

# **African American History as told through African American Music**

***Sue Christmas***

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## **Introduction**

On November 17, 1967, I sat in the auditorium of West Philadelphia High School, waiting for 11:00 AM. High school students across the city had planned a public demonstration and protest on the Parkway in front of the Philadelphia School Board building ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wkkl/1967\\_Philadelphia\\_Student\\_Demonstrations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wkkl/1967_Philadelphia_Student_Demonstrations)). A major demand of this demonstration was to have Black (not African American) history taught in Philadelphia schools. The 1,000 strong senior class (the largest to graduate in West Philly's history) was gathered in the auditorium for a special assembly. We were warned against jeopardizing our status as the eleventh hour hit. We got up, en mass, and walked toward the exits. We were on a mission. My English teacher, the really cool one, who was also a radio disc jockey and politically radical for that time, grabbed me by the back of my collar and told me to sit down. "This is going to get ugly. Stay here." He did this with several other female students.

Ugly it got. The Police Commissioner was Frank Rizzo. His infamous reputation for "no nonsense" riot control started with this event. In 1978, the Philadelphia Inquirer would go on to win a Pulitzer Prize for articles on police brutality under the administration of Mayor Frank Rizzo ([www.pulitzer.org/awards/1978](http://www.pulitzer.org/awards/1978)). A few years later, the Ku Klux Klan would honor Frank Rizzo as "Racist of the Year." However, I recall this high school protest as the first time that Rizzo enacted his long sought-after mounted police riot control unit, along with the use of tear gas and nightsticks. The planned peaceful demonstration that turned into a nationally televised riot did result in a mandate by the School Board of Directors that Black history was to be included into the curriculum of Philadelphia public schools. We won and I will never forgive my English teacher.

This was an amazing victory, preceding an amazing year, 1968. Martin Luther King had lost his impact on many young people. Most of our feelings ranged from mild support to out and out apathy because, the impact of the civil rights movement had yet to surface in Philadelphia. Schools were still segregated and inferior (much as they are today). Black militancy and Black Power were still fledgling movements. April 4, 1968 radicalized many of us. If Martin Luther King, the symbol of peaceful protest could be killed so violently, Malcolm X was right- "By any means necessary." We had become invigorated by our demonstration, battle and victory. Even though we were graduating, we now had Black history in our schools. Right on! Power to the People!

In my college years (1968-1972) and beyond, I would participate in many demonstrations ranging from protests to end the Viet Nam war, affirmative action, women's rights, and always that Black (African and Afro-American) history be taught at our colleges and universities. This was the start of many African and Afro-American studies programs at major universities and colleges across the nation. Although I did not attend Woodstock (another unforgivable and regrettable decision), I was part of a generation and movement that fought long and hard to see that Black history no longer be excluded or minimized. Black history would not be segregated by continents, but would be highly and accurately recognized for its major contributions to and impact on the world.

Paramount to any protest activity was the unifying force of music. Foregone were the spirituals and the civil rights anthem, "We Shall Overcome." Our high school graduation song was the Temptations' version of "The Impossible Dream." Sam Cooke had promised that, "A Change is Gonna Come." Curtis Mayfield told us to "Keep on Pushing." Edwin Starr told us that "war was good for absolutely nothing." As we prepared for the revolution, we learned from Gil Scott Heron in 1970, that "The Revolution Will Not be Televised." The Hippie/Flower Child movement penetrated young African Americans as the Isley Brothers told us, "It's Your Thing" and Eric Burden and War gave us "Low Rider." Earth Wind and Fire told us to "Keep Your Head to the Sky." There was never a better time to be young and music was sometimes a barometer, but most often the driving force. As in the past, musicians took on the role of being some of our strongest social and political activists, even though unsung (pardon the pun).

As I made a career change in the mid 1990's to teaching, first in high school and then in elementary school, I recognized the mandate. African American history was mandated to be taught, but by teachers who had not learned very much themselves and were not given many resources. Black history started somewhere in Egypt. Slavery and the civil rights movement are the only two time periods in African American history. Garret Morgan invented the traffic light and George Washington Carver invented peanut butter (not really). Rosa Parks was tired that day. Harriet Tubman and Martin Luther King were the best black people, ever. Every February, teachers across Philadelphia, panic over that blasted mandatory assembly.

