), etc.

PROJECTS

A. TTW designate groups within the class to create a visual representation of one of the geographical regions of Mississippi.

B. Individuals or groups of students may elect to create a visual advertisement for one of the geographical regions of Mississippi or a city listed in the objective. Students may decide the medium (drawing, painting, sculpture, video, mixed media, etc).

MATERIALS

- Large map of Mississippi and surrounding area
- Blank paper maps of Mississippi

ASSESSMENT

TTW will use a blank map of Mississippi to evaluate each student's ability to locate and label the items listed in the objective.

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

Students can be encouraged to add a melody to the created lyrics, as well as movement, dance, staging, costuming for extra effect.

3 cotton - lesson 2

VOCABULARY



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
8 b • 6 b • 9 c d

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 c • 3 a b • 5 c • 6 c

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 8 c • 9 b

National Standards for Theatre
1 a b • 2 b c • 3 a b • 4 a

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

① TSW explain, both verbally and in writing, the following vocabulary:

- *Sharecropping system*
- *Cotton*
- *Eli Whitney's cotton gin*
- *Steamboat/paddlewheeler*
- *Plantation*
- *Slavery*
- *Civil War*
- *Mississippi River*
- *Levee*
- *Boll weevil*
- Natchez
- New Orleans
- Memphis
- Helena
- Greenwood

PROCEDURES

① TTW present the narrative:

COTTON LESSON

The histories of *cotton* and the blues in Mississippi are very closely connected, particularly as it was the rise of the cot-

ton industry here that resulted in many African Americans moving to the Delta, the likely birthplace of the blues. It's often thought that the hard work involved in the production of cotton, as well as the unfair nature of the *sharecropping system* that prevailed in the Delta, were major causes of the blues. It's certainly the case that the early pioneers of the blues worked in cotton production.

Also, the introduction of mechanization processes in the planting, weeding, and harvesting of cotton is closely associated with the out-migration of many African American laborers from Mississippi, resulting in a large number of musicians and an even larger audience for the blues moving to northern cities including Chicago.



African American workers picking cotton near Clarksdale in 1940

Source: Marion Post Wolcott, Library of Congress

The production of cotton is a theme on a number of Mississippi Blues Trail markers, most notably at Dockery Plantation near Cleveland ["Birthplace of the Blues?"] and Hopson Plantation near Clarksdale ["Cotton Pickin' Blues."]

Cotton has been used for making fabric and clothing for thousands of years, but its production grew dramatically after *Eli Whitney's* 1793 invention of the *cotton gin*, a machine that could separate the white cotton fibers from seeds at a rate much faster than humans. The actual planting, weeding, and picking of cotton, though, would remain very difficult, labor intensive, and a slow process until the mid-1900s.

The development of cotton production in Mississippi was aided by the introduction in the early 1800s of steamboat travel on the *Mississippi River*. In particular, the area around

3 cotton - lesson 2

Natchez—founded in 1716, and located on a bluff high above the river—became one of the leading centers for cotton production in the world. The *steamboats* allowed traffic to go up and down the river; before this no boats could go up the river because of the strong current.

The workers at the cotton plantations in the Natchez area in the early 1800s were slaves who were largely imported to the Mississippi region from states to the east. Their labor made many plantation owners wealthy, and in the middle 1800s there were five hundred millionaires living in the Natchez area, one of the highest concentrations of wealth in the world.



Source: Ben Shahn, Library of Congress

Cotton bales being loaded for shipment in Natchez, 1935

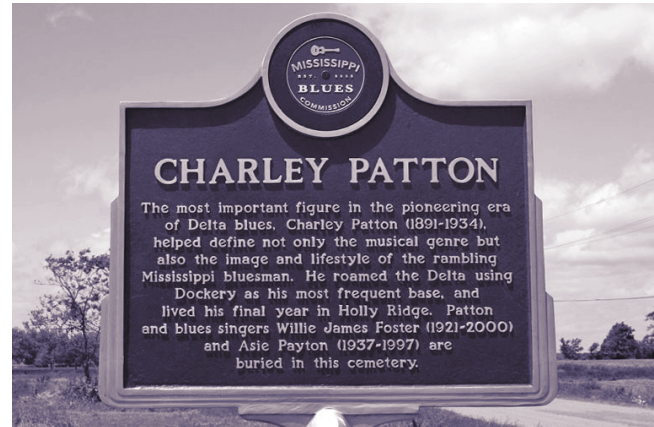
The Civil War (1862-1865) resulted in the end of slavery, but the cotton plantation system continued after its end, as did small farm production of cotton throughout the state. Shortly after the end of the war, cotton production became more important in the Delta. There, the establishment of plantations could only take place after years of hard work clearing the land of swamps and forests, and building levees in order to prevent annual flooding.

Because of these conditions, there were relatively few slaves in the Delta prior to the **Civil War**, and the companies clearing the land recruited many African American workers to come to the area; after the establishment of plantations, more workers were recruited to work the fields.

By the 1870s the many plantations and new towns that arose in the Delta were connected by trains that connected the Delta with New Orleans and Memphis, and allowed for easier shipping of products including cotton.

The Dockery Farms plantation, east of Cleveland, was one of

the biggest in the Delta, and had its own train station, store and currency. It was also an important center for the blues; most notably, **Charley Patton**, the “founder of the Delta blues” lived there with his family and performed at informal “juke joints” on the plantation.



Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

Charlie Patton Blues Trail Marker

1 TTW introduce **Charley Patton** and **Dockery Farms** plantation (“Birthplace of the Blues?” marker), and locate Holly Ridge and Dockery on the map.

One of Patton’s close associates, **Son House**, sang about one of the major natural problems that planters in the Delta faced, drought, in his song “Dry Spell Blues.”

*Now the people down South soon will have no home
Now the people down South soon will have no home
'Cause this dry spell has parched all their cotton
and corn*

*Pork chops forty cents a pound, cotton is only ten
Pork chops forty cents a pound, cotton is only ten
I don't keep no woman, no, no, not one of them*

*So dry, old boll weevil turn up his toes and die
So dry, old boll weevil turn up his toes and die
Now ain't nothin' to do – bootleg moonshine and rye*

The Natchez area continued to be an important area for production, but it declined significantly in the early 1900s with the arrival of an epidemic of **boll weevils**, a small insect that devastated crops because it fed on cotton buds and flowers. The soil in the Natchez area was already weakened from overuse, and the **boll weevil** hit the area harder than the Delta, leading to the Delta taking the lead of the “cotton kingdom.”

3 cotton - lesson 2



In addition to destroying the farmer's crops, the **boll weevil** also put many cotton laborers out of work. Many folk songs were written about the **boll weevil** - here are some verses from the most popular version.

*Well, the boll weevil is a little black bug
Come from Mexico they say
Well he come all the way to Texas
He was lookin' for a place to stay
Just lookin' for a home,
He was lookin' for a home*

*He was lookin' for a home,
Lookin' for a home.
He was lookin' for a home,
Well, lookin' for a home.*

*Well, the first time I seen a boll weevil,
He was sitting on a square,
And the next time I seen the boll weevil,
He had his whole [damn] family there,
They were looking for a home,
Just looking for a home.*

*They were lookin' for a home,
Oh, lookin' for a home.
They were lookin' for a home,
Well lookin' for a home.*

*Well the farmer said to his wife "Honey,
what do you think about that?
The old boll weevil done made a nest
In my brand new Stetson hat,
And it's full of holes,
It's full of holes.*

*It's full of holes,
Oh, full of holes,
It's full of holes,
It's full of holes.*

M Media Resource - cotton songs

VOCABULARY

Sharecropping system: system of agriculture in which a land-owner allows a tenant to use the land in return for a share of the crop produced on the land

Cotton: a bush/shrub which produces a downy fiber used to make yarn or thread

Eli Whitney: an American inventor best known for inventing the cotton gin, which revolutionized cotton production in the American South

Cotton gin: a machine that quickly and easily separates cotton fibers from the seed

Steamboat: vessels used for river travel, which were powered by steam and made up-river travel much easier

Plantation: large estate or farm

Slavery: social system based on enslaved labor

Civil War: also known as the American Civil War (1861-1865), was a war fought over the cessation of the Confederate States in the southern part of the United States

Mississippi River: chief river of the largest river system in the United States, which runs from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico

Levee: a man-made embankment beside a river

Boll weevil: a small insect that devastates crops because it feeds on cotton buds and flowers

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

A. *Design movement and characterizations to bring to life the lyrics of the boll weevil song and/or "Dry Spell Blues" with props, costumes, scenery.*

B. *TTW utilize the following to evaluate the student's understanding of the objective. Define/Explain the following:*

- Sharecropping system
- Cotton
- Eli Whitney's cotton gin
- Steamboat/paddlewheeler
- Plantation
- Slavery
- Civil War
- Mississippi River
- Levee
- Boll weevil

3 cotton - lesson 2

- Natchez
- New Orleans
- Memphis
- Helena
- Greenwood

C. TTW encourage students to utilize movement and props to creatively portray the following through a theatrical scene or tableau:

- *Sharecropping system*
- *Cotton*
- *Eli Whitney's cotton gin*
- *Steamboat/paddlewheeler*
- *Plantation*
- *Civil War*
- *Mississippi River*
- *Levee*
- *Boll weevil*

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ ACCOMMODATIONS

Material may be separated into two categories for presentation: geographical locations and terms.

Students may be encouraged to explore the following:

- Antebellum years
- Steamboat travel on the Mississippi River
- The Broadway musical *Showboat*

3 cotton - lesson 3

MIGRATION



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
8 b • 6 b • 9 c d

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
3 a • 4 b c • 6 b c

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 8 c • 9 b

National Standards for Theatre
1 a b • 2 b c • 3 a b • 4 a

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
2 b c d

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

James Cotton from the Tunica area sang about the economic problems in raising cotton in his “Cotton Crop Blues,” recorded in 1952 for Memphis’ Sun Records.

*Ain't gonna raise no more cotton, I'll tell you
the reason why I say so
Ain't gonna raise no more cotton, I'll tell you
the reason why I say so
Well, you don't get nothing for your cotton, and
your seed's so doggone low*

*Well, raising a good cotton crop, just like a lucky
man shooting dice
Well, raising a good cotton crop, just like a lucky
man shooting dice
Work all the summer to make your cotton, when fall
comes it still ain't no price*

In his “Cotton Farmer Blues,” **Sampson Pittman** provides more detail about the process of selling crops at a bad rate set by storeowners.

*Farmer went to his merchant just to get some meat
and meal
Farmer went to his merchant just to get some meat
and meal
But the merchant told the farmer,
“You got boll weavils in your field”*

*You've got a good cotton crop but it's just like
shooting dice
You've got a good cotton crop but it's just like
shooting dice
Now, you're gonna work the whole year 'round,
buddy, yet, the cotton won't bring no price*

*Now, you go to the commissary, he will give you
plenty of meal and meat
Now, you go to the commissary, he will give you
plenty of meal and meat
Now, he'll give you half a price for your cotton,
not a doggone thing for your seed*

OBJECTIVES

1 TSW explain, both verbally and in writing, the correlation between low pay for cotton farming and the exodus of African Americans to the industrialized Midwest cities of Chicago and Detroit.

PROCEDURES

1 TTW introduce **James Cotton**, show a picture of the Blues Trail marker, and locate Tunica on the Mississippi map before continuing the narrative:



James Cotton Blues Trail marker

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

2 TTW will introduce **Charley Pride**, who is acknowledged on a Mississippi Country Music Trail marker in Sledge, which they will locate on the map. Here one might also discuss how the tough life of agricultural workers was also reflected in country songs.

3 cotton - lesson 3

African American country singer **Charley Pride** also sang about the tough work in his “Mississippi Cotton Pickin’ Delta Town.”

*One dusty street to walk up and down
Nothing much to see but a starvin’ hound
In a Mississippi cotton pickin’ Delta town*

*Down in the Delta where I was born
All we raised was cotton, potatoes and corn
I’ve picked cotton ‘til my fingers hurt*

*Draggin’ a sack through that Delta dirt
And I’ve worked hard the whole week long
Pickin’ my fingers to the blood and bone*

*There ain’t a lot of money in a cotton bale
At least when you try to sell
In a Mississippi cotton pickin’ Delta town*

*One dusty street to walk up and down
Nothing much to see but a starvin’ hound
In a Mississippi cotton pickin’ Delta town*

The difficult work of working with cotton drove many people to leave Mississippi, often for Chicago.

3 TTW continue narration:

The “**Great Migration**” is the term historians use to refer to the relocation of six million African Americans from the South to cities in the North and to the West Coast between 1910 and 1970. There were both “push” and “pull” factors behind this. The “push” factors included segregation and poor economic conditions that led people down South to seek a better life. The “pull” factors were the many jobs up North and out West that offered good wages, such as at factories. Generally speaking, people in Mississippi and neighboring Arkansas, Tennessee, and Alabama moved northward, most notably to Chicago; people in Louisiana and Texas were more likely to move out West, mostly to California.

The **Great Migration** is usually divided into two “waves.” The first was from 1910 until around 1930, when the Great Depression resulted in unemployment throughout the country. Over one million people moved during this time, and another five million moved between 1940 and 1970. In the 1940s many jobs were created to supply troops fighting in World War II, while many people left the South during the same time because new technologies made picking cotton and other crops require many less workers. Since 1970 many African Americans have returned to the South.



Close-up Tommy McClennan Blues Trail Marker

4 TTW introduce **Tommy McClennan**, show a picture of the Blues Trail marker, and locate Yazoo City on the Mississippi map before completing the narrative:

In his “Cotton Patch Blues,” **Tommy McClennan** has moved to Chicago, and is singing to his woman, who is still picking cotton in Mississippi.

*I left my baby in Mississippi
Pickin’ cotton down on her knee
I left my babe in Mississippi
Whoo-ooo, pickin’ cotton down on her knee
She said, ‘Babe, you get Chicago all right
Please right (sic) me a letter, if you please

*I said, ‘Baby that’s alright
Baby, that’s alright for you’
I said, ‘Baby that’s al-ri-yi-yight
That’s alright for you’
She didn’t say, ‘Wha’ch a-mean?’
You just keep a-pickin’ cotton, right there
O babe, should I get through*

*Now, I’m ‘on leave Mississippi
Hopin’ I might flag a ride
Wh’ she say?
I said, I ‘on leave Mississippi, baby
Hopin’ I might flag a ride
An if I don’t get nobody
Oh babe, I’m gon’ pass on by*

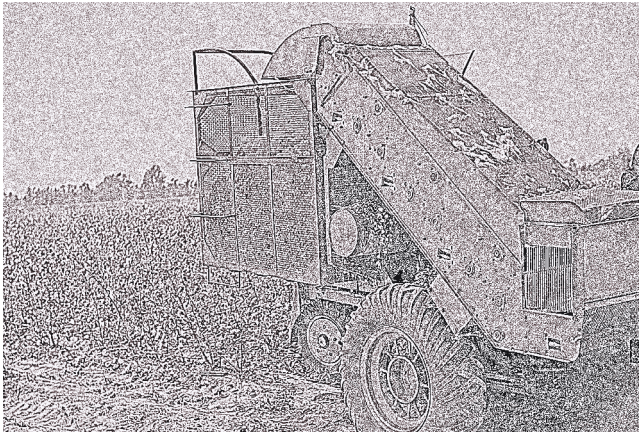
*Babe, when I get in Chicago
I’d a-swear I’m ‘on take a train
‘Take your time now and play it right
‘A ‘cause it’s last go round’
When I get in Chicago, babe
I’d a-swear I’m ‘on take a train,
I know when I get back to Mississippi
I’m sure gonna change yo’ name.*

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

3 cotton - lesson 3

The history of the mechanization of cotton farming is covered well on the marker “Cotton Pickin’ Blues,” which is located on Hopson Plantation near Clarksdale. Here is some select text that explains the process.

In 1944 the Hopson Planting Company produced the first crop of cotton to be entirely planted, harvested, and baled by machine. From the '20s through '40s engineers from the International Harvester Company tested and developed tractor-mounted cotton pickers at Hopson. In 1944 they succeeded in harvesting a crop using only machines, and the technology was soon implemented across the South, resulting in changes including the replacement of the sharecropping system with wage labor and the destruction of the abandoned homes of displaced workers.



International cotton picker on Hopson Plantation, 1939

PROJECT

Design movement and characterizations to bring to life the lyrics of “Cotton Pickin’ Blues” or “Cotton Farmer Blues” with props, costumes, and scenery.

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

TTW utilize the following to evaluate the student’s understanding of the objective.

COTTON AND RELOCATION

Use complete sentences to explain the following:

- 1) Why did many African Americans leave Mississippi to go to Chicago and Detroit in the 1900s?
- 2) What term is used to describe the movement of many African Americans from out of the South?
- 3) During what two (2) time periods in the 1900s did the most African Americans leave Mississippi to go to Chicago and Detroit?

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

Students may be encouraged to explore the following:

- The Great Migration
- Industry in the Midwest
- African American musical culture in the Midwest influenced by the blues
- Motown and the recording industry

3 cotton - assessment 2

NAME _____

DATE _____

*Locate and label the following
on the Mississippi map.*

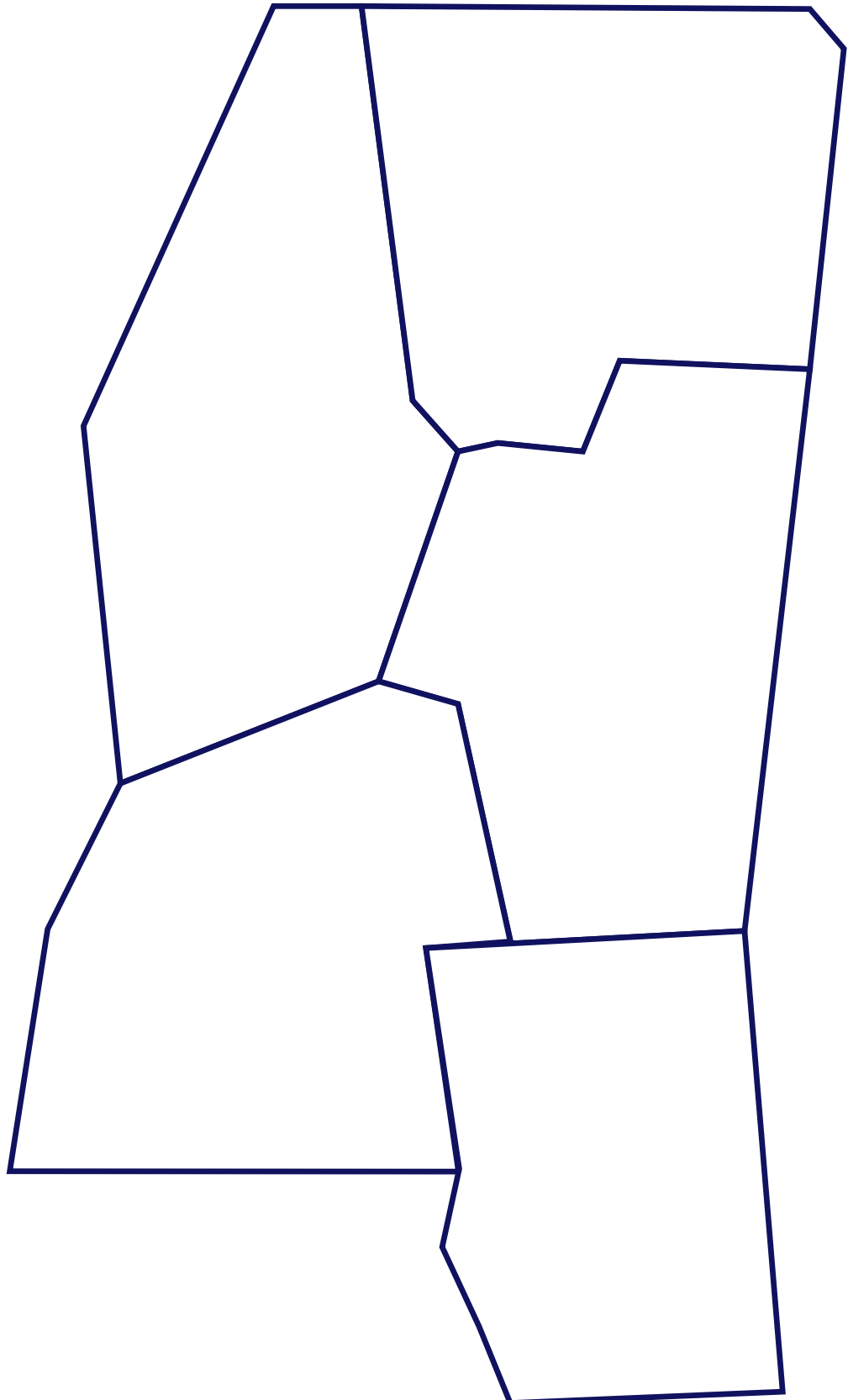
A. The Mississippi River

B. The five regions of the state:

- Mississippi Delta
- Hills
- Pines
- Coast
- River/Capital

C. These towns:

- Greenville
- Indianola
- Natchez
- Vicksburg
- New Orleans



3 cotton - assessment 2

NAME _____

DATE _____

Use complete sentences to explain the following:

A. Why did many African Americans leave Mississippi to go to Chicago and Detroit in the 1900s?

B. What term is used to describe the movement of many African Americans from out of the South?

4 transportation - lesson 1

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 a b c d • 9 c d

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 7 a • 8 c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 a • 3 a b • 4 b c • 5 b e • 6 a b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

National Standards for Theatre
2 b c

National Standards for Visual Art
1 c d

OBJECTIVES

- 1 TSW demonstrate understanding of **transportation** by defining the term verbally and in writing as well as listing at least four modes of transportation.
- 2 TSW locate the **Mississippi River** on a map of the United States indicating origin and terminus by pointing out location and by drawing the river on a blank U.S. map. TTW use floor space in the classroom to create the Mississippi River utilizing students linking hands/arms for the “length” of the river, mimicking the bends and curves in the river.
- 3 TSW define **dugout canoe**, **flatboat**, **keelboat**, and **steamboat** both verbally and in writing.
- 4 TSW define **docks**, **freedmen**, **dockworkers/stevedores** both verbally and in writing and will locate the Mississippi River cities of Natchez, Vicksburg, Greenville, as well as Helena, Arkansas; Memphis, Tennessee; and New Orleans, Louisiana; by pointing out location and by drawing the location on a blank map of Mississippi.