It is only on rare occasions that Paul Robeson or Marian Anderson are mentioned, most probably because they are the only musicians that can be recognized for their European operatic vocalizations. Most teachers are scared to teach about spirituals because of the religious content. But, the bottom line is that African American music could easily be considered this country's only cultural export. It indeed has influenced political movements abroad. African American music has not only penetrated social and political movements, but has had worldwide impact, spiritually and emotionally. As Phillip Bailey, lead singer of Earth, Wind and Fire has said, "A lot of you young people were made on my songs. I'm kind of like your Godfather."

This is the curriculum that I have always wanted to do, but have never had the time to design or the time, space and resources to deliver in one school year. I have done segments throughout the school year and I can tell you that most of the content of this curriculum has been tested and is well received by young students. I look forward to the

opportunity to present this curriculum to my class next year and hope to hear from teachers who can use some or all of it.

## **Overview**

Mazlo's law of hierarchy places art at the top of the hierarchy. The logic of this law would place music, an art form, at the top of the hierarchy, not to be considered a need, but a desire. This desire is only attainable by humans fortunate enough to have all of their needs met. However, this curriculum will present a history of African American music as a true art form, which will occur throughout all of America's history. Students will learn that at the most despondent periods in African American history, music will be at its strongest. They will understand that African American music will be considered a need, a necessity for coping, struggling and triumph.

This curriculum will present a history of America as it impacts African Americans from the perspective of its musical creations and creators. In A People's History of the United States, author Howard Zinn writes US history from the perspective of the Native American, African slave and the Asian and European immigrant from the 1600's through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike the traditional history format, which is taught from one war period to the next and from the perspective of government rulers and their upper class constituencies, Zinn's history is taught from the perspective of the people victimized by history and their struggles to overcome the oppressions of wars, government rulers and their upper class constituencies. The goal of this curriculum is to utilize the musical outcome and present a history through the eyes and ears of African Americans as told through their music. The impact of the various genres, starting with traditional African drumming and concluding with Hip Hop will help to specify a period of American history from the perspective of African Americans.

This curriculum is meant to support the mandate that African American history be included in the School District of Philadelphia's overall curriculum at all levels of learning. Although many aspects can be taught from kindergarten through twelfth grade, this curriculum is specifically designed for the lower elementary school grades, specifically, first through fourth grade. It will include ten lessons presented in a step-by-step lesson plan format, which can be given as one lesson per week over a ten-week period, or five mini-lessons, each day over a ten-week period. The objective of this curriculum is that students will be able to identify various genres of African and African American music and the mutual impact with American history.

## Lesson Objectives

Lesson One will examine traditional West African music and dance and encourage students to identify how elements of traditional African music remain a great influence in modern music. Students will be encouraged to examine and create early instruments of African origin.

Lesson Two will focus on the capture of Africans and African music. It will investigate how circumstances crucially shut down music, as Africans knew it. The music however does not stop. Whole new venues are created, equally as forceful.

Lesson Three will present African American music from the turn of the century to the end of the New Negro Renaissance (Harlem Renaissance). This will include ragtime, blues and the beginning of the music that we will come to know as jazz.

Lesson Four will focus most specifically on the music that was called the “blues.” Students will learn that this “blue” music became music of hopeful times and liberating behavior. They will also examine the role that women played in the development of this genre.

In Lesson Five, students will be able to analyze the music known as jazz, as it moves from the blues and swing of such artists as Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller to the introspective and social protest music of such artists as Miles Davis and John Coltrane. This lesson will explore how the wide spectrum of music termed as jazz ranged from America’s dance music to introspective “progressive” music.

Lesson Six will visit one of the most overwhelming and reoccurring themes in African American history and music. This lesson will explore the influence of religion behind most African American social movements and music. This lesson will take an in depth look at the Civil Rights Movement with the influence of music.

Lesson Seven will explore the music known as Rhythm and Blues. Students will learn how to recognize the elements of jazz, blues and gospel, as these genres blend to form America’s new dance music.

Lesson Eight will examine the contributions of artists from Philadelphia to all genres of music. Even though Philadelphia is not considered a music capital, student will understand that Philadelphians have been very prominent participants.

Lesson Nine will allow students to explore the contributions and impact of Hip Hop artists on American culture. Students will be able to identify and define the genre and its relevance to their lives. Furthermore, students will reinvestigate and make comparisons to traditional African music and dance. They will be allowed to compare the very rhythmic traditional African music, storytelling and dance to modern rap and pop-lock dance.

Each lesson will have an independent study component, which may be done in small groups or for homework. The results of independent study projects should be included in a portion of the classroom devoted to being an African American Music History museum. Books used for read aloud should also be kept in the museum and accessible to students for independent investigation.

The classroom should be set up so that students will be able to work in small groups. Equipment will be necessary to view videos from the computer and DVD’s. Audio equipment should be available to listen to CD’s. The focus of this curriculum is music, but as much as possible, use videos. All too often, music is considered a background tool, with little or no association to the artistry involved in creating music.

Videos will help students to associate people performing and playing music with a selection.

The goal of this curriculum is to immerse students totally in a world of African American music. There is much to pick and choose and many of the selections that were made can be replaced by another piece from the same artist or a similar artist. Most of all, this should be a completely enjoyable and heartfelt journey.

## **Rationale**

This curriculum will meet many requirements of the Pennsylvania State Standards in Literacy, Math, Social Studies and Science for the grades first through fourth. Although this curriculum is focused on music, all four disciplines will be utilized.

The Literacy State Standards will be fulfilled by use of lyrics that students will both read and write. Phonics decoding will also be utilized in reading and pronouncing lyrics from the Yoruba language. Students will be able to explore major ideas and themes of musical selections as they would if reading a story.

This curriculum will make use of Math State Standards by the study of patterns in rhythms. Students will also divide notes and rhythms into fractions. This will be a practical application and utilizations of mathematical principals.

Social Studies standards will probably be the most applicable to this curriculum. Students will begin to learn the history of the United States and African American history as told through music. Philadelphia itself was such fertile ground for musical history that special attention will be given to musicians as who are either from or lived in Philadelphia

The science standards for technology will be used, in that students will explore how music changed and became more accessible with advancements in technology. Students will understand that musical instruments themselves were constant results of changes in technology. They will understand the history of going from a drum made of a hollowed tree and animal skins to rhythms being played by a computer as creations of scientific technology.

The Pennsylvania State Standards constantly emphasize the use of cultural and ethnic diversity as practical applications in teaching these standards. This curriculum will show how Pennsylvania State Standards can be applied while teaching about diverse cultures and ethnicities.

## **Classroom Activities**

### *Lesson One: Exploring African Roots*

Objectives: Students will be able to explore, examine and understand how the history of African American music begins with traditional African music. Students will be able to identify the elements that comprise traditional African music.

Materials and resources needed:

Music: Babatunde Olatunji, Drums of Passion CD of traditional Yoruba songs

Lyrics of “Odun De” (New Year’s celebration song)

[masteranylanguage.com/odundelyrics](http://masteranylanguage.com/odundelyrics)

Babatunde Olatunji, Live '85 , DVD (live performance of traditional music and dance)

African Healing Dance, DVD

Soweto Gospel Choir DVD (portion showing musicians making music with dinner plates and forks)

Books: The Village that Vanished (story of African slave capture)

Items that can be used as percussion instruments, e.g. upside down bucket with a wooden dowel, plastic container holding seeds or beans and covered with a lid, gongs, chimes, xylophones, triangles, two thick wooden dowels to be clinked together etc. If possible, supply a couple of African instruments such as a drum made with real animal skin, a calabash or gourd, cow bell, etc. to show the simplicity of the instruments made from objects available in nature.

World map or globe: A globe will show a more accurate representation of size.

Step One: Explain that students will embark on a history of African American music. Ask their favorite songs and if they can identify the kind of music. Inquire if this is music that is enjoyed by other members of their family. Explain that African American music is music that has a big impact on all American music. Music is always around us and is very important to how we feel and how we relate to one another. Music is usually associated with dance. We will explore African music as it was during just before and during the slave trade to America. Show students the world map. Show them where they live now. Show them where Africa is. Point out that Africa is an entire continent with many countries and different kinds of people.