5 TSW indicate the origin and terminus of the Natchez Trace by pointing out the location on a physical map and by drawing the trail on a blank Mississippi map.

6 TSW explain both verbally and in writing the reasons workers sang songs as they worked along the **Mississippi River** and explain the feelings expressed in the music. After viewing photographs or art pieces of the era, TSW create a tableau of workers laboring and singing in the fields, displaying emotions of the individuals performing the tasks.

7 TSW demonstrate their understanding of life along the **Mississippi River** in the 1800s by writing a fictional account in the first-person.

PROCEDURES

1 TTW introduce the topic of transportation by asking the students to brainstorm a definition, followed by determining the many means of **transportation**.

Teachers should work toward shaping student definition to reflect: **moving a person or object from one place to another** and proceed to differentiate between a **conveyance/vehicle/animal**: a movable object on or in which a person or object moves from one place to another and the **movement of self** from one place to another.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

Conveyance/vehicle/animal

water (boat, ship, canoe, kayak, etc.)

road (car, truck, bus, bicycle, motor bike, etc.)

air (airplane, glider, parasail, etc.)

rail (train)

horse

horse and buggy (wagon)

Movement of Self

walk/run/climb

roller skate

ice skate

A. Repeat the first procedure as written. TTW provide magazines, newspapers and other printed materials for students to create a collage of modes of transportation.

B. TTW introduce the topic of transportation by asking students to collectively brainstorm a definition, followed by each student individually listing as many possible modes of transportation on notebook paper. TTW ask for volunteers to mime one of the modes of transportation listed for the class to guess. As each one is determined, the teacher will list

4 transportation - lesson 1

them on the board and categorize as to vehicle, animal, machine or movement of self. The teacher can further engage the students by asking them to recall their own personal travel experiences on a boat, plane, or train, listing the sequence of events (ie: packing bag, locking up the house, terminal, baggage, security screening, boarding, seat-belts, take off, etc.). Students may dramatically recreate the event individually or in groups.

② TTW ask students to brainstorm important rivers in the United States/Mississippi and lead students to discover the origins and terminus of the **Mississippi River** on both a large physical map of the United States as well as a paper-map (see appendix).

Here, teachers can encourage students to discover interesting facts about the Mississippi River by using an Internet search-engine to uncover such things as:

- The Missouri River is the longest river in the U.S.
- The Mississippi River is the second longest river in the U.S.
- The Mississippi River, Missouri River and Jefferson River system create the fourth largest river system in the world.
- Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto was buried in the Mississippi River.

③ TTW briefly describe the history of transportation along the Mississippi River using the following narrative:

TRANSPORTATION LESSON

As we addressed in the lesson about the meaning of the blues, one of the major topics in early blues was the desire to travel, often to escape or avoid one's problems. In this lesson we're going to address some of the modes of travel that could or did in fact take people away along the river, the railway, the highway.

The Native Americans who lived in Mississippi prior to the arrival of Europeans travelled by foot and, on smaller tributaries, by dugout canoe. In the early 1500s Spanish explorers and colonists introduced the horse to the region, and Native Americans soon adopted this mode of transportation. Travel along many stretches of the mighty Mississippi River was for centuries nearly impossible because of its powerful and dangerous current, but in the 1700s European settlers began using flatboats or keelboats to travel downriver from the Midwest. These boats, however, were unable to go back upstream—the current was simply too strong. Sailors who left their loads in

Natchez or New Orleans would often sell or dismantle their boats to sell for lumber, and then walk or ride horses back north to their homes. They often took the Natchez Trace, an ancient path created by Native Americans that stretched four-hundred forty miles northeast to the location of present-day Nashville.



Dugout Canoe



Fishing boats, flatboats, steamboats, sailboats



The Early Natchez Trace

Engraving by De Bry; courtesy John Carter Brown Library

Source: steamboattimes.com

Source: National Park Service

4 transportation - lesson 1

④ TSW define *docks, freedmen, dockworkers/stevedores* both verbally and in writing and will locate the Mississippi River cities of Port Gibson, Natchez, Vicksburg, Greenville and Helena, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee, by pointing out location and by drawing the location on a blank map of Mississippi. TTW engage the students to think about the many shapes of boats/ships and lead them to label the vessels named, including: dugout canoe, flatboat, steamboat and keelboat.

⑤ TTW introduce information regarding steamboat travel on the Mississippi River with the following narrative:

Transportation changed dramatically in the early 1800s, with the arrival of regular steamboat traffic. These large, steam-propelled boats with giant paddles could travel up and down the *Mississippi River*, carrying goods and passengers between New Orleans and cities to the north. As we addressed in the lesson about cotton, the arrival of regular steamboat traffic is what allowed cotton cultivation to take off in the Natchez area and, later, the Delta.

African American slaves and, later, *freedmen*, worked on the boats and along the docks in river cities including Natchez, Vicksburg, Greenville, Helena, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee. The *dockworkers—or stevedores*—often sang while they worked.

M Media Resource - video of dockworkers

The popular folk song “Alberta,” which likely predates the blues, was collected among stevedores in the 1930s and ’40s.

*Alberta, what’s on your mind?
Alberta, what’s on your mind?
You keep me worried, you keep me bothered,
all the time*

*Alberta, what’s on your mind?
Alberta, don’t you treat me unkind,
Alberta, don’t you treat me unkind,
Alberta, don’t you treat me unkind.*

Teachers may show photographs or art pieces of river workers, divide the class into 4-5 groups and ask each group to describe the workers portrayed in each piece. Students may create a tableau of those workers in the art piece with their body language and facial expression. Students in the classroom will have an opportunity to identify and explain the emotions/body language and possible reasons behind them.

Engage the Student

- 1) What is the songwriter expressing in these lyrics?
- 2) Does the author choose formal words or colloquial speech to express ideas?
- 3) Is a rhyme scheme used consistently throughout the song? What is the rhyming pattern?
- 4) Are there hidden meanings expressed in the lyrics?

⑥ TTW introduce information concerning blues songs about the river with the following narrative:

BLUES SONGS ABOUT THE RIVER

While the riverboat era continued into the 1900s, it began to decline in the mid-1800s with the rise of the railroad. Songs about the railway are much more common than songs about the river in blues, which arose during the height of the railway era in the late 1800s. Still, a good number of blues songs celebrate the powerful *Mississippi River* and the mighty steamboats.

“Mississippi River Blues” by **Big Bill Broonzy** is one of the many songs in which the singer talks about his girlfriend being on the other side of the river. While in some cases these songs might be literal, in others, including this one, they are using the symbolism of the river as something so wide and mighty that it’s nearly impossible to cross. The loved one, in other words, is out of reach.

*Mississippi river
is so long, deep and wide
I can see my good girl
Standin’ on that other side*

*I cried and I called
I could not make my baby hear
Lord, I’m ‘on get me a boat, woman
Paddle on away from here*

*Ain’t it hard to love someone
When they are so far from you
Lord, I’m on’ get me a boat and
Paddle this old river blue*

*I went down to the landing
To see if any boats were there
And the ferryman told me
Could not find the boats nowhere*

4 transportation - lesson 1

*The big boat ease up the river
Are turnin' 'round an 'round
Lord, I'm 'on get me a good girl
Or jump overboard and drown.*

Jimmie Rodgers from Meridian recorded the similarly titled “Mississippi River Blues.” Its main themes are of a romantic longing for the river itself and the pleasures of travelling.

*Oh you Mississippi River, with waters so deep
and wide
My thoughts of you keep risin', just like an
evening tide
I'm just like a seagull that's left the sea
Oh your muddy waters keep on callin' me*

*I'm gonna pack my grip [suitcase] and head that way
You'll see me hanging 'round again some day
'Cause I know that's the only way to lose
The Mississippi River blues*

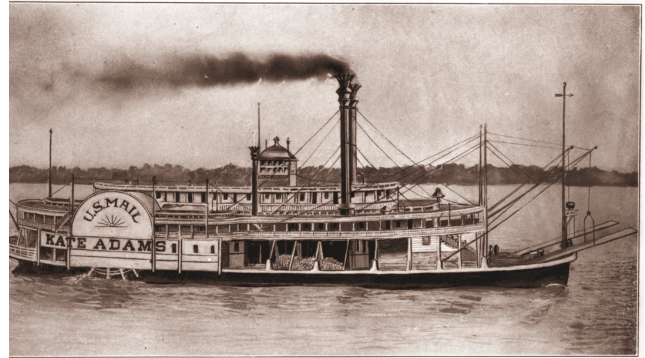
*I've often ridden on your bosom
From Memphis down to New Orleans
Floating over muddy waters, drifting through
familiar scenes
And when I hear that whistle of an old steamboat
Down that Mississippi River again I'm a-going
to float*

*I'm gonna pack my grip and head that way
You'll see me hanging 'round again some day
'Cause I know that's the only way to lose
That mean old Mississippi River blues*

7 TTW introduce information regarding speed of steamboat travel with the following narrative:

In the early 1800s the steamboats were relatively slow—less than ten miles an hour—and it would take five and a half days to travel between New Orleans and Natchez. By 1870, though, it was possible to make the trip in just over ten hours, and steamboat captains sometimes raced down the river. This was very dangerous as it overheated the engines and risked explosions.

Teachers may want students to investigate the reason for increased steamboat speed or may defer to a later in the instructional period (*see projects*).



The Kate Adams

Source: Smithsonian Institution

Jazz Gillum, a native of Indianola, sang about a competition between two famous boats in his song “The Race of the Jim Lee and the Katy Adam.”

*Oh, well, the Jim Lee and the Katy
Oh, well, the two boats had a race
Oh, well, the Jim Lee and the Katy
Oh, well, the two boats had a race
And the Katy threw the water
All in the Jim Lee's face*

*Now Big Katie left Memphis
Just about five o'clock
Big Katy left Memphis
It was just about five o'clock
And when she got down to Helena
Oh, well, she stopped and Eagle rocked
(the Eagle Rock was a popular dance)*

*I'm gonna ride Katy Adams
I'm going to ride until she stops
Oh, well, I'm gonna ride her
until she stops
I ain't gonna lay round here
Oh, well, well, and be no stumbling block*

The Kate Adams was celebrated in other songs as well. In **Papa Harvey Hull's** “Don't You Leave Me Here” he makes a reference to how the boat could be compared with a man.

*Katy Adams got ways
Just like a man
Because she steals a woman sweet loving babe
Everywhere she lands*

4 transportation - lesson 1

- 8 TTW introduce information regarding the sounds of the steamboats with the following narrative:

The loud blasts of the steamboats' whistles could be heard for miles, and workers in the fields learned to recognize boats by their distinctive sounds. In his 1929 recording "Jim Lee Blues" **Charley Patton** sings about hearing the whistle of the Jim Lee and how its lonesome sound leads him to think about his own loneliness.

*I went away up the river, some forty miles or mo'
I think I heard that Jim Lee, when she blow*

*She blow so lonesome, like wasn't gon' blow no mo'
An' it blowed jus' like my baby gettin' on board*

*I'm a po' old boy and a long way from home
An' she's callin' me to leave my plumb good home*

*My mama, she is dead an' my father [just as]
well to be
I ain't got nobody to feel an' care for me*

*If you don't want me, just give me your hand
Mmm, I'll get a woman quick as you can a man*

A number of songs referred to hearing the Katy's whistle blow; similarly, other songs referred to the sounds of the "Katy," the nickname of a train on the Missouri, Kansas, Texas line. Its whistle was recalled in the **Memphis Jug Band's** "K.C. Moan."

*Well, I thought I had heard that KC when she moan
Thought I heard that KC when she moan
Thought I heard that KC when she moan
Well, she sound like she got a heavy load*

*Yes and when I get back on the KC road
When I get back on the KC road
When I get back on the KC road
Gonna love my woman like I never loved before*

*Well I thought I heard that KC whistle moan
Well I thought I heard that KC whistle moan
Well I thought I heard that KC whistle moan
Well she blow like my woman's on board*

*When I get back on that K C road
When I get back on that K C road
When I get back on that KC road
Gonna love my baby like I never loved before*

PROJECTS

Project may be either group or individual.

A. Investigate Native Americans living in the region of Mississippi in which the school/student is located in terms of:

- Housing
- Food
- Clothing
- Transportation
- Music, art, culture
- Rituals, customs, beliefs

B. Research African American slaves living in Mississippi in terms of:

- Time period
- Housing
- Food
- Clothing
- Transportation
- Writing, poetry, literature
- Music, art, culture
- Customs

C. Research African American freedmen living in Mississippi in terms of:

- Time period
- Housing
- Food
- Clothing
- Transportation
- Writing, poetry, literature
- Music, art, culture
- Customs

D. Investigate steamboat travel on the Mississippi River in terms of:

- Boat size, shape, speed, including a diagram of the layout/ floorplan
- Early steamboats c. 1800
- Technological improvements to steamboats c. 1870
- Food service on-board
- Sleeping cabins
- Entertainment
- Safety/dangers

4 transportation - lesson 1

E. Use information gleaned from a project above to create one or both of the following:

- 1) A short story based on fictional characters set in the 1700s or 1800s that describes the locale and lifestyle, as well as a **transportation** event that shaped/affected their lives.
- 2) Pretend to be either a **freedman** or a **steamboat** traveler writing a letter to family or friends telling of work/travel. Be certain to include current geographical location or plans to mail the letter in a port along the Mississippi River.
- 3) Dramatize the story by creating a script that clearly defines the main characters and dialog, constructing scenery, choosing costumes/props, and rehearsing for a class performance.
- 4) Perform the letter as a dramatic solo or by using a narrator and auxiliary actors to portray sentiments expressed in the narrative.

F. Create a scene, monologue, or movement piece inspired by one of the songs included in the lesson.

VOCABULARY

Transportation: conveyance of somebody or something; Means of traveling

Steamboat: large, steam-powered boat with a big paddle

Docks: group of piers for ships; place for ships to moor

Freedmen: African American women and men who were not enslaved during the slavery era

Dockworkers/stevedores: men who worked on the docks loading and unloading ships/boats

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use
- Physical map of the United States
- Paper maps of the U.S. and Mississippi

ASSESSMENT

A. Define transportation in your own words

B. List at least four modes of transportation and label which is self-transportation (ST) and which is by means of a conveyance or vehicle (C/V)

C. Draw the Mississippi River on the U.S. map.

D. On the Mississippi map label the ports of:

Natchez
Vicksburg
Greenville
Helena, AR
Memphis, TN

E. Draw the Natchez Trace from its starting to ending points on the Mississippi map below

F. Why did African American slaves and freedmen sing while working along the Mississippi River? List at least two feelings expressed by the songs.

Teachers may also develop a rubric for evaluating group/individual projects

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson can be shortened by presentation of smaller segments of the eight teaching procedures during each instructional period.

Students can be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view other videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students can find books or Internet sources that further illustrate transportation or Mississippi blues songs about transportation.

4 transportation - lesson 2

TRAINS



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 a b c d • 9 a b c d

National Standards for Theatre
1 b • 2 b c • 3 a b • 4 a

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a b c • 7 a c • 8 c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 c • 3 a b c • 4 b c • 5 a b c e • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

① TSW define **train**, **railroad**, **locomotive**, **steam engine**, **train depot**, **railroad tracks**, and be able to list and describe at least five of the different train cars (coal car, boxcar, passenger car (Pullman car), caboose, dining car, baggage car, observation car, club car).

② TSW be able to indicate cities in Mississippi served by the Illinois Central and Gulf Railroad from the end of the Civil War through 1970 by pointing out the location on a physical map of the state and by drawing the location on a blank map of Mississippi:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| • Jackson | • Meridian |
| • Hattiesburg | • Aberdeen |
| • Gulfport | • Cleveland |
| • McComb | • Greenville |
| • Natchez | • Vicksburg |

③ TSW be able to indicate major railroad cities between Cleveland, MS and Chicago, IL, such as:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| • Memphis, TN | • Champaign, IL |
| • St. Louis, MO | • Chicago, IL |
| • Springfield, IL | |

as well as major railroad cities south to New Orleans, LA

- Vicksburg, MS
- Baton Rouge, LA
- New Orleans, LA

by pointing out the location on a physical map of the United States and by drawing the location on a blank map of the U.S.

④ TSW explain both verbally and in writing the reasons blues artists composed/wrote songs about **train** travel and explain the feelings expressed in the music. Using the information gleaned about feelings, TSW create lyrics for a blues song about train travel expressing various emotions.

⑤ TSW demonstrate understanding of the historical and cultural life of African Americans in Mississippi from the end of the **Civil War** in 1865 through 1950 by writing a fictional account in the first-person. TSW bring the fictional account to life through monologue or adapting the story for a dramatic presentation by creating a script, designing scenery, props, or costumes. TSW may also create a visual art project (drawing, collage, etc.) to further explore this topic.

PROCEDURES

① TTW ask students to brainstorm a definition of **train** (lead students to construct a sentence such as: a series of several vehicles/conveyances/cars on wheels connected and pulled by a power-source (engine)).

And proceed to define: **railroad**, **locomotive**, **steam engine** (with encouragement toward the following definitions:

Railroad: a travel path of parallel steel rails supported by wood planks/ties providing a track for engine/locomotor pulled **trains**

- To transport by **train**
- A company providing transportation by **train** (such as the Illinois Central and Gulf Railway System)

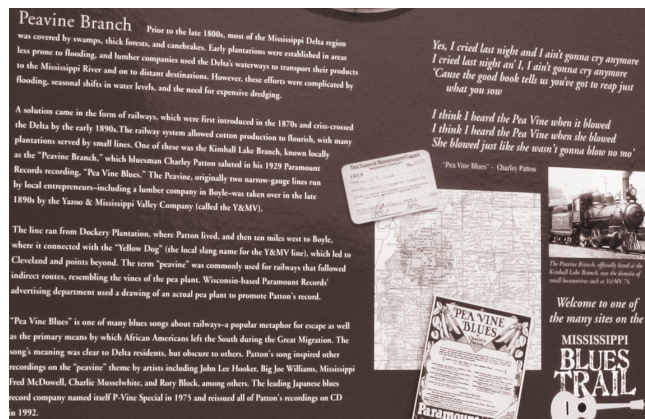
The teacher may want to delve into more of a history of railroads here or defer to the Projects at the end of this lesson

② TTW connect the **train** with blues music by introducing the following narrative:

4 transportation - lesson 2

TRAINS

The **train** played a very important role in the history of the blues because of both its symbolism—a rapid means of leaving or escaping—and because it was the development of the train system in the state, and that system's connection to other cities, which allowed the Delta area to develop economically. As we note in the lesson about cotton, the rise of that crop in the Delta is tied to the emergence of a network of trains in the Delta in the 1870s.



Close-up of the Peavine Blues Trail marker

These trains were often initially used to help remove lumber during the long process of clearing the Delta of forests and swamps; later they connected individual plantations to the main lines to Memphis, Jackson and other larger cities. One of the most well-known of these was the **"Peavine" railroad** which connected **Dockery Farms** plantation, the home of a number of influential blues artists, to the nearby city of Cleveland and the Illinois Central railway line.

Charley Patton, who lived at **Dockery Farms**, recorded a song called "Peavine Blues." In typical blues fashion he used the train to talk about his woman, but he also made reference to how he might leave on the Peavine in case of a flood.

*I think I heard the Pea Vine when it blowed
I think I heard the Pea Vine when it blowed
It blow just like my rider [girlfriend] gettin' on board*

*Well, the levee sinkin', you know I, baby...
(spoken: Baby, you know I can't stay!)
The levee is sinkin', Lord, you know I cannot...
I'm goin' up the country, mama, in a few more days*

*I think I heard the Pea Vine when it blowed
I think I heard Pea Vine when it blowed
She blowed just like she wasn't gonna blow no more*

- 3 TTW point out major cities along the Illinois Central and Gulf Railway System route from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Chicago, Illinois, (emphasizing cities in Mississippi, especially the Delta) using a physical map of the United States and asking students to mark the cities on a paper U.S. map. TTW will then continue with the narrative:

Optional: play Arlo Guthrie's recording of "City of New Orleans" for a more modern take. Ask students if they have seen the Amtrak train that stops in Greenwood, Yazoo City, Jackson, Hazlehurst, Brookhaven, and McComb.

It's hard to imagine how amazing it must have been for people to have first experienced a steam **locomotive** – it belled out smoke, made lots of noise, and travelled as fast as a horse could run. Unlike a horse, though, it could continue at the same pace for hundreds of miles. The train revolutionized travel—a trip that once would have taken weeks could now take just a full day—and people could now envision being able to relocate to, say, Chicago, in less than 24 hours.

In addition to the **Peavine** marker, several other Blues Trail markers address the train and its relationship to the blues. The **Mississippi to Chicago** marker addresses the Great Migration—the movement of thousands of African Americans from the Deep South to northern cities—with a focus on the Illinois Central (IC) railroad, which ran from Chicago straight to the Mississippi Delta.

The IC train that ran from New Orleans to Chicago was called the "Cannonball"—today it's called the "City of New Orleans"—and it was the subject of many blues songs. Raymond's **Joe McCoy** sang about his woman leaving, presumably going north, by taking the Cannonball in his "The Lonesome Train That Took My Baby Away."

*Woke up this morning, found something wrong
My loving babe had caught that train and gone
Now won't you starch my jumper, iron my overalls
I'm going to ride that train that they call the Cannonball*

*Mister depot agent, close your depot down
The woman I'm loving, she's fixing to blow this town
Now that mean old fireman, that cruel old engineer
Going to take my baby and leave me lonesome here*

4 transportation - lesson 2

*It ain't no telling what that train won't do
It'll take your baby and run right over you
Now that engineer man ought to be ashamed of himself
Take women from their husbands, babies from their
Mother's breast*

*I walked down the track when the stars refused to shine
Looked like every minute I was going to lose my mind
Now my knees was weak, my footsteps was all I heard
Looked like every minute I was stepping in another
world*

*Mister depot agent, close your depot down
The girl I'm loving, she's fixing to blow this town
Now that mean old fireman, cruel old engineer
Going to take my baby and leave me lonesome here*

- 4 TTW ask for a student volunteer to identify Memphis, Water Valley (location of the Casey Jones Blues Trail marker), and Vaughan on the physical map of Mississippi and/or eventually show the location and continue the following narrative:

The engineers who operated these trains enjoyed high social status, and one of the most popular train topics in American folk song concerned train engineer John Luther “Casey” Jones, who died when the train he was driving, “The Cannonball,” crashed into a stalled freight train in Vaughan, Mississippi, on April 30, 1930. Jones, who had lived and worked in the railroad town of Water Valley, was credited with saving the lives of his passengers and crew.

Many songs were written about him after his death, including “Casey Jones” by **Mississippi John Hurt**.

*Casey Jones was a brave engineer,
He told his fireman to not to fear
Says, “All I want, my water and my coal
Look out the window, see my drive wheel roll”*

*Early one mornin' came a shower of rain,
'round the curve I seen a passenger train
In the cabin was Casey Jones,
He's a noble engineer man but he's dead and gone*

*Casey's wife, she got the news,
She was sittin' on the bedside,
She was lacin' up her shoes
I said, “Go away, children, and hold your breath,
You're gonna draw a pension after your daddy's dead”*

*“Children, children, get your hat”
Mama, mama, what you mean by that?”
“Get your hat, put it on your head,
Go down in town, see if your daddy's dead”*

*Casey said, before he died,
Fixed the blinds so the boys can't ride
If they ride, let 'em ride the rod,
Trust they lives in the hands of God”*

*Casey said again, before he died,
One more road that he wanted to ride
People wondered what road could that be?
The Gulf Colorado and the Santa Fe*

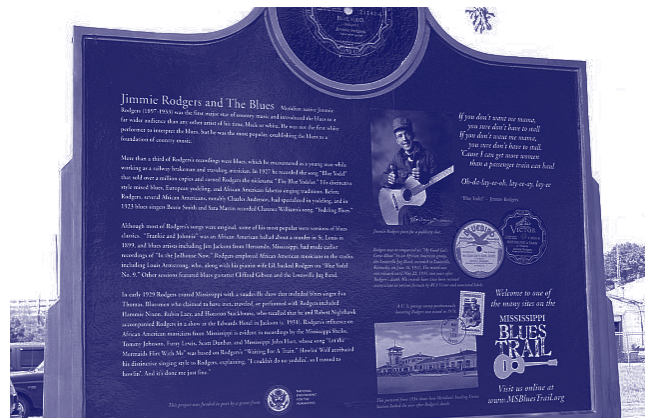


Casey Jones

Source: J. E. France, courtesy Water Valley Railroad Museum

- 5 TTW introduce **Jimmie Rodgers** and ask for a student volunteer to locate Meridian (and perhaps New Orleans) on the physical map of Mississippi or point out the locations and continue with the following narrative:

Jimmie Rodgers from Meridian was one of the most popular artists of his day, and prior to becoming a full time musician he worked on the railroad as a brakeman, a job that involved



Jimmie Rodgers Blues Trail marker

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

4 transportation - lesson 2

assisting the train conductor in slowing down a train. He worked on the New Orleans and Northeastern Railway, which ran between Meridian and New Orleans, and he often encountered other musicians while travelling.

Although Rodgers worked on a train, one of his most famous songs is about a hobo looking for a ride on a boxcar. Riding on boxcars was common but illegal, and in Rodgers' song "Waiting for a Train," one of the problems the hobo faces is a brakeman who refuses to let him ride.

*All around the water tank
Waitin' for a train
A thousand miles away from home
Sleeping in the rain.*

*I walked up to a brakeman
To give him a line of talk
He says if you've got money
I'll see that you don't walk.*

*I haven't got a nickel
Not a penny can I show
He said get off you railroad bum
And slammed the boxcar door.*

*He put me off in Texas
A place I surely love
Wide open spaces 'round me
The moon and stars above.*

*Nobody seems to want me
Or lend me a helping hand
I'm on my way from 'Frisco
Goin' back to Dixieland.*

*My pocketbook is empty
And my heart is filled with pain
I'm a thousand miles away from home
Just waiting for a train.*

M Media Resource - audio and video train songs

⑥ TTW ask for a student volunteer to locate Greenville, Grenada and Amory on the physical map of Mississippi or show the location and continue with the following narrative:

Riding on boxcars or on other areas of freight trains was a common theme of blues songs, largely because many blues singers travelled this way, particularly during the Great

Depression. In his song "Seventy Four Blues," Greenville's **Willie Love** sang about riding boxcars and expressed his desire to move up North.

*Yes, I'm going home in the morning
I'm going to ride number seventy-four
Yes, I'm going home in the morning
I'm going to ride number seventy-four
Yes, if I ever get back up North, peoples
I ain't coming down South no more*

*Seventy-four is just a freight train
But it got ways just like a man
Well, seventy four, girl, is just like a freight train,
But it got ways just like a man
Well, it'll take your sweet little woman, boys,
And put you down cold in hand*

*Well, I rode number seventy-four, boys,
And the rain was falling down
Well, I rode number seventy-four, boys,
And the rain was falling down
Well, you know I got awful cold and chilly
Boys, but I was Chicago bound*

*Yes, if you live in the country, write to me
If you're downtown you can telephone
Yes, if you live in the country write to me darling
If you're downtown you can telephone
Well you know I just want to keep in touch
With you, baby,
Whilst I'm trying to beat my way back home.*

Just as men often sang about using the train to get away, they sometimes complained about the train as the way that their loved one left them. We found this above in the song by **Joe McCoy**, and here **Walter Davis**, a native of Grenada, sings about his "baby" leaving him by taking the Mobile and Ohio (M & O) Railroad.

*My baby's gone
And she won't come back no more
My baby's gone,
And she won't come back no more
Well, she left me this mornin'
And she caught that M&O*

*Listen here, people
I've done everything that I could
Listen here, people
I've done everything that I could*

4 transportation - lesson 2

*Listen here, people
I've done everything that I could
But she's gone and left me
She didn't mean me no good*

*There is one thing, babe
I just can't understand, myself
There is one thing, babe
I just can't understand myself
When that gal I love quit me
I don't want nobody else*

*But that's alright, babe
I can't stand the way you do
But that's alright, babe
I can't stand the way you do
You are running me crazy
And it's goin' to worry you*

*When she left she bought a ticket
Just as long as she was tall
When she left she bought a ticket
Just as long as she was tall
She didn't know how much I loved her
Or else she wouldn't have left at all.*

While some women did leave by taking the train, others sang about being left behind by their man, who left on a train. Here we can see that the reverse side of some men's ideas about "freedom" means that a woman is left alone at home. **Lucille Bogan**, from Amory, was a prolific songwriter and wrote the "T & NO Blues" – T & NO stands for the Texas and New Orleans Railroad.

*The train I ride is eighteen coaches long
The train I ride is eighteen coaches long
And the man that I love, been done here and gone*

*I hate to hear that T & NO [whistle] blow
I hate to hear that T & NO blow
Puts my mind on the wander, makes me want to go*

*Going to beat the train to the crossing, going to burn
The trestle down
Going to beat the train to the crossing, going to burn
The trestle down
That's the onliest way I can keep my man in town*

*He's a railroad man, and he sure do love to ride
He's a railroad man, and he sure do love to ride*

If he don't ride that T and NO, he sure ain't satisfied

*Going to fall on my knees, pray to the Lord above
Going to fall on my knees, pray to the Lord above
Please send me back the only man I love*

PROJECTS

A. Trace the origins of railroads/trains from England in the 1770s to the first trains in America (1827-29) explaining:

- The need for rail transportation
- The earliest "train"
- Early steam engines
- Sophisticated steam engines
- Speed of early rail travel
- First passenger trains
- Long-distance rail travel
- Sleeping cars

B. Investigate the origins of the train depot in the nearest Mississippi city to the school/students in terms of:

- When constructed
- Early pictures of the structure, workers, travelers, goods to be shipped

C. Take a field trip on a train and write about the event with attention to the following:

- A description of all train cars
- Sounds experienced during the trip
- Description of the travel time-frame (either a narrative or timeline)
- Description of train employees at the station and on the train
- Over-all feelings about the trip
- Comparisons to other transportation experiences by boat, car, airplane, etc.

D. Research the major railroad companies that operated from the late 1800s to the mid 1900s in America, specifically including information about the following businesses with geographical attention to the particular service area in the United States (and any others deemed important):

- B&O - Baltimore and Ohio
- ATSF - Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe
- IC - Illinois Central
- SCL - Seaboard Airline and Atlantic Coast Line merged
- UP - Union Pacific
- SP - Southern Pacific
- MKT - Missouri, Kansas, Texas
- L&N - Louisville and Nashville

4 transportation - lesson 2

E. Investigate the east to west expansion of the railroad in the United States with specific emphasis on Promontory Point, Utah/Golden Spike. Include:

- Major railroad companies involved
- Workers employed to lay rail lines and hardships incurred
- Strong politicians involved in advocating complete east-west U.S. rail connection

F. Explain the development of the Pullman car with attention to:

- George Pullman's invention
- Layout/floor plan of sleeping car
- Upper berths/lower berths explained
- Pullman porters and the development of the African American middle class
- Pullman Porters' Chorus based in Chicago

G. Specify that most railroad positions were male-dominated. Investigate important railroad careers such as:

- Brakeman
- Engineer
- Switchman
- Porter
- And others

H. Use information gleaned above to write:

- 1) A short story about the nearest train depot to the school/students centering around a train accident or a mysterious event
- 2) A letter to a family in Mississippi from a worker who is on a train to Chicago to find a better job in the Midwest

I. Explain both verbally and in writing the reasons blues artists composed/wrote songs about train travel and explain the feelings expressed in the music. Use the information generated about feelings to create lyrics for a blues song about train travel expressing various emotions.

J. Write a fictional account in the first-person of the historical and cultural life of African Americans in Mississippi from the end of the Civil War in 1865 through 1950. Bring the fictional account to life through monologue or adapting the story for a dramatic presentation by creating a script, designing scenery, props, or costumes. The student may also create a visual art project (drawing, collage, etc.) to further explore this topic.

K. Dramatize the words to any of the blues songs in this lesson. Use the lyrics to create a script for the characters, ac-

tion, scenery, props and costumes. Or, designate a narrator to read the lyrics as others mime the actions of the people in the ballad.

VOCABULARY

Train: linked railroad cars

Railroad: rail system that made travel and transportation of goods easier in the rural South

Locomotive: rail engine

Steam engine: train with an engine powered by steam (as opposed to coal)

Train depot: place where trains stopped to pick up or drop off passengers

Railroad tracks: tracks made of rails on which trains travel

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

A. Using your own words define the following terms:

- Train
- Railroad
- Locomotive
- Steam engine
- Train depot
- Railroad tracks

B. List at least five types of train cars.

C. Locate the following cities on a blank map of Mississippi:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| • Jackson | • Meridian |
| • Hattiesburg | • Aberdeen |
| • Gulfport | • Cleveland |
| • McComb | • Greenville |
| • Natchez | • Vicksburg |

4 transportation - lesson 2

D. Locate the following cities on a blank map of the U.S.:

- Memphis, TN
- St. Louis, MO
- Vicksburg, MS
- Baton Rouge, LA
- New Orleans, LA
- Champaign, IL
- Chicago, IL
- Springfield, IL

E. List at least two feelings that were expressed in blues songs about rail travel.

Intrapersonal- Write a poem that expresses the feelings of a spouse being separated by distance from a mate because a job couldn't be found nearby

Students can be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view other videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students can find books or Internet sources that further illustrate trains or Mississippi blues songs about rail travel.

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson can be shortened by presentation of smaller segments of the six teaching procedures during each instructional period.

Encourage students to explore the multiple intelligences in terms of the impact of the train on humanity:

Linguistic- Create original lyrics about a trip on a train

Logical/Mathematic- Determine the distance between two destinations on a train and calculate the amount of time it would take to travel between distances

Bodily/Kinesthetic- Create movement (motions) or choreography to enhance the lyrics of any of the blues songs in this lesson

Spatial- Draw one of the train cars from the past century or draw a futuristic train car faster than the current bullet train

Musical- Compose/improvise a melody to enhance original lyrics created about a trip on a train

Interpersonal- Create a dramatization of the life of a Pullman porter on a train centering on the roles of communication and concern for the feelings/well-being of others

4 transportation - lesson 3

HIGHWAYS AND AUTOMOBILES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 a b c d • 9 a b c d

National Standards for Theatre
1 a • 2 b c • 3 a b

Mississippi Framework (Music)
3 • 6 a b c d • 7 a c • 8 b c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 c • 3 a b • 4 b c • 5 c e • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2
4
5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

Using blue painter's tape, the students will outline the shape of Mississippi on the classroom floor. TSW form lines to create each of the highways listed above. TSW be able to verbally respond as to whether the highway their line represents is a north/south or east/west road.

Teachers are encouraged to utilize available technology to take pictures of local highway signs in your community. Ask students to create the local context/location of the highway signs/highways.

④ TSW demonstrate understanding of the impact of the automobile on composers/writers of the blues by using the following to explain:

- Sense of personal freedom
- Owning = status symbol
- Easy manner of escaping troubled life
- Transportation to events such as performances of the blues

⑦ TSW demonstrate understanding of the impact of automobile transportation on citizens of Mississippi in the 1900s by writing a fictional account in the first-person.

PROCEDURES

OBJECTIVES

- ① TSW define the following:
 - Automobile/car (and separate auto from mobile in the explanation)
 - Bus/Greyhound Lines
 - Mass production/assembly line
 - Henry Ford
 - Ford Model T
 - Affordable
- ② TSW distinguish between a US Highway sign (expanded/wide shield), an Interstate Highway sign (tapered shield) and a Mississippi highway sign by pointing to each on a map and by drawing each as well as explaining the difference between each sign.
- ③ TSW draw the following US Highways on a blank map of Mississippi:
 - US 61
 - US 51
 - US 49
 - US 45
 - US 80
 - US 45
 - US 90
 - US 82

① TTW ask students to explain the significance of the following:

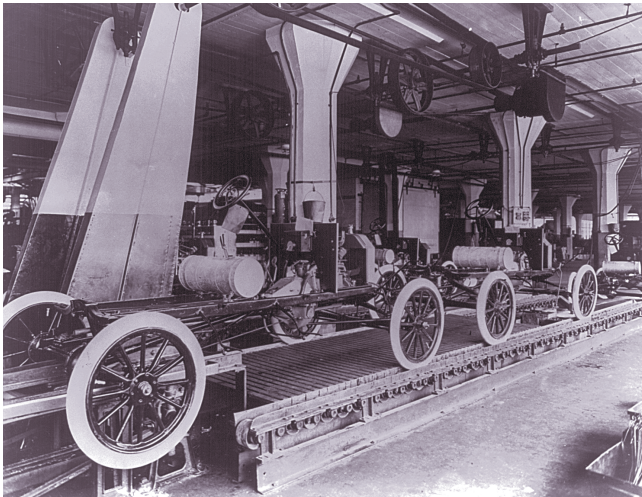
- Automobile (emphasizing separation of the word to assist in definition)
- Bus/Greyhound Bus
- Mass production/assembly line
- Henry Ford
- Ford Model T
- Affordable

② TTW ask students to brainstorm the names of automobile manufacturing companies and makes of vehicles, leading students to center on Ford as the origins of affordable cars due to mass production/assembly line manufacturing and continue with the following narrative:

4 transportation - lesson 3

HIGHWAYS AND AUTOMOBILES

The gasoline-powered *automobile* emerged around the same time as the blues, and in 1914 Henry Ford's Ford Motor Company revolutionized the industry with their assembly-line production. Ford's Model T car became known as the first car that was "affordable," though it would have still been out of reach to many people in Mississippi in the early 1900s. Nevertheless, the car soon became a relatively common sight, and more successful blues artists—such as **Charley Patton**—were able to purchase their own.



Ford Motor Company assembly line

3 TTW show pictures indicating the difference between a US Highway sign (an enlarged/wide shield) as contrasted with the Interstate Highway sign (a tapered shield) and a Mississippi State Highway sign (round). Then, as each of the following US Highways are mentioned in the following narrative TTW direct students to trace each road on a MS Highway Map (issued by MDOT) and then draw these *highways* on a blank map of Mississippi.



US Highway



Interstate



Miss. Highway

With the mass-production of *cars*, national, state and local governments had to start building more roads. A system of national, numbered roads emerged, including Highway 61—which ran from New Orleans through Mississippi and

to near the Canadian border in Minnesota; Highway 51, which ran from New Orleans, through Mississippi, and to north Wisconsin; and Highway 80, which originally ran from coast to coast, and passes through Jackson. Within Mississippi, some of the important early state highways included Highway 49, which ran from Gulfport to Clarksdale (and today into Arkansas); Highway 45, which goes south from Corinth through Meridian; and Highway 10, which ran eastward from Greenville, and which was later replaced by Highway 82. The "Highway 10 & 61" Blues Trail marker in Leland addresses how the intersection of these two highways was a good place for musicians to get tips.



Train Depot, Leland, Mississippi

Passengers on a train that ran from New Orleans to Memphis had to disembark in Leland and eat at cafes there while the train backed into Greenville to pick up more passengers. (The train literally drove backwards for the 10 miles from Leland to Greenville, as not to change tracks.) The train would then drive back to Leland, gather the passengers and continue down the line to New Orleans or Memphis.

Like the railways, the highways provided blues artists with both a practical means of travel to and from performances, and also served to spark the imagination. This is most evident in the many songs about Highway 61, which ran cut through the Delta and was the way many Mississippians moved northward. Few of the blues songs about Highway 61—which is memorialized in Blues Trail markers in both Vicksburg and Tunica—are very accurate in their depiction of where it travels, but this did not do anything to diminish the idea of Highway 61 as a road that could take you far away from your current problems.

In the version by **Mississippi Fred McDowell**, for instance, Highway 61 stretches from New York City to the Gulf of Mexico, while other versions describe it as going all the way to California.

4 transportation - lesson 3

Lord, that 61 Highway
It's the longest road I know-whoa
Lord, that 61 Highway
It the longest road I know-oh
She run from New York City
Down the Gulf of Mexico

Lord, it's some folks said them
Greyhound buses don't run
Lord, it's some folks said them
Greyhound buses don't run
Just go to West Memphis, baby
Look down Highway 61

I said, please
Please see somebody for me
I said ple-eee-ase
Please see somebody for me
If you see my baby
Tell her she's alright with me

I'm gonna buy me a pony
Can pace, fox-trot and run
I'm gonna buy me a pony
Can pace, fox-trot and run
Lord, when you see me, pretty mama
I be on Highway 61

I started school one Monday morning
Lord, I throwed my books away
I started school one Monday morning
Lord, I throwed my books away
I wrote a note to my teacher, Lord
I gonna try 61, today

Lord, if I happen a die, baby
'Fore you think my time have come
Lord, if I happen a die, baby, Lord
'Fore you think my time have come
I want you bury my body-yeah
Out on Highway 61

Lord, if yo' man should have you get boogied, baby
Lord, don't want you to have no fun
If your man should have you get boogied
Baby, don't want you to have no fun
Just come down to my little cabin
Out on Highway 61.

Tommy McClennan from Yazoo City sang about another important Mississippi highway in his "New Highway 51 Blues." Here we find, unsurprisingly, that the song is really about him and his woman. Also note how **Greyhound** is compared with the dog after which the bus line was named.

Highway 51
Run right by my baby's door
Highway 51
Runs right by my baby's door
If I don't get the girl to lovin'
Ain't goin' down Highway 51, no mo'

Now, if I should die
Before my time should come
I say, if I should die, umm
Just before my time should come
I want you to please bury my body
Out on Highway 51

Now, yonder come that Greyhound
With his tongue stickin' out on the side
Yonder come that Greyhound
With his tongue stickin' out on the side
If you buy your ticket
Swear 'fore God, that man'll let you ride

My baby didn't have one five dollars
Now-now, she spent it all on me, a V8 Ford
My baby one five dollars
Spent it all on me, a V8 Ford
So I could meet that Greyhound bus
On that Highway 51 road

Now, anytime you get lonesome
And you wants to have some fun
Anytime you get lonesome
And you wants to have some fun
Come out to Tommy's cabin
He lives on Highway 51.

④ TTW ask students to raise a hand if they have ever ridden a **Greyhound Bus** to another city, or ask those who have at least seen a Greyhound Bus to raise a hand. TTW show a route-map of the Greyhound Bus Lines and continue with the following narrative:

4transportation - lesson 3

In this song McClennan referred to both a V8 Ford and the Greyhound bus line, describing the bus as looking like the racing dog that is its namesake. When the song was written cars were still relatively rare, particularly among poor, rural people, and bus lines served as an important form of transport. The Greyhound and Trailways lines connected Mississippians to the rest of the country, while local entrepreneurs often provided bus—or flatbed truck—service to take rural people into towns on Saturdays for shopping and entertainment.



This street corner in Belzoni was the Greyhound bus stop in 1939.



A 1949 Greyhound bus ad

tion for blues musicians when it became an important form of travel. A famous photograph of **B.B. King** shows him and his band posed in front of a bus that King bought in 1955. King continues to travel by bus today.

Big Joe Williams from Crawford was known for his perpetual travels, and sang about them in his “Highway 49 Blues.”



B.B. King stepping off his bus at Club Ebony in Indianola, Mississippi, 2009

Well I'm gonna get up in the morning
Hit the Highway 49
I'm gonna get up in the morning
Hit the Highway 49
I've been looking for my woman
Lord don't think she can't be found

*Melvina my woman
She out on the Highway 49
Melvina my woman
She out on the Highway 49
I'm gonna get up in the morning
Roll on down the line*

*I believe, I believe, I believe I'll dust my bed
I believe, I believe, I believe I'll dust my bed
Out on the Highway 49
I have walked till I am dead*

*I got the blues this morning
Rollin' in to Jackson town
I got the blues this morning
I'm rollin into Jackson town
I've been looking for my baby
Lord don't think the girl can't be found*

Long tall mamma
She don't pay me no mind
Yeah long tall mamma
She don't pay me no mind
All she wanna do
Walk the Highway 49

4 transportation - lesson 3

In his “Highway 80 Blues” **Tommy Lee (Thompson)** sang about a road that crosses Highway 49 in Jackson.