Step Two: Hand out the percussion instruments. Ask students to demonstrate how they could make music out of these instruments. Ask them to stop. Start to play the Drums of Passion CD. While playing low, explain that this is traditional music of the Yoruba people who live mostly in the country now called Nigerian. Show Nigeria on the map. Explain that many Yoruba people were taken as slaves to the Americas and that most African Americans have Yoruba ancestors. This is the music of the Yoruba ancestors. Music is made up of melody and rhythm. Western music tends to focus on melody with rhythm as the background. African and African American music will emphasize rhythm much more. Western music is usually prearranged and written by a composer. African and African American music was not routinely written until the early twentieth century and is known for improvisation. Even though a selection may be prearranged, a musician will add his/her own interpretation, by rearranging and adding notes and rhythms to make the selection unique to the musician, not the composer. Turn up music, use one of the percussion instruments to recreate one of the rhythms that you hear. Explain that these same rhythms are used in American music today. Check for understanding: Allow students to use percussion instruments to duplicate the rhythms that they hear.

Step Three: Count the rhythms. Most songs will be in four/four timing. Explain that the rhythms are fractioned into whole, half, and quarter notes. Have students listen for the fractioned rhythms. Clap first to the whole note, every four counts, then to the half note, the first and third counts, then to the quarter notes, all four counts. You can also try eight and sixteenth notes.

Step Four: Hand out the lyrics of the song “Odun de” or write the lyrics on chart paper. Have students sound out phonetically. Explain that the song is a celebration of the new-year and a wish for a good harvest. Invite children to sing along to the Olatunde’s song “Odun de” on CD.

Step Five: Show excerpts of the video Live '85. Ask children to notice the instruments, the dress and the dancing. Ask them to compare to modern Hip Hop. If they do not see similarities, note the strong emphasis on rhythm. Explain the dress and dances were often used for a ceremony or special event.

Step Six: Show excerpts of the video, African Healing Dance, in particular the dance “Sowu” which comes from the Ashante people of Ghana (another strong component of African American ancestry). Allow children to follow instructions to dance along.

Step Seven: Read aloud-The Village that Vanished, a story about how a village managed to escape being captured by African slave traders and taken to the Americas. Explain that most villages were not able to escape and many Africans were stolen from their homes to become slaves in the Americas.

Closure: Ask children to summarize what they have learned about African music. How did they feel about the capture of Africans from their homeland?

Independent Practice: Have students create a percussion instrument from household objects and bring to school for the African America Music History Museum.

### *Lesson Two: Evolution of African Music as it Survives Slavery*

Objectives: Students will be able to explore, examine and understand the evolution of African music, as captured Africans must transition to slavery. Students will be able to identify the differences and explain why this evolution occurred.

Materials and resources needed:

World Map

Music: Milton Cardona – Bembe (rhythms of the deified forces of nature)

Congo Square – Spirit Call (slave rituals of New Orleans)

Oscar Brown Jr. Sin and Soul, “Bid ‘em In” (Imitation of a slave auctioneer)

Oscar Brown Jr. Sin and Soul, “Signifying Monkey” (storytelling)

Marlena Smalls and the Hallelujah Singer, Gullah (spirituals)

The Five Blind Boys of Alabama – Deep River (spirituals)

Sweet Honey in the Rock – Sacred Gourd (spirituals)

Temptations – Temptations Live, “Old Man River”

Youtube.com – “Steal Away” by Reverend Pearly Brown

“Swing Low Sweet Chariot,” Paul Robeson

“Follow the Drinking Gourd,” Richie Havens

Owen Sound’s Black History Lyrics and the Underground Railroad

Stories behind the spirituals: “Steal Away,” “Swing Low Sweet

Chariot,” “The Gospel Train’s a Coming” and “Follow the Drinking

Gourd” ([www.osblackhistory.com/songs](http://www.osblackhistory.com/songs))

Step One: Review Lesson One. Ask children what they remembered about African music. Review that most Africans who came to the Americas, from early 1600s to the late 1700s, came as captives to be sold as slaves. They will get a deeper understanding of what slavery meant in America and how music helped slaves survive.

Step Two: Show on the map how slaves went from the coast of what is now Ghana and Senegal to the Americas. Read aloud The Old African, Chapter II, pages 15 through 42. This will explain the middle passage or the cruel capture and voyage of slaves from Africa. Even though written for children, it is lengthy, detailed and graphic. It is important that you read first and use your discretion as to what you will include or edit. Allow children to ask questions and discuss.

Step Three: Define the word slave, as someone who is owned by another person, the same as an animal or object. A slave was forced to work for his/her owner. Explain that slaves were brought from Africa and taken throughout the Americas. This lesson will be about slaves and the music that was brought to the United States. Many Africans and later African Americans were enslaved from 1619 until the late 1800’s (almost 300 years). Slaves created many songs to help themselves survive. They also created songs to help them escape. Explain that slaves were sold in auctions. Play “Bid’em In” from the Oscar Brown Jr. CD, Sin and Soul.