*I went down 80 Highway, I went down in my
Mercury Ford
I went down 80 highway, I went down in my
Mercury Ford
You know it was stormin’ and it was rainin’,
I could hardly see the road*

*I was doing 80 miles an hour, all up and down the road
I was doing 80 miles an hour, all up and down the road
I said, Lord have mercy, please save my wicked soul*

*Mr. Highway Man, please don’t you block the road
Mr. Highway Man, please don’t you block the road
You know I’m raisin’ a cold 100,
sure enough I’m moving and have to go*

*Lord, that 80 highway, it goes east and west
Lord, that 80 highway, you know it goes east and west
You know I’ve gotta find my baby, you know
she’s way out in the west.
Goodbye baby*

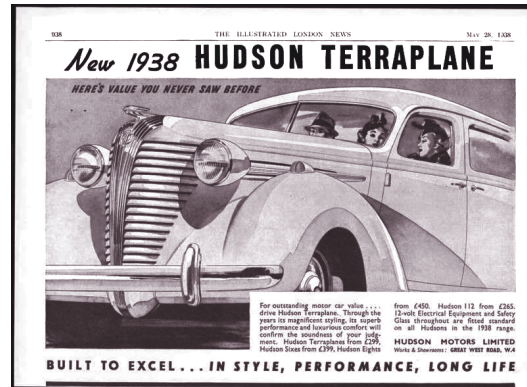
- 5 TTW emphasize the impact of owning/driving a car:
- Sense of personal freedom
 - Owning = status symbol
 - Easy manner of escaping troubled life
 - Transportation to events such as
 - Performances of the blues

AUTOMOBILES

The automobile served an important practical function, in the sense that people could travel wherever they want, any time they want, which was not possible with train or steamboat service. Another important side of the car, though, was that of a status symbol. Simply having a car was something to boast about back in the day, and particularly if you had a beautiful new car. In his song “Terraplane Blues,” **Robert Johnson** sang about his luxury car.

*And I feel so lonesome
you hear me when I moan
When I feel so lonesome
You hear me when I moan
Who been drivin’ my Terraplane
for you since I been gone*

*I’d said I flash your lights, mama
Your horn won’t even blow
spoken: Somebody’s been runnin’ my batteries
down on this machine
I even flash my lights, mama
this horn won’t even blow
Got a short in this connection
hoo-well, babe, it’s way down below*



Newspaper ad for the 1938 Hudson Terraplane

M Media Resource - “Chevrolet” plus others

While the *Terraplane* is largely forgotten today, the Cadillac remains a status symbol. Here’s a song recorded by **Howlin’ Wolf** in 1952 about the pleasure of driving one.

*Be careful what you’re drivin’, man
That Cadillac may get away, you better be careful!
There standin’ the highway man, standin’ parked
on the road
There standin’ there highway man, parked on
the road*

*You better watch out for the red light, just
before you go
Green light says go, red light says stop
Look-a-here boy, you better be on your watch
There’s standin’ a highway man, parked on
the side of the road*

*You better be careful, ‘bout how you drive on
the road
Stop!
I love the Cadillac, long wreckin’ machine
I love a Cadillac, it’s a long wreckin’ machine
Me an’ my baby can ride it, ev’rything is nice ‘til then
(Yeah!)*

4 transportation - lesson 3

*I'll make a cool hundred, I ain't got time to
stop for gas
I'll make a cool hundred, I ain't got time to
stop for gas
I'm gonna drive this automobile, just as long
as the gas lasts
(Play it!)*

*Look-it-here man, please check this oil
Look-it here man, please check this oil
Just a long Cadillac, bound to try out your soil*

One of the most notable blues songs about cars was "Rocket 88" by **Jackie Brenston**, which is often called the first rock 'n' roll song because of its strong beat and wild style. It was recorded in Memphis in 1951 by the band of Clarksdale's Ike Turner, but was released under the name of his vocalist and saxophonist, **Jackie Brenston**.

The Rocket 88 was made by the Oldsmobile company, and here Brenston sings about how much fun it is to drive around in one.



*You woman have heard of jalopies,
You heard the noise they make,
Let me introduce you to my Rocket 88.
Yes it's great, just won't wait,
Everybody likes my Rocket 88.
Baby we'll will ride in style,
Movin' all along.*

*V-8 motor and this modern design,
Black convertible top and the gals don't mind
Sportin' with me, ridin' all around town for joy.
Blow your horn, Rocket, blow your horn*

*Step in my Rocket and don't be late,
We're pullin' out about a half-past-eight.
Goin' on the corner and havin' some fun,
Takin' my Rocket on a long, hot run.
Ooh, goin' out,
Oozin' and cruisin' and havin' fun*

*Now that you've ridden in my Rocket 88,
I'll be around every night about eight.
You know it's great, don't be late,*

*Everybody likes my Rocket 88.
Gals will ride in style,
Movin' all along.*

Originally written and recorded by Mississippian **K.C. Douglas** in 1949 as "Mercury Boogie," the song "Mercury Blues" was a big hit for country singer **Alan Jackson** in 1993; his version was used by the Ford Motor Company in television advertisements for Mercury trucks.

*If I had money tell you what I'd do
I'd go downtown and buy a Mercury or two
I'm crazy 'bout a Mercury, I'm crazy 'bout a Mercury
I'm gonna buy me a Mercury and cruise it up
and down the road*

*The girl I love, I stole it from a friend
He got lucky stole her back again
Cuz' She knew he had a Mercury, she knew he
had a Mercury
I'm gonna buy me a Mercury and cruise it up
and down the road*

*Hey now mama you look so fine
Ridin' round in your Mercury 49
I'm crazy 'bout a Mercury, I'm crazy 'bout a Mercury
I'm gonna buy me a Mercury and cruise it up
and down the road*

*My baby went out she didn't stay long
She bought herself a Mercury, came a cruisin' home
I'm crazy 'bout a Mercury, I'm crazy 'bout a Mercury
I'm gonna buy me a Mercury and cruise it up
and down the road*

*If I had money tell you what I'd do
I'd go downtown and buy a Mercury or two
I'm crazy 'bout a Mercury, I'm crazy 'bout a Mercury
I'm gonna buy me a Mercury and cruise it up
and down the road*

*I'm gonna buy me a Mercury and cruise it up
and down the road*

Another song that paid tribute to the pleasures of driving in a nice car was "Pontiac Blues" by **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2**

*I found out, what my baby likes.
I found out, what my baby likes.
She likes a whole lot of loving,
And a straight-eight Pontiac*

4 transportation - lesson 3

*We gonna get on the highway,
And cut the bright lights on.
Get on the highway,
Got the bright lights on.
Turn the radio on,
Dig that voice from the North.*

*We gonna move, down highway 49.
We gonna move, down the highway 49.
She got her head in my chest,
Sonny, ain't this fine.*

*I see you drivin' round
In your brand new automobile
I see you drivin' 'round
Babe, in your brand new automobile
You're lookin' happy baby with your handsome
Your handsome driver at the wheel*

*Well, come on, get me
Baby, let's go and have some fun
I just wanna see
Baby, well that new car run
Everything will be alright
Long about the break of dawn
In your brand new automo*

*Come on, get me
Baby, let's go and have some fun
I just wanna see
Oh, baby, well that new car run
Everything will be alright, be alright
Long about the break of dawn*

*I seen you drivin' 'round
Babe, in your brand new automobile
I seen you drivin' 'round
Man, in your brand new automobile
You're lookin' happy with your handsome driver
Than in your automobile*

6 TTW ask students to imagine working on an **assembly line** doing the same thing over and over again and describe what feelings may ensue (could those feelings inspire a blues song?).

TTW will continue with the following narrative:

Many migrants who moved north to the state of Michigan found work at **automotive** plants. In the song "Cadillac

Assembly Line," which was written by Clarksdale native **Sir Mack Rice**, **Albert King** sings about many of the topics associated with the travel. He is:

- 1) going up to Detroit to find work at the Cadillac plant;
- 2) leaving Mississippi because he doesn't want to pick cotton anymore;
- 3) taking a bus to get to Detroit, and;
- 4) when he makes enough money, going to send his girlfriend/wife a plane ticket

*Goin' to Detroit, Michigan
Girl, I can't take you
Hey, I'm goin' to Detroit, Michigan
Girl, you got to stay here behind
Goin' to get me a job
On the Cadillac assembly line*

*I'm tired of whoopin' and hollerin'
Up and down the Mississippi road
Hey, I'm tired of whoopin' and hollerin'
Pickin' that nasty cotton
Gonna catch me a bus up North
I won't have to keep sayin' yes, sir, boss*

*Goin' to Detroit, Michigan
Girl, I can't take you
Hey, I'm goin' to Detroit, Michigan
Girl, you got to stay here behind
Goin' to get me a job
On the Cadillac assembly line*

*Well, girl, if you'll be alright
And keep your blue jeans zipped up tight
When I make my first check
I'll put you on the Delta jet, hey hey
I'm gonna send for you, darlin'
Won't you come on home*

PROJECTS

A. Choose either a U.S. Highway or Mississippi State Highway near the school and create lyrics to begin writing a song that includes:

- The highway number
- Naming cities through which the singer/author will travel
- The final destination
- Reasons for travel or expressing feelings of being on the open road in Mississippi

4 transportation - lesson 3

In music class or with the expertise of a music specialist, compose a melody and support the melodic line with a 12-bar blues harmony

B. Create a Mississippi puzzle map

- Glue a Mississippi highway map onto cardboard (use a refrigerator or stove box)
- Glue another piece of cardboard to the back of the first piece
- With the help of an adult, cut out sections that will trace several major U.S. Highways such as 49, 80, 61, 51, etc. or cut out all 82 counties (only cut the top layer of cardboard)

C. Write a story about a farmer in the Mississippi Delta who decides to leave family in Mississippi and drive to Detroit to find a job in the automobile industry. Plan the story by re-searching and focusing on:

- Main characters and supporting characters
- Setting in Mississippi, setting in Detroit
- Plot/action
- Theme/message

D. Investigate route maps for Greyhound Lines or Trailways Bus System in Mississippi between 1900-1970 to determine which bus line served the town nearest the school. Locate the building that was (or still is) the bus station in town and find pictures of past and present. Use printed historical documents from the public library, historical association, or in personal interviews with senior citizens to determine the layout of the bus station, frequency of bus service, cost of travel, and other important facts. Possibly use information gleaned to write a story about a traveler, bus station worker, or town citizen in regard to the bus station.

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

QUIZ: The Highways/Automobile and The Blues

A. Define the following terms using your own words:

- Automobile
- Bus/Greyhound Lines

- Mass production
- Assembly Line
- Henry Ford
- Affordable

B. Draw each of the following road signs and explain what each means:

- US Highway sign
- Interstate Highway sign
- Mississippi State Highway sign

C. Using the blank map of Mississippi, draw the following U.S. Highways:

- US 61
- US 51
- US 49
- US 80
- US 45
- US 90

D. Why did the automobile make such an impact on composers/writers of the blues? List at least three reasons.

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- CD player

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson can be shortened by presentation of smaller segments of the six teaching procedures during each instructional period.

Students can be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view other videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students can find books or Internet sources that further illustrate automobile manufacturing, road travel via car or bus or Mississippi blues songs about traveling the open road.

4 transportation - assessment 3

NAME _____

DATE _____

A. Define the following terms in your own words:

Automobile _____

Bus/Greyhound Bus Lines _____

Mass production _____

Assembly line _____

Henry Ford _____

Affordable _____

B. Draw each of the following road signs and explain what each means:

US Highway Sign

Interstate Highway Sign

Mississippi State Highway Sign

C. Why did the automobile make such an impact on composers/writers of the blues? List at least three reasons:

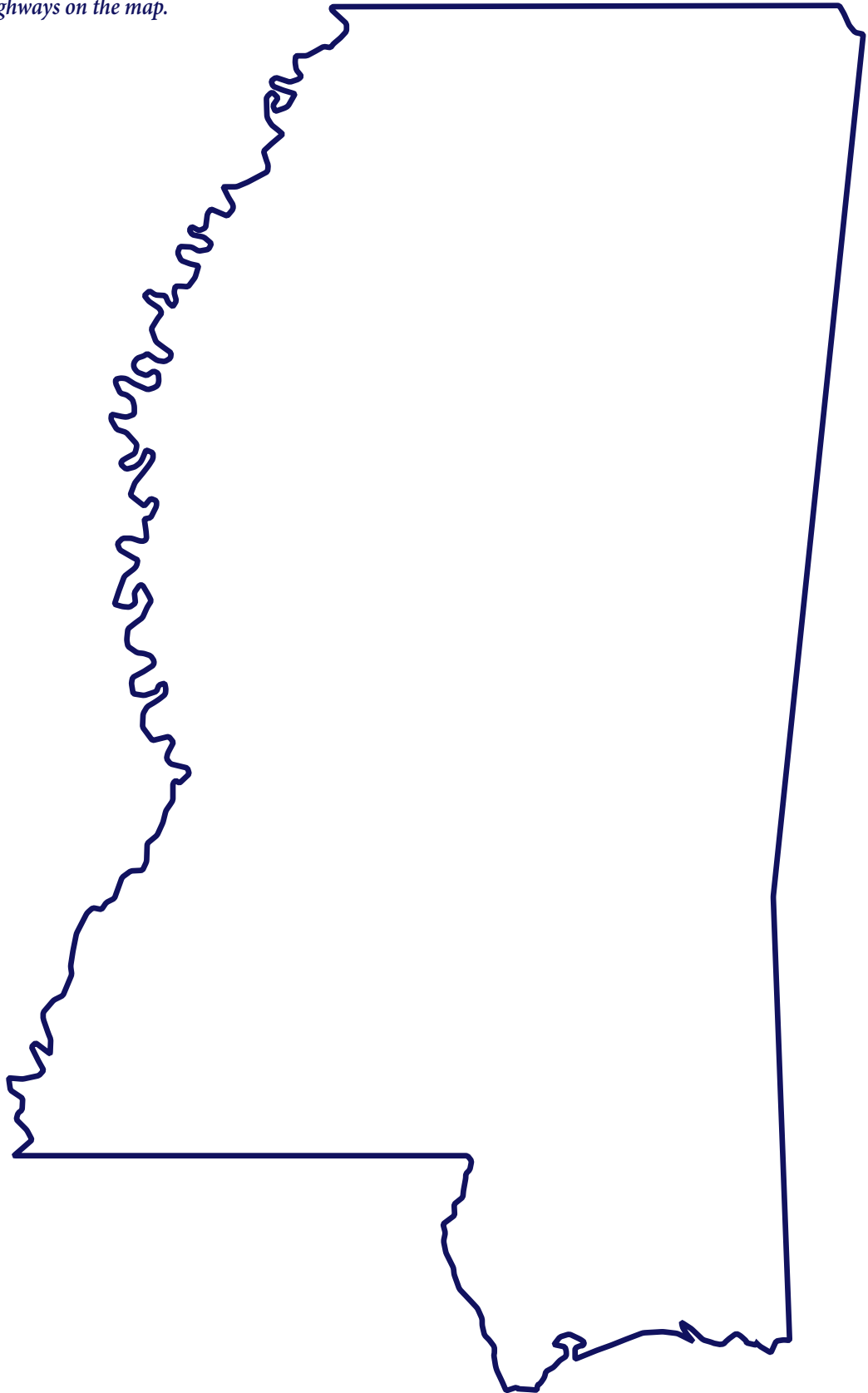
4 transportation - assessment 3

NAME _____

DATE _____

Draw the following U.S. Highways on the map.

US 61
US 51
US 49
US 80
US 45
US 90



5 civil rights - lesson 1

GENERAL COMPLAINTS



National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 a b c d • 9 a c d

National Standards for Theatre
1 a • 2 b c • 3 a b

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 7 a • 8 c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
4 a b c • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

- 1 TSW define the following terms both verbally and in writing: *reconstruction*, *Black codes*, *Jim Crow laws*, *segregation*, *county farm*, *The Great Depression*, *“Hooverville.”*
- 2 TSW explain both verbally and in writing the following topics/trends:
 - Emergence of the blues in the South
 - How content of the blues could change in the North because of different social atmosphere
 - The connection of the blues to political and social protest
 - Had the end of the Civil War changed the status of African Americans in the U.S.?
- 3 TSW write short stories, timelines and/or narratives based on blues songs, Reconstruction Era history, and The Great Depression.

PROCEDURES

- 1 TTW introduce the topic of Politics and Civil Rights

with the following narrative:

POLITICS AND CIVIL RIGHTS

The blues is often viewed as a music of protest, but it's usually not thought of as being particularly political. This is largely because politics in the blues tends to be somewhat hidden and/or presented in coded language.

One reason that blues is not more directly political likely has to do with the nature of the social and political world at the time of its emergence in the late 1800s and early 1900s. During the *Reconstruction* era immediately following the *Civil War* (1861-1865) African Americans were given many new freedoms, notably the right to vote. In Mississippi African Americans were elected to offices including U.S. Senator (Blanche K. Bruce & Hiram Revels), the U.S. House of Representatives (John R. Lynch), and Secretary of State (James D. Lynch).

Within a decade, though, the new freedoms enjoyed by African Americans were severely restricted due to the implementation of “*Black Codes*” that severely restricted their behavior, and the formal and informal “*Jim Crow*” laws that resulted in *segregation* of schools, public places, and public transportation. Both formal and informal rules also prevented African Americans from voting or even registering to vote. And more generally, there was a continual threat of violence to those who complained about or disobeyed these rules.

The blues is thought to have emerged in the 1890s, not long after all these laws and regulations were established. It's not surprising, then, that we don't find in blues lyrics much direct criticism about political conditions. To do so, quite simply, might be dangerous in which to engage for African Americans in the South.

We can, however, see how blues singers sang about their social and political problems in other ways. For instance, there are many songs that address mistreatment without being very specific about any problem, and others that address basic political conditions, such as a bad economy, poverty, or current political events. Later in this lesson we can see how blues artists began singing more directly about issues such as racism and *segregation* once they had relocated to the North, and were relatively shielded from punishment for speaking their mind. And, finally, we can see more directly political songs from the Civil Rights era in the 1960s, when many African Americans became vocal about their mistreatment.

5 civil rights - lesson 1

② TTW introduce the idea of mistreatment having students imagine the following new rules at school:

- 1) School begins at 6 a.m. Monday through Saturday and no transportation will be provided for students
- 2) Students must remain seated at a desk/table working/studying until 9 a.m.
- 3) Students work to paint buildings, make new bricks, and perform other maintenance on the school from 9-12, noon
- 4) Students are only given 10 minutes to eat and all must work in the school gardens until 2 p.m.
- 5) Students must remain at a desk/table working/studying until 5 p.m.
- 6) Students continue work on building maintenance from 5 p.m. until 6 p.m.

TTW ask students to react and will notate responses on the board (these may be used later to create a blues song). In order to demonstrate the evolution of blues lyrics as a way of commenting on political conditions: The students will be encouraged to write a song that does not speak specifically about the mistreatment. Then students will be asked to write a song that does speak specifically about mistreatment.

Students may also be encouraged to create a tableau or a short skit to enact the new rules as a performance.

③ TTW continue the thread of mistreatment in the blues with the following narrative and the listening of the blues song:

GENERAL COMPLAINT

One of the popular stereotypes in the blues is of the singer being mistreated by their loved one, as reflected by a popular joke that all blues start with the line “My Baby Left Me.” An idea that has been expressed by some blues singers, including **Willie King** from Noxubee County, is that we can view complaints about being mistreated by a particular man or woman as a way of expressing one’s feelings about mistreatment more generally. In the following quotation King is talking about the early days of the blues:

At the time you couldn’t just come out and talk about the whites, how they was doin’ ya, how they was treatin’ ya, knowin’ that they wasn’t treatin’ you right. So you had to use this woman for to get your message across. [Sings] “Oh, she ain’t treatin’ me right.” But most of the time you’re talking about the woman and the boss man.

But you’ve got to use the woman for to try to keep everything in peace. You just couldn’t come out and say that your boss man wasn’t treating you right. Even in some games they play, they’re talking about the white man. They use different kinds of animals, ducks, geese, chickens.
(Source: *Living Blues* magazine)

King’s last point about how protest was hidden through being directed at animals was also made by bluesman **Big Bill Broonzy**. He recalled how African American farmers used to yell or curse at their mules instead of directing their anger at their boss man, who had no idea he was being criticized.

M Media Resource - audio, “Hidden Violence”

④ TTW assist the students in locating Clarksdale, Mississippi, on the map and continue with the following narrative and the listening of the following blues song:

One of the most popular songs that addressed the issue of mistreatment was “Five Long Years” by **Eddie Boyd**, a native of Clarksdale. In the beginning of the song Boyd suggests that anyone who has experienced mistreatment can relate to his story.

*Have you ever been mistreated?
You know just what I’m talking about.
Have you ever been mistreated?
You know just what I’m talking about.
I worked five long years for one woman,
She had the nerve to put me out.*

*I got a job in a steel mill, shucking steel like a slave.
Five long years, every Friday
I come straight back home with all my pay.
Have you ever been mistreated?
You know just what I’m talking about.
I worked five long years for one woman,
She had the nerve to put me out.*

*I finally learned my lesson,
Should a long time ago.
The next woman that I marry,
She gonna work and bring me the dough.
Have you ever been mistreated?
You know just what I’m talking about.
I worked five long years for one woman,
She had the nerve,
She had the nerve,
She had the nerve,
She had the nerve to put me out.*

5 civil rights - lesson 1



Close-up Jimmy Reed Blues Trail marker

- 5 TTW assist the students in locating Dunleith, Mississippi, on the map and continue with the following narrative and the listening of the blues song:

Jimmy Reed from Dunleith, Mississippi, was one of the most popular blues artists of the 1950s, achieving many hits in both the Pop and R&B charts. One of his biggest hits was “Big Boss Man,” a song that likely appealed to many African American laborers. On the surface it’s a complaint about a particular boss, but many listeners were probably attracted to it as a complaint about bosses more generally. It was also a favorite of **Elvis Presley**, who performed and recorded many blues songs.

*Big boss man
Can you hear me when I call?
Big boss man
Can you hear me when I call?
Oh, you ain't so big
You're just tall, that's all*

*You got me working, boss man
Working 'round the clock
I want me a drink of water
You won't let me stop
You big boss man
Can you hear me when I call?
Oh, you ain't so big
You just tall, that's all*

*Gonna get myself a boss man
One gonna treat me right
Work me hard in the day time
But I'll sure rest easy at night
Big boss man
Can you hear me when I call?
Oh, you ain't so big
You just tall, that's all*

- 6 TTW ask the students to brainstorm definitions for the colloquial word, “grip” and lead students to the correct definition (suitcase) before continuing with the following narrative and listening to the blues song:

One of the few early blues songs to mention **Jim Crow** was **Maggie Jones’** “Northbound Blues,” recorded in 1925. In one of the earlier lessons we talked about how blues singers often sang about trains as a way to get away from their troubles. Here she sings about the train as a way to get away from the racism she experienced under **Jim Crow laws**.

*Got my trunk and grip all packed
Goodbye, I ain't coming back
Going to leave this Jim Crow town
Lord, sweet papa, New York bound*

*Got my ticket in my hand
And I'm leaving Dixieland*

*Going north child, where I can be free
Going north child, where I can be free
Where there's no hardships, like in Tennessee*

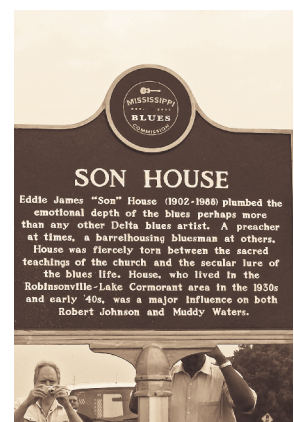
*Going where they don't have Jim Crow laws
Going where they don't have Jim Crow laws
Don't have to work there, like in Arkansas*

*When I cross the Mason-Dixon Line
When I cross the Mason-Dixon Line
Goodbye old gal, your mama's gonna fly*

*Going to daddy, got no time to lose
Going to daddy, got no time to lose
I'll be alone, can't hear my northbound blues*

- 7 TTW will introduce **Son House**, and locate Tunica (site of his Blues Trail marker) and Clarksdale on the map before continuing.

In his “County Farm Blues,” **Son House**, a native of Clarksdale, sang about the treatment of prisoners on a county farm. While some prisoners were sent there for crimes of violence or theft, the county farm



Son House Blues Trail Marker

5 civil rights - lesson 1

was also a place where people might be sent for the smallest of charges. Bluesman **David “Honeyboy” Edwards**, for instance, recalled that he would avoid going out on the streets during a weekday because he might be sent to the **county farm** because he didn’t have a regular job.

*Down South, when you do anything, that’s wrong
Down South, when you do anything, that’s wrong
Down South, when you do anything, that’s wrong
They’ll sure put you down on the county farm*

*Put you down under a man they call “Captain Jack”
Put you under a man called “Captain Jack”
Put you under a man they call “Captain Jack”
He” sure write his name up and down your back*

*Put you down in a ditch with a great long spade
Put you down in a ditch with a great long spade
Put you down in a ditch with a great long spade
Wish to God that you hadn’t never been made*

*On a Sunday the boys be lookin’ sad
On a Sunday the boys’ll be lookin’ sad
On a Sunday the boys be lookin’ sad
Just wonderin’ about how much time they had*

B TTW use the following narrative to explain **The Great Depression** of the 1930s and then listen to the blues songs:

Other songs addressed issues such as unemployment, poverty, or simply “tough times.” These are all issues that can be seen as both personal and public problems, in the sense that we expect politicians to try to fix them. Many songs that were recorded during the **Depression** of the 1930s—a time when many people were out of work—complained about how difficult it was to survive. In 1931, **Charley Jordan** sang about “Starvation Blues.”

*Lord, Lord, Starvation is at my door
Well, it ain’t no need of running, because I ain’t got
No place to go*

*The grass is all dying, the rivers all dropping low
Do you know what is the matter?
Starvation is at my door*

*Well, I used to eat cake, but now I have to eat
Hard cornbread
And now I would rather be sleeping somewhere
In the graveyard dead*

*There’s more women standing begging, that never
Had to beg before
The starvation times, have drove them
From their door*

*Now I almost had a square meal the other day
But the garbage man come, and he moved the
Can away*

*Now I remember one time, when I had a-plenty
To eat
But now the time has come, and I can’t find
No place to sleep*

In 1933, bluesman **J.D. Short** sang about unemployment in “It’s Hard Time,” and mentioned a prominent political protest in Washington, D. C. at the time.

*It is hard time here, hard time everywhere
Well, it’s hard time here, hard time everywhere*

*I went down to the factory, where I worked
Three years ago
And the bossman told me, “Man I ain’t hirin’
Here no more*

*Now we have a little city, that they call “down
In Hooverville”
Times have gotten so hard, people don’t have
No place to live*

9 TTW use the following narrative to explain “Hooverville” and listen to the blues song:

The reference in the last line of the song to “**Hooverville**” refers to shacks that protesters built in Washington, D.C. to protest the economic problems that arose during the term of Herbert Hoover (1929-1933), who was President during the early years of the Depression.

The U.S. economy became better in the 1940s, but slowed down again in the early ’50s. In his 1954 recording “Tough Times” **John Brim** sang about how his problems with finding a job and paying his bills reminded him of the troubles he had in the 1930s.

5 civil rights - lesson 1

*Me and my baby was talking, and what she said
Was true
Said: "It seems like times is getting tough, like they
Was in '32*

*You don't have no job, our bills is past due
So, now tell me, baby, what are we gonna do?"*

*Chorus:
Tough times, tough times is here once more
Now if you don't have money, people, you can't live
Happy no more.*

*I had a good job, working many long hours a week
They had a big lay-off and they got poor me
I'm broke and disgusted, in misery
Can't find a part-time job, nothing in my house
To eat*

*Chorus:
I went down to the grocery store, said, I'll get a
little more food on time [credit]
The man said, "Wait a minute, see how
Do we stand?"
Said, "I'm sorry to tell you, you too far behind."*

PROJECTS

These projects may be group or individual. Teachers are encouraged to utilize websites to show images of this time as well as use discussion and simulations to build understanding and vocabulary of this era before exploring the projects listed below.

- A. Investigate the lives of African Americans elected to state or national office during the Reconstruction Period in American history that results in a timeline or narrative.
- B. Research the term "Hooverville" and create one in the classroom.
- C. Use one of the blues songs to write a short story of a family living in the Great Depression.
- D. Utilizing the lyrics of the blues song "County Farm," write a short story about a character sent to the "farm" for punishment of an insignificant act.
- E. Sift through the lyrics of songs known as African American

folksongs, or spirituals, to discover the hidden meaning of a great desire to be free from slavery.

VOCABULARY

***Reconstruction
Black Codes
Jim Crow laws
Segregation
County Farm
The Great Depression
Hooverville***

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

- A. Define the following terms in your own words:

***Reconstruction
Black Codes
Jim Crow Laws
Segregation
County Farm
The Great Depression
"Hooverville"***

- B. Explain the following using your own words:

How did blues singers in the south sing about social and political problems facing African Americans?

How did blues singers in the north sing about social and political problems facing African Americans?

- C. Write a short paragraph explaining your answer to the question:

Even though African Americans were free from slavery at the end of the Civil War, why were blacks not truly free in the early 20th century?

5 civil rights - lesson 1

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- CD player

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson may be shortened by presentation of smaller segments of the six teaching procedures with or without group projects during each instructional period.

Students may be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view other videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students may be encouraged to find books or Internet sources that further illustrate The Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, James Meredith, Fannie Lou Hamer, Medgar and Charles Evers, as well as songs about those topics.

5 civil rights - lesson 2

POLITICAL LYRICS



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 a b c d • 9 a c d

National Standards for Theatre
1 a • 2 b c • 3 a b

National Standards for Visual Arts
1 c d • 2 a c • 3 b

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 7 a • 8 c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
4 a b c • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

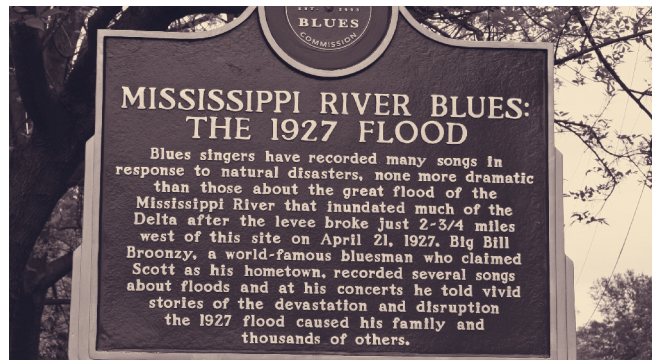
- 1 TSW define the following terms both verbally and in writing: *political singer*, *folk music*, *meaning of the derogatory terms “boy” and “uncle.”*
- 2 TSW explain both verbally and in writing the significance of U.S. Presidents Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy on the status of African Americans.
- 3 TSW will explain both verbally and in writing the following topics/trends:
 - The connection of the blues to political and social protest
 - Did the end of the Civil War change the status of African Americans in the U.S.?
- 4 TSW write short stories, narratives, or timelines based on blues songs, the folk song movement, African Americans in the U.S. military, and/or Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy.

PROCEDURES

- 1 TTW begin by either involving the class in group projects to investigate *The Folk Song Movement* in the 1960s (see project idea) or by providing background prior to initiating the following narrative:

SONGS THAT MENTION POLITICS MORE DIRECTLY

Blues musicians who lived in the South (or were otherwise concerned with performing or selling their records in this region) had to consider the possible negative effect on their careers when deciding to play or record songs that criticized the treatment of African Americans under Jim Crow. It was a different case for artists who lived in the North or overseas—they could be more free in expressing themselves.



Mississippi River Blues/Big Bill Broonzy Blues Trail Marker

- 2 TTW introduce **Big Bill Broonzy**, and locate Scott, Mississippi, on the map.

One of the most politically outspoken blues artists was **Big Bill Broonzy**. During the 1930s Broonzy was a popular recording artist, performing songs about romance, loneliness, and other popular blues themes. In the '40s and '50s, though, Broonzy redefined himself as a more political singer. He became particularly popular among folk music fans in Chicago, and was also one of the first blues singers to visit Europe, where he was very well known.

In his song “When Do I Get to Be Called A Man” Broonzy addresses the fact that during the *segregation* era white people often called African American men “*boy*.” This was a way of denying them dignity and self-respect; he also notes at the end that the only time African American men weren’t called “*boy*” was when they became white-haired old men, and were then called “*uncle*.”

5 civil rights - lesson 2

*When I was born into this world, this is what
Happened to me
I was never called a man, and now I'm fifty three*

Chorus:

*I wonder when, yes, I wonder when
Yes, I wonder when I will get to be called a man,
Or do I have to wait to I get ninety-three*

*When Uncle Sam called me, I knowed I'd be called
A real McCoy
But it wasn't no difference, they just called me
Soldier boy*

The theme of being called a “man” was later expressed in songs by Mississippians **Bo Diddley**, who recorded a song called “I’m A Man,” and **Muddy Waters**, who recorded the song “Mannish Boy,” in which he repeatedly stated “I’m a man, spelled m-a-n.” On the surface these songs only appear to be stating the obvious; to African American listeners who had been called “boy,” though, they undoubtedly were viewed differently.

In 1947 folklorist **Alan Lomax** presented a concert in New York City with **Big Bill Broonzy**, **Memphis Slim**, and **John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson**. He also recorded them talking openly about segregation in the South, and Broonzy performed the song “Black Brown and White,” which addressed discrimination at stores, work and in the military.

M Media Resource - Big Bill Broonzy, “Black Brown and White”

*This little song that I'm singin' about,
People, you all know that it's true,
If you're black and gotta work for livin',
Now, this is what they will say to you,
They says:*

*If you was white, You's alright,
If you was brown, Stick around,
But if you's black, oh, brother,
Get back, get back, get back.*

*I was in a place one night,
They was all havin' fun,
They was all buyin' beer and wine,
But they would not sell me none.
They said:*

*If you was white, You's alright,
If you was brown, You could stick around,
But as you's black, hmm, hmm, brother,
Get back, get back, get back.*

*I went to an employment office,
I got a number, I got in line,
They called everybody's number,
But they never did call mine.
They said:*

*If you was white, You's alright,
If you was brown, You could stick around,
But as you's black, hmm, hmm, brother,
Get back, get back, get back.*

*Me and a man was workin' side by side,
Now, this is what it meant:
They was payin' him a dollar an hour,
And they was payin' me fifty cent.
They said:*

*If you was white, You'd be alright,
If you was brown, You could stick around,
But as you's black, oh, brother,
Get back, get back, get back.*

*I helped win sweet victories,
With my plow and hoe,
Now, I want you to tell me, brother,
What you gonna do 'bout the old Jim Crow?*

*Now, if you is white, You's alright,
If you's brown, Stick around,
But if you's black,
Hmm, hmm, brother,
Get back, get back, get back.*

② TTW engage students in group projects to research African Americans in the U.S. Military or may continue with the following narrative and Blues song:

Like Broonzy, Josh White from South Carolina had a successful recording career performing very typical blues before he became known as a political singer. He lived for many years in New York City and, like Broonzy, also spent a lot of time in Europe.

5 civil rights - lesson 2

In the last song, “Black Brown and White,” Broonzy said that he helped out with war efforts with his “plow and hoe,” meaning agricultural work that supported the military. In his 1941 song “Uncle Sam Says,” White sings about the fact that the U.S. Military was segregated, and that African Americans were only given menial jobs. Like Broonzy, he points out the sad fact that African Americans were fighting for freedom in the military, but that at the same time they didn’t enjoy it back home because of “**Jim Crow**” laws.

*Airplanes flying ‘cross the land and sea,
Everybody flying but a Negro like me.*

*Uncle Sam says, “Your place is on the ground,
When I fly my airplanes, don’t want no Negro ‘round.”*

*The same thing for the Navy, when ships go to sea,
All they got is a mess boy’s job for me.*

*Uncle Sam says, “Keep on your apron, son,
You know I ain’t gonna let you shoot my big Navy gun.”*

*Got my long government letter, my time to go,
When I got to the Army found the same old Jim Crow.*

*Uncle Sam says, “Two camps for black and white,”
But when trouble starts, we’ll all be in that same
Big fight.*

*If you ask me, I think democracy is fine,
I mean democracy without the color line.*

*Uncle Sam says, “We’ll live the American way,”
Let’s get together and kill Jim Crow today.*

③ TTW initiate a discussion with the question: What is the purpose of a good education? TTW lead students to make the connection between education and opportunities for higher wages before continuing with the following narrative and blues song:

Pianist and vocalist **Champion Jack Dupree**, who was born in New Orleans, moved in the 1960s to Europe, where he lived for decades. Most of his songs were not about politics, but some were very detailed in describing life under segregation. One is his 1970 recording “Schoolday Blues,” in which he sings about how he—like many African Americans of his generation—didn’t receive a good education, and instead had to work hard at low-paying jobs.

*Lord, I never went to school, not one day in my life,
I had to work hard every day, every day of my life*

*Well, the people all told me, I ain’t nothing but a
White man’s slave,
And conditions ain’t no better, slave out all the day*

*I can’t read, I can’t write, I can’t even sign my name,
It’s a low down dirty, low down dirty shame*

*I know you people glad, I know you glad you ain’t
None of me,
I know you have had hard times, but you don’t have
Times like me*

*I don’t have no education, I ain’t nothing but a fool,
I say, don’t blame me, people, ‘cause I never went
To school*

*Well it wasn’t but two men in the world ever tried to
Set me free,
That was Abraham Lincoln and President Kennedy*

One of the notable things about that song was that he mentioned at the end two United States presidents who were beloved by African Americans. Many blues and gospel singers sang tributes to President John F. Kennedy after his assassination, and there were also many tributes to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt both during his administration and after his death.

④ TTW charge each student with the responsibility of identifying an elder in the community who was living at the time of the assassination of President Kennedy and arrange an interview with that person. TTW lead the students in brainstorming questions to the community elder concerning the effect of President Kennedy’s death on the individual and the community at large. If possible, interviews should be recorded using audio, video or computer recording equipment.

PROJECTS

A. Investigate the Folk Song Movement of the 1960s (sometimes called the “folk music revival”) with particular attention to the themes of social/political protest as well as significant performers/reformers that results in a narrative or timeline.

5 civil rights - lesson 2

B. Research the status of African Americans in the U.S. Military beginning with the Civil War through World War II that results in a narrative or timeline.

C. Determine through investigation/research the significance on U.S. Presidents Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy on the status of African Americans that results in a narrative or timeline.

D. Investigate speeches given by Presidents Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy that related to the status of African Americans. Write a script that combines elements of all three speeches to be given by characters depicting these three men or perform an entire speech as a monologue.

E. See Living History assignment above.

VOCABULARY

Political Singer
Folk Music
Negro
“Boy”
“Uncle”

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

A. Define the following terms in your own words:

Political singer
Folk music
Meaning of the derogatory term, “boy”
Meaning of the derogatory term, “uncle”

B. Explain the following using your own words:

How did the blues connect to social and political protest?

C. Write a short paragraph explaining your answer to the question:

Did the conclusion of the Civil War have a dramatic effect on the status of African Americans?

What changed, and what didn’t change?

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- CD player

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson may be shortened by presentation of smaller segments of the three teaching procedures with or without group projects during each instructional period.

Students may be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view other videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students may be encouraged to find books or Internet sources that further illustrate Social/Political protest, Reconstruction, The Great Depression as well as songs about those topics.

5 civil rights - lesson 3

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
6 a b c d • 9 a c d

Mississippi Framework (Music)
6 a • 7 a • 8 c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
4 a b c • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

1 TTW define the following terms both verbally and in writing: *Civil Rights movement*, *Civil Rights era*, *Rosa Parks*, *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, *sit-in movements*, *Freedom Riders*, *freedom marchers*, *Medgar Evers*, *Charles Evers*, *Beale Street*.

2 TSW explain both verbally and in writing how African Americans overcame forced racial inferiority through non-violence.

3 TSW will explain both verbally and in writing the following topics/trends:

- The connection of the blues to political and social protest
- The end of the Civil War resulted in the freeing of enslaved persons, but what sorts of restrictions remained for African Americans?

4 TSW write short-stories, narratives, or timelines based on Civil Rights topics including *Freedom Riders*, *Freedom Marchers*, *Rosa Parks*, *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, *Charles Evers*, and the *sit-in movement*.

PROCEDURES

1 TTW use the following narrative to introduce the *Civil Rights movement* and continue with the blues song:

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The *Civil Rights era* is often dated as beginning in 1954, when the U.S. Supreme Court decided that school segregation was unconstitutional. The following year African American *Rosa Parks* sparked a boycott of public transportation in Montgomery after she famously refused to move to the back of the bus on which she was riding. *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, first became well known as the leader of this boycott.

The bravery of people like Rosa Parks and Dr. King in the face of violence encouraged many people, including musicians, to become more vocal in their criticism of racism and other sorts of discriminatory behavior. Still, many artists were reluctant to record or perform political songs because it might hurt their career, especially if they wanted to tour or sell records in the South.

J. B. Lenoir (pronounced and sometimes misspelled "Lenore") was a distinctive blues artist, in both his high-pitched singing style and the candid political critiques in many of his song lyrics. Born on his family's farm near Monticello on March 5, 1929, he learned to play guitar from his father, Dewitt (or Dewitt) Lenoir, Sr., as a youth he also played with his brother Dewitt, Jr. Lenoir decided to leave because of racial discrimination and later recalled, "After the way they treat my daddy I was never going to stand that no kind of way." Lenoir began traveling to play music in his teens. He lived in Gulfport and worked at the Splendid Cafe there at one point in the 1940s, and he said he later performed in New Orleans with Sunny Boy Williamson No. 2 (Rice Miller) and Elmore James. By 1949 Lenoir had settled in Chicago, where blues kingpin Big Bill Broonzy took him "as his son." Lenoir also performed with Memphis Minnie, Muddy Waters, and Little Walter, and soon formed his own band, J. B. and his Bayou Boys, with Sunnyland Slim on piano.

While the subject matter of most of Lenoir's singles on various labels was conventional for a blues artist, his first recordings, in 1950, included the topical "Korea Blues." A 1954 release, "Eisenhower Blues," resulted in controversy, and Parrot Records owner Al Benson took Lenoir back into the studio to record the song as the more generic "Tex Paying Blues," both issues featured "I'm in Korea" on the flip side. In 1965-66 Lenoir recorded a number of political songs for European release, including "Shot on James Meredith," "Alabama March," "Born Dead," "Vietnam Blues," and the biting "Down in Mississippi," for producer Willie Dixon at the behest of German promoters Horst Lippman and Fritz Rau. Lenoir and his Afro-American Blues Band performed some of these songs during a 1965 tour of Europe. The material was reportedly deemed too controversial for release in the United States at the time and only appeared on American labels years later. Lenoir died on April 29, 1967, in Urbana, Illinois, due to complications resulting from an auto accident. In 2003 Lenoir's music gained more attention when he was featured in the Wim Wenders documentary *The Soul of a Man*, and in 2011 he was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame.

Bethel Smith, whose mother was a sister of Dewitt Lenoir, Sr., moved to Chicago in 1956 in hopes

Lenoir in his famous striped suit, c. 1960 (Vee-Jay Records)

In 1970 British blues icon John Mayall produced one posthumous album of Lenoir's 1960s songs on the Poplar label. The LP included interviews with Lenoir, among the former. Mayall also paid tribute to Lenoir with his recordings of "The Death of J. B. Lenoir" and "I've Got a Right for You J. B."

"Manning (for Mama) Talk to Your Daughter" was the only Lenoir record to hit Billboard, suggesting that his blues themes, including the No. 1 pop in 1955. Some of his other songs, especially "The Mean (Bongo)" and "Blue Rock Blues," became favorites in Chicago, where he was revered for his raucous boogie and raucous rhythms.

J.B. Lenoir Blues Trail marker close-up

Some of the most powerful songs recorded during the Civil Rights era were from bluesman *J.B. Lenoir*, a native of the Monticello area. In the early '50s Lenoir recorded a song called "Eisenhower Blues" that criticized the state of the economy, and in the mid-'60s he recorded a series of songs that were extremely critical and detailed about life under segregation in the Deep South. Significantly, he recorded these to be released in Germany—the songs he recorded for the commercial market in the United States addressed more typical blues themes.

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

5 civil rights - lesson 3

One of the most powerful songs Lenoir wrote and recorded was “Down In Mississippi.”