Step Four: Play excerpts of Michael Cardone’s Bembe or Congo Square’s Spirit Call. Ask students to compare with African music that they heard last week. It should sound similar because it is mostly drum music. Explain that slaves used this music as a way of worshipping as they did in Africa. Slaves also used the drums to send secret messages to each other, usually about escaping. When slave owners realized this, slaves were forbidden to use drums. Slave owners also felt that slaves would be most accepting of slavery if they were Christianized. Slaves were forbidden from practicing African religions and forced to become Christians. The slave music became mostly singing and the songs were mostly Christian songs that became known as spirituals. Mostly slaves working in the fields or in small buildings called praise houses sang these songs. Choose one of the spirituals from the CD’s. Ask the children how the music made them feel. Do they think slaves singing the music were happy? Which music sounded happier, the African music or the slave music? Explain that slaves continued to practice African religion and play African drums in secret. They also continued to pass secret messages, especially about escaping back and forth. The spirituals became very important to the Underground Railroad. Give the children the lyrics to the spirituals from Owen Sound’s



Black History. Explain the code language in the songs given by the website. Allow the children to sing along to the YouTube videos. Other songs can be used from Marla Smalls and the Hallelujah Singers, The Five Blind Boys of Alabama, The Temptations Live, or Sweet Honey in the Rock. Slaves also told stories. Play Oscar Brown Jr.'s "Signifying Monkey." Explain that these stories also carried secret meanings.

Step Five: Read aloud - In the Time of the Drums, a retelling of a legend from the sea islands of how when slaves were unloaded from a slave ship, and still bound, they walked back into the water. Follow the Drinking Gourd, a story of slaves escaping on the Underground Railroad using the stars of the Big Dipper to guide them. This could follow the video of "Follow the Drinking Gourd" song.

Closure: Ask children to summarize what they have learned about the period of slavery. How did this change the music? How did the music help slaves?

Independent Practice: In the Time of the Drum is a legend. Write a paragraph about the ending of the story. What do you think happened to the slaves that went into the water? Did they walk back to Africa?

### *Lesson Three: From Slavery to the New Negro Renaissance (aka Harlem Renaissance)*

Objectives: Students will be able to explore and understand the evolution of African American lives after liberation from slavery and how music reflected new status and prosperity. Students will be able to identify the various genres from minstrels to jazz.

Materials and resources needed:

Map of United States

Music and Videos:

Ken Burns Jazz-Episodes 1 & 2

Cab Calloway-Are you Hep to the Jive CD

Stormy Weather-Excerpts of Fats Waller, Cab Calloway, Ada Brown,

Dance performances of Nicholas Brothers and Katherine Dunham

Betty Boop Cartoons - Excerpts of Louis Armstrong, "I'll Be Glad When You're

Dead You Rascal You" and Cab Calloway, "Minnie the Moocher"

YouTube.com-Acappella – "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

YouTube.com-Acappella – "Set Me Free"

Poetry and Literature:

Paul Lawrence Dunbar - "Negro Love Song"

James Weldon Johnson-Lyrics of "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

([en.wikipedia.org/wlkl/Lift\\_Every\\_Voice\\_and\\_Sing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wlkl/Lift_Every_Voice_and_Sing))

Cab Calloway-Dr. Hepster's Dictionary

([www.artofmanliness.com/.../are-you-hep-to-the-jive-the-cab-calloway-hepster-dictionary/](http://www.artofmanliness.com/.../are-you-hep-to-the-jive-the-cab-calloway-hepster-dictionary/))

Cab Calloway-"Are You Hep to the Jive" lyrics

([www.areyouheptothejive.com/lyrics](http://www.areyouheptothejive.com/lyrics))

Books: “Shimmy, Shimmy, Shimmy Like My Sister Kate: Looking at the Harlem Renaissance through Poems” by Nikki Giovanni

Step One: Review with students the concept of slavery. Inform them that slavery legally ended in 1865. Some people celebrate Juneteenth as a holiday. This is because some slaves in Texas did not know that slavery ended until June 19<sup>th</sup> 1867, two years after the legal ending. Ask students how they think slaves felt about the end of slavery. Explain that they will be exploring the time period right after slavery and the music that was created.