*Far back as I can remember
Either had to plow or hoe
One of those long ol’ nine feet sacks
Standin’ at the old turn row*

*Down in Mississippi
Down in Mississippi
Down in Mississippi where I was born
Down in Mississippi where I come from...*

*They had a huntin’ season on a rabbit
If you shoot him you went to jail
The season was always open on me
Nobody needed no bail.*

*Nothing I got ‘gainst Mississippi
It also was the home of my wife.
But I count myself a lucky man
Just to get away with my life.*

- 2 TTW explain the following terms:
- Freedom Riders
 - Freedom marchers
 - Civil Rights activists

and use the following narrative/blues song:

A new phase of the **Civil Rights movement** began in the early 1960s with the arrival of the sit-in movements, in which protestors occupied public facilities such as restaurants. In 1961 the “**Freedom Riders**,” young people who wanted to test the right of African Americans to use public transportation that crossed state lines, such as **Trailways** or **Greyhound** buses, came through the Deep South, including Mississippi. They were often met by violent crowds.

In his 1962 song “Ride on Red,” **Louisiana Red** talks about taking his own bus ride out of the South. The Citizen’s Committee he refers to was a New Orleans-based group opposed to integration; in Mississippi a similar organization was the Citizen’s Council, which was founded in 1954. [Note: Louisiana Red’s sense of geography is a bit confused, as he travels “north” from Vicksburg to New Orleans!]

*Ride on, Red, ride on!
Well I left my home in Vicksburg*

*And started traveling north,
Made it to New Orleans as the bus was taking off
The Citizen’s Committee was giving away the fare
Saying, ‘if you don’t like the south, boy,
Just ride on outta here’*

*Ride on, ride on red, ride on
Gonna ride off to my freedom
And make those northern states my home*

*We made it to Shreveport, where we were
Supposed to eat
I got myself a sandwich and ate it on the street.*

*Ride on, Louisiana Red, ride on
Gonna ride on to your freedom
And make those northern states your home*

*We made it into Little Rock, we made another state
Took the whole of the U.S. army
To make one school integrate*

*Ride on, ride on Red, ride on
Gonna ride on to your freedom
And make those northern states your home*

*Well I live here in New York and I am doing fine,
Have myself a ball above the Mason-Dixie line*

*Ride on, ride on Red, ride on
Gonna ride off to my freedom
And make those northern states my home*

- 3 TTW introduce **Medgar Evers** and **Charles Evers** as well as the **B.B. King** blues song with the following narrative:

Medgar Evers was a **Civil Rights** leader in Jackson, Mississippi and in 1963 was killed at his home by a man opposed to the changes that the **Civil Rights movement** was trying to make. After his death his brother, **Charles Evers**, came back to Mississippi from Chicago to continue his work.



Charles Evers Blues Trail marker

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

5 civil rights - lesson 3

Charles Evers later became the first African American elected mayor of a city in Mississippi [Fayette] during the modern era, and in 1973 started a festival that honored his brother's legacy. For many years **B.B. King** was the headliner at the festival, which also featured many other blues artists.

Another event that mixed blues and **Civil Rights** politics was the Delta Blues Festival outside of Greenville, which was founded in 1978 on the site of "**Freedom Village**." See the Blues Trail marker for "Freedom Village" for more information.

In the 1950s **B.B. King** recorded a song called "Why I Sing the Blues" in which he explained that it was because of a woman. In the late '60s King recorded a new version of "Why I Sing the Blues," which included verses about topics including slavery, poverty, substandard housing, and employment discrimination.

*Everybody wants to know
Why I sing the blues
Yes, I say everybody wanna know
Why I sing the blues
Well, I've been around a long time
I really have paid my dues*

*When I first got the blues
They brought me over on a ship
Men were standing over me
And a lot more with a whip
And everybody wanna know
Why I sing the blues
Well, I've been around a long time
Mm, I've really paid my dues*

*I've laid in a ghetto flat
Cold and numb
I heard the rats tell the bedbugs
To give the roaches some*

*Everybody wanna know
Why I'm singing the blues
Yes, I've been around a long time
People, I've paid my dues*

*I stood in line
Down at the County Hall
I heard a man say, "We're gonna build
Some new apartments for y'all"
And everybody wanna know*

*Yes, they wanna know
Why I'm singing the blues
Yes, I've been around a long, long time
Yes, I've really, really paid my dues*

*My kid's gonna grow up
Gonna grow up to be a fool
'Cause they ain't got no more room
No more room for him in school
And everybody wanna know
Everybody wanna know
Why I'm singing the blues
I say I've been around a long time
Yes, I've really paid some dues*

*Yeah, you know the company told me
Guess you're born to lose
Everybody around me, people
It seems like everybody got the blues
But I had 'em a long time
I've really, really paid my dues
You know I ain't ashamed of it, people
I just love to sing my blues*

*I walk through the cities, people
On my bare feet
I had a fill of catfish and chitterlings
Up and down Beale Street
You know I'm singing the blues
Yes, I really
I just have to sing my blues
I've been around a long time
People, I've really, really paid my dues*

*Now Father Time is catching up with me
Gone is my youth
I look in the mirror everyday
And let it tell me the truth
I'm singing the blues
Mm, I just have to sing the blues*

*I've been around a long time
Yes, yes, I've really paid some dues*

*Yeah, they told me everything
Would be better out in the country
Everything was fine
I caught me a bus uptown, baby
And every people, all the people
Got the same trouble as mine*

5 civil rights - lesson 3

*I got the blues, uh huh
I say I've been around a long time
I've really paid some dues*

*Blind man on the corner
Begging for a dime
The rollers [police] come and caught him
And throw him in the jail for a crime
I got the blues
Mm, I'm singing my blues
I've been around a long time
Mm, I've really paid some dues*

*Oh I thought I'd go down to the welfare
To get myself some grits and stuff
But a lady stand up and she said
"You haven't been around long enough"
That's why I got the blues
Mm, the blues
I say, I've been around a long time
I've really, really paid my dues*

④ TTW share the psychological implications of **Jim Crow laws** on African Americans and the positive reaction through music with the following:

Another form of political expression during the **Civil Rights era** were songs that expressed pride in being African American. One intention of legislation such as the **Jim Crow laws** was to ensure that Africans "knew their place," and a psychological effect of this was often a sense of inferiority.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., addressed this when he said, "Too many Negroes are ashamed of themselves, ashamed of being black. A negro got to rise up and say from the bottom of his soul, "I am somebody. I have a rich, noble, and proud heritage. However exploited and however painful my history has been, I'm black, but I'm black and beautiful."

This sentiment was echoed most famously by soul singer **James Brown** in his 1968 song "Say It Loud" (I'm Black and I'm Proud)

*Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!*

*Some people say we've got a lot of malice
Some say it's a lot of nerve
But I say we won't quit moving until we get
What we deserve
We have been [re]buked and we have been scorned*

*We have been treated bad, talked about
As just bones
But just as it takes two eyes to make a pair, ha
Brother we can't quit until we get our share*

*Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!
One more time!
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud!*

*I worked on jobs with my feet and my hand
But all the work I did was for the other man
Now we demand a chance to do things for ourselves
We're tired of beatin' our head against the wall
And workin' for someone else*

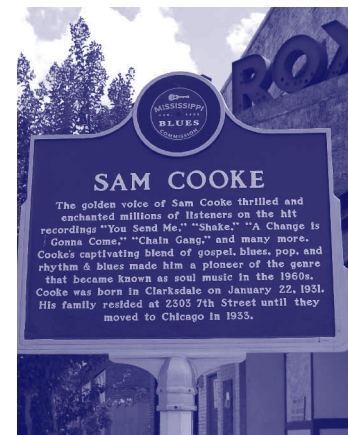
*Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud*

*We're people, we're just like the birds and the bees
We'd rather die on our feet
Than be livin' on our knees*

*Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud
Say it loud: I'm black and I'm proud*

One of most inspirational songs to come out of the **Civil Rights movement** was "A Change is Gonna Come" by **Sam Cooke**, a native of Clarksdale. In the 1950s Cooke became a gospel star while singing lead vocals with the group the Soul Stirrers. In 1957, though, he began singing secular (non-religious) music including pop, blues and soul. In Cooke's 1964 song "A Change is Gonna

Come," which has a reference to the segregation of movie theaters, we can see the hope experienced by many African Americans that positive change was around the corner. Although this song was released as a secular soul song, churches have embraced it because of its positive message.



Sam Cooke Blues Trail marker

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

5 civil rights - lesson 3

*I was born by the river in a little tent
Oh, and just like the river I've been running
Ever since.*

*It's been a long, a long time coming but I know
A change gonna come, oh yes it will.*

*It's been too hard living, but I'm afraid to die
'Cause I don't know what's up there beyond the sky.
It's been a long, a long time coming but I know
A change gonna come, oh yes it will.*

*I go to the movies and I go downtown
Somebody keep telling me don't hang around.
It's been a long, a long time coming but I know
A change go'n come, oh yes it will.*

*Then I go to my brother,
And I say, "Brother, help me please."
But he winds up knockin' me, back down
On my knees.*

*Oh, there been times that I thought I couldn't
Last for long
But now I think I'm able to carry on.
It's been a long, a long time coming but I know
A change gonna come, oh yes it will.*

5 TTW assist the students in locating Inverness on the Mississippi map, draw attention to the Blues Trail Marker, and conclude with the following:

Another inspiring song is "We're Gonna Make It" by **Little Milton Campbell** of Inverness, which was a big hit in 1963. While it doesn't contain specific details about politics, it can be seen as reflecting the optimistic view of many people during the **Civil Rights movement**: that times are tough, but things are going to get better in the end.

*We may not have a cent, to pay the rent
But we're gonna make it, I know we will
We may have to eat beans every day
But we're gonna make it, I know we will*

*And if a job is hard to find
And we have to stand in the welfare line
I've got your love and you know you got mine
So we're gonna make it, I know we will*

*We may not have a home, to call our own
But we're gonna make it, I know we will*

*We may have to fight hardships alone
But we're gonna make it, I know we will*

*'Cause togetherness brings peace of mind
We can't stay down all the time
I've got your love and you know you got mine
So we're gonna make it, I know we will*

*Our car may be old, our two rooms cold
But we're gonna make it, I know we will
We may not can spare a roach a crumb
But we're gonna make it, I know we will*

*And if I have to carry 'round a sign
Sayin' "Help the deaf, the dumb, and the blind"
I got your love and you know you got mine
So we're gonna make it, I know we will*

*We're gonna make it
We're gonna make it, baby
It might seem hard sometime
But don't worry, darlin' baby
We're gonna keep on tryin'*

PROJECTS

A. Investigate the Civil Rights movement that results in a narrative or timeline.

B. Research the life and protest of Rosa Parks using that information to write historical fiction concerning her thoughts/actions on the day of her impressive refusal to give up her bus seat in Montgomery, Alabama.

C. Use information gleaned from research to write a historical fictional account of a Freedom Rider or freedom marcher.

D. Recreate Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech by acting/delivering the address from memory.

E. Investigate the lives of one or more of the following: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Medgar Evers, Charles Evers, that results in a narrative, timeline, or created drama based on significant events.

5 civil rights - lesson 3

VOCABULARY

Civil Rights Movement: a social movement aimed at outlawing racial discrimination against African Americans

Civil Rights Era: the period from the mid-1950s to the late '60s when many Americans actively sought to change racist laws and practices in the United States

Rosa Parks: an African American civil rights activist who is recognized as the “mother of the modern day Civil Rights movement” because of her refusal to move to the back of a Montgomery, Alabama, bus so that a white male could be seated

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: a clergyman and active leader of the Civil Rights movement, noted for his powerful speeches and leadership

Sit-in movements: a non-violent form of protest in which individuals occupied segregated public spaces, such as restaurants, to bring attention to the unjustness of Jim Crow laws.

Freedom Riders: Civil Rights activists who rode buses into the South in May of 1961 to test a Supreme Court decision against segregation of interstate travel. Many were beaten and jailed.

Freedom Marchers: Civil Rights activists who marched in various cities to oppose segregation

Medgar Evers: a Mississippi native and Civil Rights leader who helped integrate the University of Mississippi; Medgar Evers was Mississippi's first field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

Charles Evers: the older brother of Medgar Evers; also a Civil Rights activist and the first African American to be elected mayor of a Mississippi town since Reconstruction

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

A. Define the following terms or contributions of individuals in your own words:

- Civil Rights movement
- Civil Rights era
- Rosa Parks
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Sit-in movements
- Freedom Riders
- Freedom Marchers
- Medgar Evers
- Charles Evers

B. Explain the following using your own words:

- How did African Americans overcome Jim Crow laws through non-violence?
- How did the blues connect to social and political protest?

C. Write a short paragraph explaining your answer to the question:

- Did the Civil Rights movement effectively/permanently affect the status of African Americans?

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- CD player

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson may be shortened by presentation of smaller segments of the six teaching procedures with or without group projects during each instructional period.

Students may be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view other videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students may be encouraged to find books or Internet sources that further illustrate the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Medgar and Charles Evers, as well as songs about those topics.

5 civil rights - assessment 4

NAME _____

DATE _____

A. Define the following terms in your own words:

Reconstruction _____

Black Codes _____

Jim Crow Laws _____

Segregation _____

County Farm _____

The Great Depression _____

“Hooverville” _____

Political singer _____

Folk music _____

Meaning of the derogatory term “boy” _____

Meaning of the derogatory term “uncle” _____

5 civil rights - assessment 4

NAME _____

DATE _____

B. Explain the following using your own words:

How did blues singers in the South sing about social and political problems facing African Americans?

How did blues singers in the North sing about social and political problems facing African Americans?

C. Explain the following using your own words:

How did the blues connect to social and political protest?

D. Write a short paragraph explaining your answer to the question:

Did the end of the Civil War effectively/permanently affect the status of African Americans?

E. Write a short paragraph explaining your answer to the question:

Even though African Americans were free from slavery at the end of the Civil War, why were blacks not truly free in the early 20th century?

6 media - lesson 1

EARLY YEARS OF THE BLUES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
4 a • 6 a b c d • 8 b • 9 a c d

National Standards for Theatre
1 a • 2 b c • 3 a b

Mississippi Framework (Music)
4 a • 6 a • 7 a • 8 c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 • 3 a • 4 b c • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

1 TTW ask the students to brainstorm thoughts of how people lived in 1900, at the turn of the century, in terms of lifestyle (clothing, housing, transportation, employment/jobs, and other factors). Immediately following, TTW set the scene with pictures of Cleveland, Mississippi and Memphis, Tennessee, and continue with the narrative:

MEDIA AND THE BLUES LESSON

African American agricultural workers created the blues in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and its content reflected their hopes, frustrations and the general experiences of their daily lives. Initially the blues was what's considered a "*folk music*," created and produced locally, without much consideration for profit.

Very soon after the music emerged, though, the blues also became a *commercial music* that was sought out by the music industry. Companies began selling blues in the form of sheet music and phonograph records, and later via tapes, CDs and digital downloads. In the form of recordings, the music also spread through various media forms—the radio,

movies, television, and the Internet.

One of the most important aspects about the entertainment media was that it provided African Americans with an important outlet to express themselves. During the *segregation* era African Americans in the South were generally not able to present a positive self image through newspapers or radio talk shows. Through *sheet music*, live performances, recordings, and musical appearances on the radio, though, they could communicate many ideas about their dreams, sorrows, and simple joys.

W.C. HANDY

One of the first accounts of the blues was by W.C. Handy, a bandleader from northwest Alabama. In the early 1900s he was living in the Clarksdale area, and one day he found himself waiting on a train in Tutwiler. Also there was a man playing the guitar, using a knife to press down on the top strings.

In his autobiography *Father of the Blues* W. C. Handy wrote that the man sang a song about where the "Southern crosses the Dog," which was a reference to where two trains crossed paths in Moorhead. Handy recalled that it was the "strangest music he ever heard"—it was his first encounter with the blues.

Not long after this Handy was in Cleveland, Mississippi, and saw a group of young men playing music similar to what he heard in Tutwiler on guitar, bass and mandolin. There was a crowd of people around them, and soon "a rain of silver dollars began to fall around the outlandish, stomping feet" of the musicians. It was at this moment that Handy realized there was money to be made in the blues.



W.C. Handy Blues Trail marker

In 1909 Handy moved to Memphis, where he began writing blues songs—the musicians he had heard down in Mississippi had almost certainly composed their songs "by ear." Over the next decade Handy published popular songs including "Memphis Blues," "Beale Street Blues," and "St. Louis Blues," and helped start a blues "craze" in the music industry. A number of songs with "blues" in their title were recorded during the 1910s, but the blues mostly spread through live performances and *sheet music*.

6 media - lesson 1

2 TTW introduce the term **vaudeville** and add Internet clips before continuing the narrative:

VAUDEVILLE & MINSTREL SHOWS

In 1920 **Mamie Smith** became the first African American to make a blues recording, “Crazy Blues.” It became a big hit, and soon all record companies began recording other women who performed in her style. Smith performed mostly at fancy theaters in big cities that featured **Vaudeville shows**. These included musicians, comedians, dancers, magicians and other entertainers, and were a way for many African Americans to enter show business.

The most famous of these was **Bessie Smith** who was nicknamed the “Empress of the Blues.” She wore glamorous dresses, earned lots of money from her performances, and perhaps most importantly became an important role model for independently-minded women. Smith was originally from Chattanooga, Tennessee, and in 1937 died after being injured in car accident in Clarksdale. The building that housed the hospital for African Americans where Smith died later became the Riverside Hotel, where many blues musicians lived.



Bessie Smith, “Empress of the Blues”

Source: Carl Van Vechten; Library of Congress

Like many early blues performers, **Bessie Smith** started off her professional career working in carnivals and **traveling tent shows**. These shows would travel across the country by train or truck, and would often set up in vacant lots in cities or sometimes even in rural areas between cities. When they arrived in new places they would often have a parade to advertise that they were in town, and some groups even had their own baseball teams that would play local teams.

3 TTW explain the term **minstrel** and assist students in locating **Port Gibson** on the Mississippi map before continuing the narrative:

One of the most famous of these was the **Rabbit Foot Minstrels**, who were based for many years out of **Port Gibson, Mississippi**. Groups like the Rabbit Foot Minstrels played an important role in the spread of the blues, particularly as they introduced music to new areas. It’s also likely that the musi-



Source: Dr. David Crosby

Rabbit Foot Minstrels

cians in the travelling groups learned new songs from local musicians in the places where they performed. Like the vaudeville stage shows they included many different sorts of entertainment. Famous members of the **Rabbit Foot Minstrels Blues** included **Ma Rainey**, **Rufus Thomas** and **Gatemouth Moore**; both Thomas and Moore are honored with their own Blues Trail markers.

M Media Resource - Mississippi Blues Trail film “Rabbit Foot Minstrels”

PROJECTS

A. Investigate vaudeville shows that results in the creation of 4-5 original acts created by students during a group project and culminates in a performance. Develop posters/fliers to advertise the show, print/sell tickets, design lighting, and rehearse for confidence/accuracy.

B. Research the Rabbit Foot Minstrels that results in the creation of a show developed by students during a group project and culminates in a performance. Develop posters/fliers to advertise the show, print/sell tickets, design lighting, and rehearse for confidence/accuracy (or Rabbit Foot Minstrels that results in a timeline or narrative.)

C. Following the investigation of either the vaudeville or minstrel performance circuit write a short story based on the life of a performer.

D. Delve into the life of W.C. Handy and write a timeline or narrative extolling the efforts to encourage African American performances in the media. Write a series of letters from Handy to musicians, artists, radio station owners/operators touting rising stars. Use research material to name specific artists and songs.

6 media - lesson 1

VOCABULARY

Folk music: traditional music and songs created in a particular region by non-professional musicians

Commercial music: music created or performed with the intention of making profit

Sheet music: printed music, as opposed to performed or recorded music

Traveling tent shows: a group of performers who traveled from town to town, setting up and performing in tents for the public

Vaudeville: variety shows popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s that featured musicians, comedians, dancers, and other entertainers; many African American performers entered show business through vaudeville

W.C. Handy: a bandleader and songwriter from northwest Alabama who is referred to as the “father of the blues” because of his important role in popularizing the blues

Mamie Smith: vocalist on the vaudeville circuit who in 1920 was the first African American to make a blues recording, “Crazy Blues”

Bessie Smith: the most famous Vaudeville blues performer and recording artist during the 1920s and ‘30s, known for her elegant costumes

Minstrel Show: a variety show that featured comics, singers, dancers, etc. Minstrelsy, in which performers often wore blackface makeup, was the most popular form of entertainment for most of the 1800s.

Port Gibson, Mississippi: home of the Rabbit Foot Minstrels

Rabbit Foot Minstrels: a traveling variety show that included blues performers; Recognized for making blues popular

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use
- Elements of Music posted for reference
- “The Homework Blues” printed composition

- “The Homework Blues” CD
- “Fire! Fire!” By Barbara Address

ASSESSMENT

TTW utilize the following rubrics for evaluating student compositions:

WORK SONG IMPROVISATION

0-5 Points awarded for each item

27-30 = A; 26-24 = B; 21-23 = C; 18-20 = D; 0-17 = F

- _____ Struggle/difficulty evidenced by lyrics created
- _____ Word-inflection preserved or rhythm improvised
- _____ Movement/creative dance/tableau creativity
- _____ Over-all creativity/originality
- _____ Group effort in creation process
- _____ Ability of the group to perform the composition

FIELD HOLLER LYRICS

0-5 Points awarded for each item

27-30 = A; 26-24 = B; 21-23 = C; 18-20 = D; 0-17 = F

- _____ Struggle/difficulty evidenced by lyrics created
- _____ At least three lines of text evident for each verse
- _____ At least three verses/or three ideas expressed
- _____ Indications of direction of possible vocal inflection for each line of verses (ascend, descend, stay-the-same)
- _____ Movement/creative dance/tableau creativity
- _____ Over-all creativity/originality

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- Video-camera for possible recording of group performances for evaluation/critique

6 media - lesson 1

REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson can be shortened by presenting Procedures 1-7 during an initial learning period and Procedures 8-12 at a successive time.

Students can be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students can find books in the library that further illustrate Mississippi blues or use a search-engine to explore performances by noted blues artists.

Successive lessons in the curriculum project will achieve these two options.

For those students with visual impairments—music examples can be enlarged.

For those students with aural impairments—visual clips are important and a visual demonstration of steady-beat with movement is imperative.

6 media - lesson 2

RECORDING THE BLUES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
4 a • 6 a b c d • 8 b • 9 a c d

National Standards for Visual Arts
1 c d • 2 a c • 3 a

Mississippi Framework (Music)
4 a • 6 a • 7 a • 8 c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 • 3 a • 4 b c • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

- 1 TSW define the following terms both verbally and in writing: *recording artists*, *juke joints*, *jukebox*.
- 2 TSW explain both verbally and in writing the significance of the following concerning recording of the blues: *Parchman Farm*, *Alan Lomax*, *Jimmie Rodgers*, *Paramount Records*, *Edwards Hotel*, *Hattiesburg* (the latter two sites of recordings supervised by H.C. Speir), *Trumpet Records*, *Scott Radio Service*, *Ace Records*, *Malaco Records*, and *Dorothy Moore*.
- 3 TSW will locate the following both on a physical map and on a paper map: New York City, Chicago, Memphis, Grafton (Wisconsin), Bristol (Virginia).

PROCEDURES

- 1 TTW ask the students to locate the following cities on a large physical map of the United States: New York City, Memphis, Chicago, Grafton (WI), and Bristol (VA), assisting students requiring help. TTW display art prints/photos

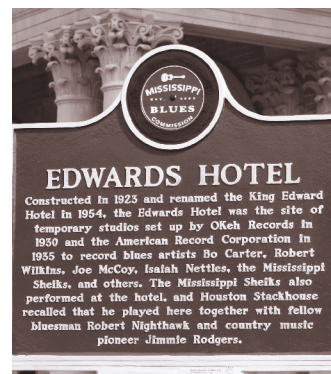
of *juke joints* and *juke boxes* and ask students to describe the images before continuing with the narrative:

FIRST RECORDINGS OF MISSISSIPPI ARTISTS

When artists such as **Bessie Smith** and **Mamie Smith** were first recorded, they were already professional musicians that played on a regular circuit of theaters across the South, the Northeast, and the Midwest. It was a very different situation for Mississippi musicians who lived in the country. They often played at parties or other gathering for tips, drinks and food. Sometimes they performed at informal “*juke joints*” that were located on plantations, but generally did not play in modern style clubs with seating and a stage.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s recording companies that were based mostly in New York and Chicago decided that they wanted to find new talent in the South, and in order to do so they hired local agents and set up temporary studios in various Southern cities. In Mississippi a man named **H.C. Speir**, who ran a furniture store on North Farish Street in Jackson, discovered many blues artists.

Sometimes these artists were sent by train or driven to cities including Memphis, New York City, Chicago, and Grafton, Wisconsin, to record. **H.C. Speir** also arranged recording sessions in Mississippi at the King Edward Hotel in downtown Jackson and at a hotel in downtown Hattiesburg. Other artists were discovered after they left the state; **Jimmie Rodgers** from Meridian, for instance, was first recorded in Bristol, Virginia. He later became one of the most popular recording artists in the country, selling millions of records before his early death.



Edwards Hotel Blues Trail marker

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

M Media Resource - Mississippi Blues Trail film: “Scouting the Delta: Charley Patton and H.C. Speir”

- 2 TTW show examples of record labels, both 78s and 45s, explaining the difference both in time frame and reason for size; then continue with the narrative:

6 media - lesson 2

FIELD RECORDINGS

Most recordings in the United States have been produced by companies with the intent of making money by selling records to the public. Another important way that blues was documented was through “field recordings” made by folklorists—people trained in traditional music—who were interested in preserving a wide range of sounds. In the 1930s and 1940s, for instance, **John A. Lomax** and his son **Alan Lomax** visited **Mississippi’s Parchman Penitentiary**, where they were able to document the songs prisoners sang while working.



Parchman Farm Blues Trail marker

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

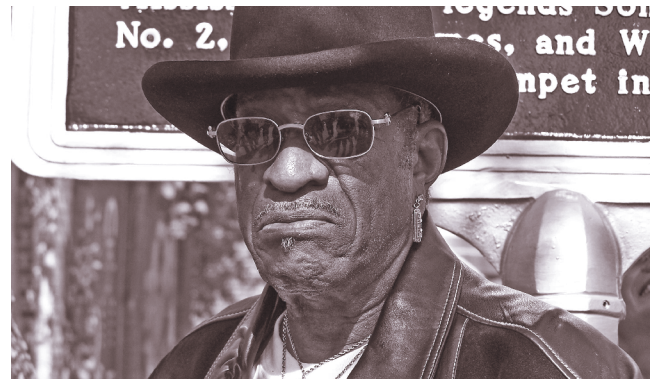
In 1941 and 1942 Alan Lomax, together with **John Work III** of Fisk University, made recordings of local musicians in Clarksdale, including the first by **Muddy Waters** and **Honeyboy Edwards**, on behalf of the Library of Congress. During a return visit in 1959 Alan Lomax recorded **Mississippi Fred McDowell** and the unique fife and drum tradition in the Como area. In the ‘60s and ‘70s many more artists were recorded by folklorists including **George Mitchell**, **Dr. David Evans**, and **Dr. William Ferris**, who helped establish the Blues Archive at the **University of Mississippi**.

RECORD LABELS IN MISSISSIPPI

As we noted above, the first Mississippi artists to record did so for labels that were based out of large northern cities. Their efforts to try to find artists in the South were short-lived, though—eventually many artists realized that it would be best for their careers to move north to cities such as Chicago.

After World War II, however, new labels started in Jackson, and in Memphis producer **Sam Phillips** made recordings for Chess, Modern, and his own Sun label by artists including **Elvis Presley**, **Rufus Thomas**, **Howlin’ Wolf**, and **Ike Turner**. In 1951 Turner’s Clarksdale-based **Kings of Rhythm** recorded the song “Rocket 88” under the name of vocalist **Jackie Brenston**; it is now regarded widely as one of the first rock ‘n’ roll records. Turner also worked as a talent scout and was responsible for recording other Mississippi artists.

3 TTW ask students to brainstorm gender-specific professions/jobs at the turn of the century in 1900 through the 1950s and will guide students in listing as many as possible before continuing with the narrative:



Bluesman Jerry McCain, who recorded for Trumpet in the early ‘50s

In 1951 **Mrs. Lillian McMurtry**, together with her husband Willard, started **Trumpet Records** out of the furniture store she operated on North Farish Street in Jackson. It used to be common for furniture stores to sell records, as record players were one of the main products they sold. Very few women were involved in the recording industry, but McMurtry studied the market very carefully and made some historic recordings. Among these were the first recordings by bluesman **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2** and **Elmore James**.

McMurtry eventually created her own recording studio, but initially had artists recorded at places including radio stations and at **Scott Radio Service**. Her label ran for about five years, and she shut it down because it wasn’t making enough money.

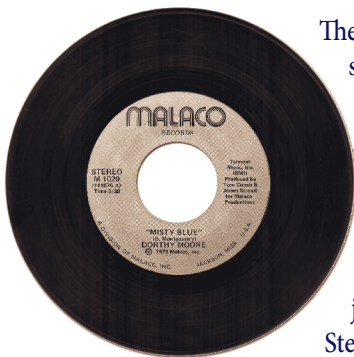
M Media Resource - Blues Trail film: “Trumpet Records”

4 TTW ask students to explain **jukeboxes** and **juke joints**, refine definitions, and continue with the narrative:

Another important Jackson-based label in the 1950s was **Ace Records**, whose owner **Johnny Vincent** started in the music business working with jukeboxes, which supplied the music in many cafes and clubs. Vincent’s first success in the music business was in New Orleans, where he produced the hit recording “The Things I Used to Do” by Greenwood native **Guitar Slim** for Specialty Records. In the mid-‘50s started Ace Records in Jackson, and in addition to working with many New Orleans-based artists he recorded singles by Mississippians **Sam Myers** and **Arthur “Big Boy” Crudup**. In the 1970s Vincent recorded many local blues artists who performed at the **Queen of Hearts** and continued recording artists including **Willie Clayton** until the late 1990s.

6 media - lesson 2

5 TTW ask students to name state universities in Mississippi, and after listing such indicate which is the oldest. TTW assist the students in locating Oxford, Mississippi, and continue with the narrative:



Dorothy Moore's hit song "Misty Blue" on the Malaco label

The biggest blues label in Mississippi was **Malaco**, which was founded in the 1960s by **University of Mississippi** fraternity brothers **Tommy Couch** and **Gerald "Wolf" Stephenson**.

Johnny Vincent was a major influence on Couch and Stephenson, and helped them establish the label. In the early '70s they had their first successes with producing records

by New Orleans artists, and in 1976 had their first big hit by a Mississippi artist with "Misty Blue" by **Dorothy Moore**. She grew up in the **Farish Street** neighborhood, and first came to wider attention when she began winning talent contests as a teenager at the **Alamo Theatre** on **Farish Street**.

Malaco later signed many of the biggest artists in the blues and soul music, including Mississippians **Little Milton Campbell**, **Denise LaSalle**, and **Tyrone Davis**. Longtime Jackson resident **Bobby Rush** also recorded for the label, and many hit songs were provided by the songwriting team of **Sam Mosely** and **Bob Johnson** from New Albany. All of these artists are acknowledged with their own Mississippi Blues Trail markers.

For many years recording music was an expensive process that required very specialized and expensive equipment. Today, though, many artists record their own songs and issue them on their own labels. And whereas labels used to depend mostly on retail stores, artists can now sell their own recordings on the Internet in either "hard" copies or in digital form. Making and selling your own recordings isn't always an easy process, though, as established record labels were well connected with the stores, radio stations, and manufacturing companies necessary to market recordings.

PROJECTS

A. Investigate women in business before, during, and after WWII that results in a timeline, narrative, or short story based on the life of a female entrepreneur.

B. Create a recording company and design a label for both a 78 and a 45.

C. Research the **Alamo Theatre** in Jackson to discover the location, a picture of the building, floor plan, and programming format that results in a narrative or a short story centering around the life of a fictional performer.

D. Locate pictures of the **Alamo Theatre** or visit the site. Sketch/draw pictures of the façade, foyer, auditorium (including seats and stage). Students may also create a replica of the theatre using clay or other media.

E. Recreate the **Alamo Theatre** in the classroom by creating aisles, stage, exit rows, etc. Plan a performance using this venue by researching entertainment on this famous stage during its heyday. Create acts/scenes that might be viewed in the theatre today.

VOCABULARY

Recording artists: musicians who make sound recordings, as opposed to simply playing live

Juke joints: very informal clubs where blues musicians often performed

Jukebox: a coin or dollar-operated machine with a wide selection of music, often found in nightclubs and cafes

H.C. Speir: ran a furniture store on North Farish Street in Jackson, discovered many blues artists

Jimmie Rodgers: popular recording artist from Meridian known as the "singing brakeman" and well-known for his "blue yodels"

Sam Phillips: owned the Memphis-based studio Memphis Recording Studio, and operated Sun Records, where Elvis Presley made his first recordings

Howlin' Wolf: blues musician from West Point

Ike Turner: blues musician, bandleader and talent scout from Clarksdale

Lillian McMurry: started Trumpet Records in 1951 out of a furniture store that she operated together with her husband Willard

6 media - lesson 2

Trumpet Records: record company operated by Lillian McMurry on North Farish Street in Jackson

Ace Records: record company operated by Johnny Vincent in Jackson beginning in the 1950s

Queen of Hearts: popular blues club in Jackson that was founded in the early 1970s

Malaco: record company based in Jackson that recorded many blues and gospel artists beginning in the early 1970s

Dorothy Moore: Jackson native who gained fame for her 1976 hit “Misty Blue,” issued on Malaco Records

Alamo Theatre: movie theatre on North Farish Street that hosted talent shows in which Dorothy Moore and other musicians competed

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

ASSESSMENT

A. Define the following terms in your own words:

- Recording artists
- Juke joints
- Jukeboxes

B. Explain the significance of the following using your own words:

- Jimmie Rodgers
- Howlin’ Wolf
- Ike Turner
- Lillian McMurry
- Record label
- Trumpet Records
- Ace Records
- Queen of Hearts Club
- Malaco
- Dorothy Moore
- Alamo Theatre

TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- CD player

+ REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson may be shortened by presentation of smaller segments of the five teaching procedures during each instructional period.

Students may be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view other videos and locate other links to blues information.

Students may be encouraged to find books or Internet sources that further illustrate Media and the Blues as well as songs performed on the radio or other performance venues.

6 media - lesson 3

RADIO AND THE BLUES



STANDARDS

National Standards for Music Education (K-4)
4 a • 6 a b c d • 8 b • 9 a c d

Mississippi Framework (Music)
4 a • 6 a • 7 a • 8 c • 9 b

Mississippi Framework (Social Studies)
2 • 3 a • 4 b c • 6 b c

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Writing Standards (G4)
1 b • 2 b d • 3 a b c d e

Speaking and Listening Standards (G4)
2 • 4 • 5

Language Standards (G4)
1 a b c d e f g • 2 a b c d • 3 a b c • 4 a b c • 6

OBJECTIVES

① TSW define the following terms both verbally and in writing: *importance of early radio (particularly before television)*, *national radio networks*, *disc jockey/deejay/DJ*.

② TSW explain the following: radio call letters starting with W and K, impact of radio after WWII; information about radio on the following Blues Trail markers: **Mississippi to Helena** (King Biscuit Time, KFFA); **Turner's Drug Store** (Tally Ho Tonic); **American Blues Network** (satellite radio distribution); **WGRM** (B.B. King's gospel group); **WROX** (deejay Early Wright); **Blues Deejaays**; **American Blues Network**; **Charles Evers**; also discuss **B.B. King**, whose show on Memphis' WDIA was sponsored by the tonic medicine Pep-Ti-Kon.

PROCEDURES

① TTW begin with an Internet clip of a *national radio show* and continue with the narrative:

RADIO AND THE MASS MEDIA

Radio took off as a popular media form in the 1920s, but for many years blues was rarely played on radio stations. Until the 1940s much of the music programming over the airwaves was

provided by the national radio networks of CBS and NBC, which used studio musicians that played mostly pop and classical music. Most programming was aimed at white audiences, including live performances by African American jazz groups, and there were very few African American radio personalities.

This changed dramatically after World War II, when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which regulates radio, allowed for the creation of new stations. Many of these began featuring music including blues, gospel and country music, with disc jockeys (also known as “deejays” or “DJs”) creating their own playlists.

② TTW assist students in locating Helena, Arkansas, on the map, explain the reason for different beginning call letters for radio stations (W for east of the Mississippi River and K for west of the Mississippi River), and continue with the narrative:

The first major blues show in the Mississippi region was *King Biscuit Time*, which first appeared in 1941 on *KFFA in Helena, Arkansas*. The show featured live music and was initially led by blues harmonica great **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2** together with guitarist **Robert Lockwood, Jr.**, who was the stepson and student of **Robert Johnson**.



Mississippi to Helena Blues Trail Marker

The show aired around noon every weekday for just fifteen minutes, and many agricultural workers on both sides of the Mississippi listened to it while eating lunch. The main advertiser was the Interstate Flour Company, which sold Sonny Boy brand flour. Musicians who played on the show were able to advertise their live performances over the radio, and Sonny Boy was able to become a “star” long before he made his first records.

③ TTW assist students in locating Belzoni, Mississippi, on the map, explain about “patent medicines,” and continue with the narrative:

Williamson, together with bluesman Elmore James, also later hosted a live radio program out of the *Easy Pay store in Belzoni*. The show was sponsored by fellow Belzoni business *Turner's Drug Store*, which used the show to advertise

6 media - lesson 3

Tally-Ho, a tonic medicine that was said to cure everything—it likely didn’t. Although the show was performed live in Belzoni, it was actually broadcast over the air by stations in Yazoo City and Greenville, which were connected by telephone lines.

④ TTW assist students in locating Indianola, Mississippi, on the map; discuss the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center and continue with the narrative:

Note for Teachers: The B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center in Indianola, Miss. has exhibits on tonic medicines and WDIA radio station.

B.B. King also started his professional career by performing live on the radio. In the mid-1940s King—then known as **Riley B. King**—was a member of the Famous St. John’s Gospel Singers, who played on Sunday afternoons over **WGRM** in Greenwood. Several years later King decided to concentrate on blues, and moved to Memphis. There he auditioned as a disc jockey for radio station **WDIA**, which was in the process of becoming the first radio station in the nation to feature all African-American content and all African-American on-air talent. Another Mississippian who served as a deejay for many years on **WDIA** was **Rufus Thomas**, who had many hit records on Memphis’ Stax label.

King’s show was also sponsored by a tonic medicine, **Pep-Ti-Kon**, and he initially got his job because he was able to make up a jingle for it on the spot – “Pep-Ti-Kon, sure is good/ You can get it anywhere in your neighborhood.” As a disc jockey King was able to choose among many songs to play over the air. He later said that this helped introduce him to a very wide variety of artists from outside of Mississippi who would influence his unique approach to the blues.

King was initially known as a the “Beale Street Blues Boy”—his nickname was later shortened to “Blues Boy” and finally just “B.B.” Like **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2**, King’s presence on the radio really helped to spread his name. Eventually, though, he had to start touring across the country to promote his records, and no longer had time to deejay on a daily basis.

⑤ TTW explain **gospel show, disc jockey/deejay/DJ** and continue with the narrative:

One of the first disk jockeys in Mississippi was **Early Wright** in Clarksdale, who hosted blue and gospel programs over **WROX** for nearly fifty years. Like **B.B. King**, Wright first ap-



WROX Blues Trail marker

Source: Mississippi Blues Commission

peared over the radio as a member of gospel group, the Four Star Quartet. In 1946 the station manager of **WROX**, who was impressed with Wright’s charismatic personality, offered him a job as a disc jockey.

Wright was known as “the Soul Man” when he was playing blues music, and “Brother Early Wright” when he was hosting gospel shows. He was also beloved by fans for the creative advertisements for products and stores that he composed, often on the spot. Another deejay at **WROX** was blues bandleader **Ike Turner**, who hosted a show called “Jive to Five.”

Disc jockeys were often chosen because of their gift for speaking and making things up on the spot. Many, like **B.B.** and **Early Wright** had colorful on-air names. Important early African American deejays from Mississippi also included Bruce “Jet Pilot of Jive” Payne, Wade “Poppa Rock” Graves, William “Dr. Daddy O” Harvey, James “Oakly Doaky” Smith, and Jobie Martin, “the loud mouth of the South.”

While deejays were often fun characters, they also played an important role in the community. Perhaps most importantly, the first African American deejays were public figures in the media at a time when few African Americans held prominent positions and Jim Crow segregation laws were in effect.

M Media Resource - “Why B.B. King Sings the Blues”

⑥ TTW assist students in locating Philadelphia, Mississippi, on the map and continue with the narrative:

One pioneering disc jockey was **Charles Evers**, who first began hosting a show on a station in Philadelphia, Mississippi, in the early ‘50s. He later moved on to Chicago, partially, he said, because of pressure resulting from his outspoken statements on the air about issues of **Civil Rights**. He returned to Mississippi in the mid-‘60s after the murder of his brother, **Civil Rights activist Medgar Evers**. Many years later Evers became the manager of the Jackson radio station **WMPR**, which featured blues, gospel and political talk shows.

6 media - lesson 3

7 TTW conduct a poll of students to determine how many listen to the radio, how many watch TV, and an estimate of the personal percentage of usage of each media before continuing with the narrative:

As television took off in the 1950s radio became relatively less popular, but it remained an important source for news and for introducing new music. Deejays also often worked as promoters for live shows, earning extra money and demonstrating another important role they played in helping further artists' careers.

Today, we can see how radio-like programming also appears on cable television—many cable companies offer dozens of channels that specialize in one form of music—and individuals are now able to create their own “radio stations” or podcasts using MP3 players and an Internet connection. Another innovative way that blues reaches audiences today is through satellites. The Gulfport-based *American Blues Network*, for instance, sends out its programming by satellite, and it's then downloaded by stations around the world.

PROJECTS

A. Investigate the origins of radio/television that results in a timeline or narrative and culminates in statements about the impact of each on the lives of Americans.

B. Write a short story about a radio performer in the 1920s emphasizing lifestyle, work hours, show sponsors, radio station owners/operators, deejays, and other challenges.

C. Create a radio show program by designing a fictional radio station, develop a show time-frame with performers, show sponsors, and actual music.

VOCABULARY

Radio network: a group of interconnected radio stations

Disc Jockey/Deejay/DJ: the host of a radio show or radio station

Gospel show: a radio show featuring gospel music and sometimes other religious messages

King Biscuit Time: a live blues radio show on KFFA in Helena, Arkansas, sponsored by Interstate Flour Company

KFFA in Helena, Arkansas: Radio station that hosts the long-running program “King Biscuit Time”

Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2: blues musician and harmonica player who originally hosted “King Biscuit Time”

Interstate Flour Company: the main advertiser for “King Biscuit Time”

Sonny Boy Flour: a type of flour sold by the Interstate Flour Company; promoted specifically through the “King Biscuit Time” show and Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2

Turner's Drug Store (Belzoni): one of the main sponsors of the live blues program hosted by Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2 and Elmore James out of the Easy Pay store in Belzoni

Easy Pay Store (Belzoni): venue of a live blues radio program hosted by Williamson and James

Tally Ho Tonic: a “cure-all” medicine advertised by Turner's Drug Store during the blues program

B.B. King: Riley B. King; he first appeared on the radio as part of a gospel group at WGRM in Greenwood, and later was a deejay at WDIA in Memphis

Pep-Ti-Kon: tonic medicine that sponsored B.B. King's radio program on WDIA in Memphis

WDIA: Memphis radio station that was the first in the nation to feature all African American programming. Early deejays included B.B. King, Rufus Thomas, and Gatemouth Moore.

WGRM in Greenwood, Mississippi: gospel station where B.B. King got his start on the radio

Brother Early “Soul-Man” Wright: one of the first African American disc jockeys in Mississippi; hosted blues and gospel programs over Clarksdale's WROX for nearly fifty years

Charles Evers: pioneering disc jockey who got his start in Philadelphia, Mississippi, and later in Chicago; widely known for his work with WMPR in Jackson

American Blues Network: based in Gulfport, Mississippi; beams its programming out by satellite signals, which are then downloaded by stations around the world

6 media - lesson 3

MATERIALS

- Historic narrative
- Access to Internet for video clips, or recordable CD to prepare clips for classroom use

Students may be encouraged to explore the Mississippi Blues Trail website to view other videos and locate other links to blues information

Students may be encouraged to find books or Internet sources that further illustrate Media and the Blues as well as songs performed on the radio or other performance venues.

ASSESSMENT

A. Define the following terms in your own words:

Era of radio's importance

- Origins of television
- **Radio network**
- **National radio companies**
- **Deejay/DJ**
- **Gospel show**

B. Explain the significance of following using your own words:

- The difference in beginning call letters in radio stations
- Impact of radio after WWII
- **King Biscuit Time**
- **KFFA in Helena, Arkansas**
- **Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2**
- **Interstate Flour Company**
- **Sonny Boy Flour**
- **Turner's Drug Store (Belzoni)**
- **Easy Pay Store (Belzoni)**
- **Tally Ho Tonic**
- **B.B. King**
- **WGRM in Greenwood, Mississippi**
- **Brother Early "Soul-Man" Wright**
- **Charles Evers**
- **American Blues Network**

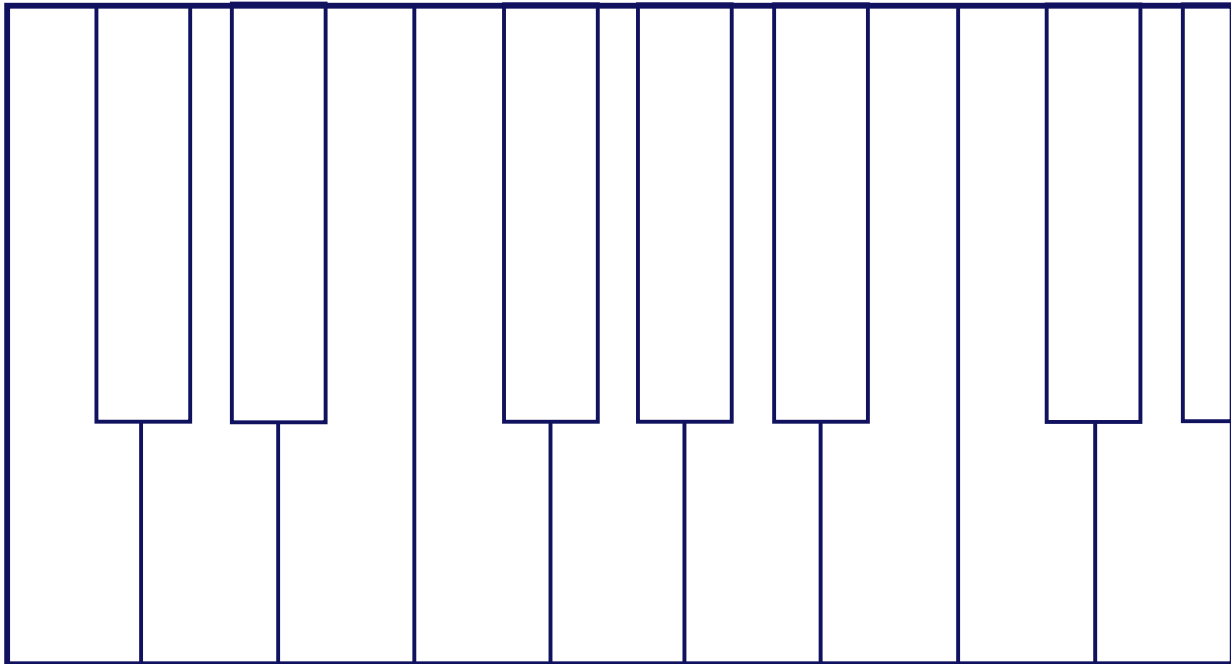
TECHNOLOGY

- Smartboard, podium, or other Internet/video viewing device
- CD player

REMEDIAL WORK/ENRICHMENT/ACCOMMODATIONS

The lesson may be shortened by presentation of smaller segments of the five teaching procedures during each instructional period.

I appendix - material



“Fire! Fire!”

“Fire! Fire!” said Ms. Maguire.
“Where? Where?” said Mr. Care.
“There! There!” said Mrs. Ware
“No, no,” said Mr. Blow.
“Then where, where?” said Mr. Bear.
“Up high,” said Mrs. Sky.
“Down low,” said Mr. Row.
“In the middle,” said Mr. Fiddle.
“Quick, quick, quick!” said Mrs. Stick.
“Not so fast,” said Mr. Last.
“Pooooooooor on water,” said his daughter.
“Swish....,” said Gish.
“It’s out, out!” said Mr. Stout.
“All’s well,” said Ms. Tell.
“Whew! Whew!” said Mr. Through.

(Boardman E. and Andress, B. *The Music Book-2*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981, p. 98.)

I appendix - material

Pablo Picasso's "The Old Guitarist"



I appendix - material

John the Rabbit

American Folk Song
Adapted by Mark Malone

Handwritten musical score for the song "John the Rabbit". The score is written on five staves in treble clef, 2/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is written with eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the first line of the song, the second staff the second line, the third staff the third line, the fourth staff the fourth line, and the fifth staff the fifth line. The lyrics are: "Oh John the Rab-bit oh yes, Got-ta bad ha-bit oh yes, He's nib-bling in my gar-den oh yes, Eat-ing up my tur-nips oh yes, And my Sweet po-ta-toes oh yes, And my ripe to-ma-toes oh yes, Well if I live — to see next fall, My gar-den won't have — an-y vege-ta-bles at all."

Oh John the Rab-bit oh yes, Got-ta bad ha-bit oh yes, He's
nib-bling in my gar-den oh yes, Eat-ing up my tur-nips oh yes, And my
Sweet po-ta-toes oh yes, And my ripe to-ma-toes oh yes, Well
if I live — to see next fall, My gar-den won't
have — an-y vege-ta-bles at all.

Accompaniment (drone)

Handwritten musical score for the drone accompaniment. It is written on a single staff in treble clef, 2/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The drone is written as a series of whole notes: B-flat, D, F, and B-flat.

Free download for "John the Rabbit"
http://www.folkways.si.edu/explore_folkways/sunny_day_download.aspx

1 music

LESSON 1: BLUES BASICS

“Homework Blues”

The Bo Diddley Beat

FIELD HOLLERS AND WORK SONGS

- Unaccompanied holler

Vera Hall - “Another Man Done Gone”

(Audio, recorded in Livingston, Alabama, 1940, by John A. and Ruby T. Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Joe Savage - “Dangerous Blues”

(Video, recorded in Greenville, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long.; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

- Individual holler/work song

R. L. Burnside - “Wood chopping holler”

(Video, recorded in Coldwater, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long.; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

- Group work song

Inmates at Parchman Penitentiary - “Oh Rosie”

(Audio, recorded at Parchman Penitentiary, Mississippi, 1947, by Alan Lomax; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Lightning Washington and Prisoners - “Good God Almighty”

(Video, with still images of coordinated work with axes; recorded at Darrington State Prison, West Virginia, 1933, by John A. and Alan Lomax; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

VOCAL INFLECTION

“Fire! Fire!”

LESSON 2: SINGING AND PLAYING THE BLUES

MELODY AND HARMONY

C MAJOR SCALES

CHROMATIC SCALES

BLUES SCALE

“John the Rabbit”

EXAMPLES OF MISSISSIPPI BLUES

Howlin’ Wolf, Hubert Sumlin and Eddie Shaw - “Dust My Broom”

(Audio, recorded at the Newport Folk Festival, 1966; written by Robert Johnson, the song is also closely associated with Elmore James. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Muddy Waters - “Take A Walk With Me”

(Audio, recorded on Stovall Plantation near Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1942, by Alan Lomax and John Work III; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

IMPROVISATION USING BLUES SCALE NOTES

TRIADS AND CHORDS

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE 12-BAR BLUES

Basic sounds of the blues in Mississippi Blues Trail films. All located at www.msbluestrail.org/films

“Little Milton”

“Muddy Waters”

“Son House”

“B.B. King”

“Robert Johnson”

LESSON 3: INSTRUMENTS OF THE BLUES

SPIRITUALS AND BLUES BALLADS

Deacon Tom Jones, Reverend C.H. Savage and Group – “If I Had My Way”

(Audio, recorded at Parchman Penitentiary, Mississippi, 1947, by Alan Lomax; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

22 and Group – “John Henry”

(Audio, recorded at Parchman Penitentiary, 1947; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Joe Savage and Walter Brown – “John Henry”

(Video, recorded in Greenville, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

INSTRUMENTS OF THE BLUES

- Diddley bow/One-string guitar

Napolian Strickland – “Jesus Won’t You Stop By Here”

(Video, recorded in Como, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Lonnie Pitchford – playing one-string for children

(Video, recorded in Lexington, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

- Acoustic guitar

David “Honeyboy” Edwards – “Roamin’ and Ramblin’ Blues”

(Video, recorded in Lexington, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Mississippi Blues Trail film “Rediscoveries: John Hurt and Bukka White”

- Acoustic guitar with slide

Booker “Bukka” White – “Please Don’t Put Your Daddy Outdoors”

(Video, recorded at the Newport Folk Festival, Newport, Rhode Island, 1966, by Alan Lomax; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Mississippi Blues Trail film “Son House”

(House plays both with and without a slide)

- Electric guitar

B.B. King – clip from William Ferris’ “Give My Poor Heart Ease” (1975)

(Video, shows King playing both acoustic and electric guitar; Used courtesy of William R. Ferris Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Howlin’ Wolf – “Meet Me In the Bottom”

(Video, recorded at Newport Folk Festival, 1966, by Alan Lomax. Features guitarist Hubert Sumlin, who is featured on a Blues Trail marker in Greenwood; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

- Harmonica

Jack Owens (guitar/vocals) and Bud Spires (harmonica/vocals) – “Catfish Blues”

(Audio, recorded in Bentonia, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

- Piano

Memphis Slim – “Fast Boogie”

(Audio, recorded in New York City, 1947, by Alan Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

- Fife and drum band

Napolean Strickland (fife) and Otha Turner (drums) – “Somebody’s Knocking on My Door”

(Audio, recorded in Jackson, Mississippi, 1972, by William Ferris. Used courtesy William R. Ferris Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Otha Turner and the Gravel Springs Fife and Drum Band – Ida Reed

(Video, recorded in Gravel Springs, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Also: full ten-minute film “Gravel Springs Fife and Drum” from 1971 by William Ferris, David Evans, and Judy Peiser available for streaming at: <http://www.folkstreams.net/film,59>

- Bones/spoons/sticks

Dom Flemons - demonstration of playing the “bones”

(Video, recorded in 2010, courtesy of Dom Flemons of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, and filmmaker Thomas Ciaburri)

- Jug

Whistler and His Jug Band – “Foldin’ Bed”

(Video, recorded in Louisville, Kentucky, 1930 (public domain))

2 meaning

LESSON 1: THEMES OF THE BLUES

SPIRITUAL AND BLUES BALLADS

Muddy Waters – “I Be’s Troubled”

(Audio, recorded near Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1941, by Alan Lomax and John Work III; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Muddy Waters – “Walking Blues”

(Audio, recorded near Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1941, by Alan Lomax and John Work III; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Lovey Williams – “Going Away Blues”

(Audio, recorded in Morning Star, Mississippi, 1963, by William Ferris. Used courtesy of William R. Ferris Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Sam Chatmon – “Trouble In Mind”

(Video, recorded in Hollandale, Mississippi, 1978, by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

SACRED AND SECULAR MUSIC

Mississippi Blues Trail films:

“Saturday Night Blues”

“Gospel and the Blues”

LESSON 2: EMOTIONS OF THE BLUES

Memphis Slim, John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson, and Big Bill Broonzy – Sources of the blues
(Audio, recorded in New York City, 1947, by Alan Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Memphis Slim, John Lee “Sonny Boy” Williamson, and Big Bill Broonzy – Keeping happy in the face of problems
(Audio, recorded in New York City, 1947, by Alan Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

LESSON 3: WOMEN AND THE BLUES

Bessie Smith – “St. Louis Blues”
(Video, only known film of Bessie Smith, from 1929, public domain)

Rose Lee Hemphill – “Rollin’ and Tumblin’”
(Audio, recorded in Como, Mississippi, 1959, by Alan Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

3 cotton

LESSON 2: VOCABULARY

Phineas Rockmore – “Boll Weevil”
(Audio, recorded in Lufkin, Texas, 1940, by John T. and Ruby A. Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Unknown Axe Cutting Group – “Pick a Bale of Cotton”

(Audio, recorded at the State Penitentiary, Huntsville, Texas, 1934, by John A. and Alan Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

4 transportation

LESSON 1: THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Walter Brown and “Arthur” – “Roustabout Holler”
(Video, from Greenville, Mississippi, 1978, recorded by Alan Lomax, John Bishop, and Worth Long. Former roustabouts demonstrating work on steamboat docks; Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Loading Cotton onto Steamboats
(Video, documentary film from 1937 made by US Department of Agriculture)

Also: Complete fifteen-minute film on the Mississippi River from 1937 made by the US Department of Agriculture; <http://archive.org/details/RiverThe1937>

LESSON 2: TRAINS

Lovey Williams – “Train I Ride”
(Audio, recorded by William Ferris in Morning Star, Mississippi, 1968; this is a version of Junior Parker’s song “Mystery Train,” which was also recorded by Elvis Presley); Used courtesy William R. Ferris Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Jimmie Rodgers – “Waiting for a Train”
(Video, from promotional film made in 1929 by his record company, public domain)

LESSON 3: HIGHWAYS AND AUTOMOBILES

James "Son" Thomas – "Highway 61 Blues"

(Audio, recorded in New Haven, Connecticut, 1974, by William Ferris; Used courtesy William R. Ferris Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.)

Lonnie Young, Ed Young, and Lonnie Young, Jr. – "Chevrolet"

(Audio, fife and drum band recorded in Como, Mississippi, 1959, by Alan Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

Mississippi Blues Trail film: *"Roamin' and Ramblin'"*

Also: 15-minute film about Mississippi Fred McDowell made by Ole Miss; starts with "61 Highway," free streaming:

http://archive.org/details/blues_maker_1969

5 civil rights

LESSON 1: GENERAL COMPLAINTS

Anonymous – "Hidden Violence"

(Audio, recorded in Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1968, by William Ferris; Used courtesy William R. Ferris Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

LESSON 2: POLITICAL LYRICS

Big Bill Broonzy – "Black, Brown and White"

(Audio, recorded in New York City, 1948, by Alan Lomax. Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress. Used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity)

6 media

LESSON 1: EARLY YEARS OF THE BLUES

Mississippi Blues Trail film: *"Rabbit Foot Minstrels"*

LESSON 2: RECORDING THE BLUES

Mississippi Blues Trail films:

"Scouting the Delta: Charley Patton and H.C. Speir"

"Trumpet Records"

LESSON 3: RADIO AND THE BLUES

Joe "Papa Rock" Lewis – "Why B.B. King Sings the Blues"

(Recorded at WOKJ, Jackson, Mississippi, by William Ferris, from film "Give My Poor Heart Ease," (1975); Used courtesy William R. Ferris Collection, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

audio version

video version

III additional resources

WEBSITES

Mississippi Blues Trail site
www.msbluestrail.org

Alan Lomax Archives
Thousands of streaming songs, video, images
<http://research.culturalequity.org>

Folkstreams
Free streaming music documentaries
www.folkstreams.net

Mississippi Folklife and Folk Artist Directory
www.arts.state.ms.us/folklife

PBS “Blues Classroom” Curriculum
www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom.html

Blog for MPB radio show “Highway 61”
Saturday 10:00 p.m.; Sunday 6:00 p.m.
www.highway61radio.org

MUSEUMS

Most offer special rates for school tours

B.B. King Museum and Interpretive Center
Indianola, Mississippi
www.bbkingmuseum.org

Delta Blues Museum
Clarksdale, Mississippi
www.deltabluesmuseum.org

Highway 61 Blues Museum
Leland, Mississippi
www.highway61blues.com

Howlin’ Wolf Blues Museum
West Point, Mississippi
www.wpnet.org/About_HWblues.htm

Jimmie Rodgers Memorial Museum
Meridian, Mississippi
<http://www.jimmierodgers.com/museum.html>

International Museum of Muslim Cultures
Exhibit on West African music
Jackson, Mississippi
www.muslimmuseum.org

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

The following offer resources, videos, archival materials, etc. helpful for lesson plans

American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress
www.loc.gov/folklife

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
“History Now”
<http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/index.php?s=articles>

Mississippi Department of Education:
Curriculum and Instruction
<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/curriculum-and-instruction>

University of Mississippi Blues Archive
www.olemiss.edu/depts/general_library/archives/blues/

SELECT LITERATURE

Deep Blues
Robert Palmer

Delta Blues
Ted Gioia

Give My Poor Heart Ease: Voices of the Mississippi Blues
William Ferris

The Blues: A Very Short Introduction
Elijah Wald

The World Don’t Owe Me Nothing: The Life and Times of Delta Bluesman “Honeyboy” Edwards
David “Honeyboy” Edwards

Living Blues Magazine
Published by University of Mississippi
www.livingblues.com

MAC MINIGRANT PROGRAM

The MAC Minigrant is a great way to supplement the cost of bringing in a blues musician to perform for you school or in your classroom.

Minigrants for organizations are designed to support small-scale arts activities in Mississippi communities. There are two Minigrant application deadlines per year: June 1 and November 1 (or the following Monday if the aforementioned date falls on a weekend or holiday. Mississippi based non-profit organizations and government entities are eligible to receive one Minigrant per year.

Organizations may not apply for funding to present the same artist or consultant in consecutive years. Organizations who have received a Project or Operating Grant from MAC are eligible to also apply for a Minigrant. However, Minigrant funding is normally limited and priority will be given to applicants who have not received another grant from MAC during the same fiscal year.

In addition, colleges and universities will receive a lower priority than other applicants. MAC is especially committed to assisting first-time applicants with the grants process. If your organization is applying for the first time, please contact one of the members of MAC's Program Staff (contact the MAC at 601-359-6030) to see if your project is eligible before submitting an application.

AWARD AMOUNTS

Minigrants range from \$200 to \$1,000 and require a dollar-for-dollar cash match. An organization may apply for funding to pay half of a Roster Artist or consultant's fee, up to \$1,000. For example, if you are presenting a Roster Artist and their total fee is \$800, you may apply for \$400. If you are hiring a consultant for board development and their total fee is \$2,000, you may apply for \$1,000.

WHO MAY APPLY

Organizations who apply for a Minigrant must:

- Be based in Mississippi
- Be incorporated in Mississippi as a 501c3 nonprofit organization, OR
- Be a unit of local government, such as a school, library, or another county or municipal agency. Units of local government may be required to provide documentation of their status as a governmental agency.

REVIEW PROCESS

Minigrants are reviewed in-house by MAC staff for eligibility. The final decision on funding for the grants is made by MAC's Board of Commissioners. Minigrant applications are processed within the deadline month and applicants are normally notified 30 days after their application is submitted.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

There are three types of activities that may be supported through Minigrants:

1. **Presenting Artists:** Minigrants can pay for up to half of the total fee of a performance, workshop, or other presentation by a member (or members) of MAC's Artist Roster or another adjudicated roster program, such as the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi or a program managed by another state or regional arts agency. Organizations may not request Minigrant funding for the same Roster Artist in consecutive years.

2. **Organizational or Curriculum Development:** Minigrants can support up to half of the total fee of a consultant providing assistance with organizational or curriculum development. This type of project should be a short-term consultancy that is focused on overall organizational development (such as board training, long-range planning, or creating a long-term fundraising plan) or curriculum development in a K-12 school. It cannot be used to support artistic or programmatic work. The applicant organization must demonstrate through the required attachments that the consultant is qualified to do the work.

3. **Conference Support:** Minigrants can support up to half of the total cost for an organization to send staff or board members to a professional conference or workshop that directly relates to the organization's work. Allowable expenses include the conference registration and travel to and from the event. The applicant organization must explain how they will benefit from the individual attending the event.

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit one original copy of the following items in the order listed. Applications should be complete, including all required information and materials. Incomplete applications, defined as applications missing one or more of the above-listed documents, will not be considered for funding and will be returned to the applicant.

MAC MINIGRANT PROGRAM

Please do not bind or staple application materials.

- Minigrant for Organizations Application Form
- Biographies (one half page maximum for each) of the key artistic and administrative personnel working on the project (paid and volunteer)

A list of your organization's board of directors. Please indicate their ethnic make-up and members with disabilities. Public schools should submit a list of their current school board members. Governmental entities should submit a list of their municipal or county level governing boards.

- If your organization is applying to MAC for the first time: a copy of your official IRS 501(c)3 determination letter. You do not need to send a copy of the letter if your organization has applied for a grant from MAC in the past three years. If you are unsure whether or not your organization has applied recently, please call and check with MAC Program Staff before submitting an application. Public schools, libraries and other agencies of local government are exempt from this requirement.

- Supporting information on the proposed artist, consultant, or conference:

- Presenting an Artist: If the artist you are presenting is not on MAC's Artist Roster, submit a copy of the cover page of the organization's adjudicated roster of which the artist is a member, as well as the page that features the artist. No copies are needed if they are on the MAC Roster, but please note their status as a Roster Artist in your project description on the first page of the application.

- Organizational or Curriculum Development:

a) the consultant's resumé and a list of their recent clients with contact information.

b) a one page narrative that includes:

- A description of the organization's specific needs that will be addressed through the consultation
- details of the project activities and the rationale for working with the proposed consultant
- the expected outcome(s) for the organization once the project is completed

- For Presenting an Artist or Organizational Development applicants: A copy of the signed contract or letter of agreement between your organization and the artist or consultant. The agreement should include all pertinent details including date of performance, type of presentation or performance, fee, payment schedule, and other necessary information.

- Conference: A complete conference brochure and registration form that shows the registration and related fees for the event. If travel funds are also being requested, please also include estimates from a travel agent or airline.

You can find more information about the MAC Minigrant, as we the application form online:

<http://www.arts.state.ms.us/grants/minigrants.php>

For questions about the Minigrant, please call the MAC offices: 601-359-6030





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