Step Two: Explain that most slaves made music either with handmade drums or with the voice. Sometimes they used a chorus of voices to make a harmony blend. Each voice sang in a different part. Singing in a group, using voices in different parts with no instruments is known as a-cappella. Play Acappella (the group) -“Set Me Free.” Explain that because this is a modern group, their music is more stylized (i.e. pre-arranged, choreographed and rehearsed) and not as improvised as slave music.

Step Three: Explain that during the 1800s stage shows were created called minstrel shows. These shows were mostly done by white people, imitating black people, but later done by black people imitating white people imitating black people (Burns, 2000). Play DVD of Ken Burns’ Jazz, Episode One, segment at 15:40 to show sample of minstrel shows.

Step Four: Explain that as African Americans gained their freedom, they migrated to cities and started to use other instruments. The instruments that became very important were horns: the trumpet and coronet in particular. Play Jazz, Episode One, at 22:48 and 24:11 as examples of band formation. Play Jazz, Episode One at 50: 48 for African American version of La Marseillaise (French National Anthem) played in France. This is the beginning of international recognition of African American music and the use of improvisation and re-stylizing, as an art form. Play Jazz, Episode One, at 48:26 as an example of the use of a new instrument, the piano, with Jelly Roll Morton, the man who claims to have invented “jazz” and one of the first to write the music that he created. Explain that this early music was known as “Ragtime.” It would be combined with “blues” to become known as “jazz,” “the most American of all art forms” (Burns, 2000). A sample of Scott Joplin from Youtube can also (or instead) be played as sample of Ragtime and new instrumentation.

Step Five: Explain that lyrics (words to songs) were very important to African American music and these lyrics came from poets. A very important poet in the early 1900s was Paul Laurence Dunbar. Hand out copies of the poem “Negro Love Song.” Explain that the word “Negro” is the Spanish word for “black” and that Negro was the word used for and by African Americans in 1900, Dunbar’s time. (This is important because most children are unfamiliar with the word “Negro” and will think you are using the “N” word). After reading the poem with the class, divide the class in half and explain that they will do the poem in call and response fashion, the same as many songs. Half of the

class will read the verse and the other half with respond with “Jump back honey, jump back.”

Step Six: Explain that another important poet in the early 1900s was James Weldon Johnson. In 1900, he wrote the lyrics and melody to the song that became the “Negro or Black National Anthem”. Hand out the lyrics. Have children read or sing along to the Acappella version of “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”

Step Seven: Explain that the poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar and James Weldon Johnson was the beginning a big creative period in African American history known as the “New Negro Renaissance” or the “Harlem Renaissance.” The period was known for its explosion in literature and music. Black music became dance music in the United States. Black music became “mainstreamed” and was used in movies and cartoons. Two very important musicians to the development of the music called “jazz” are featured in “Betty Boop” cartoons. Play the DVD cartoons for “I’ll Be Glad When You’re Dead You Rascal You” from Louis Armstrong and “Minnie the Moocher” from Cab Calloway. You may also show excerpts from the movie Stormy Weather. This movie features such Renaissance musicians and dancers as Fats Waller, Cab Calloway, Ada Brown, the Nicholas Brothers and Katherine Dunham.

Step Eight: Explain that many African Americans were moving to major cities and these cities became important in the development of African American music. The cities were New Orleans, New York, and Chicago. Show these cities on the map. Musicians and artists came from all over the country, however. As they came to these cities they started to create a new way of talking to each other. This new way was slang (not terms known in the mainstream language) used by people who were really “cool.” One musician became known for his use of slang and even wrote a dictionary to help newcomers understand. This was Cab Calloway and his dictionary was “Dr. Hepster’s Dictionary of Jive.” First, hand out the lyrics and play the song, “Are You Hep to the Jive” from the CD with the same name. Discuss the meanings of the words “hep” and “jive.” Is this similar to words and terms that rappers use today? Hand out some of the terms from “Dr. Hepster’s Dictionary.” There are several terms that refer to marijuana, skin color or derogatory to women, so screen carefully. Discuss the terms and how they could be used.

Step Nine: Do a read aloud of “Shimmy, Shimmy, Shimmy Like my Sister Kate” poetry by Nikki Giovanni.

Closure: Ask students to summarize what they learned about music and life after slavery has ended. Ask for comparison and contrast of this music to the spirituals and drumming music of slavery.

Independent Practice: Have students use terms from Dr. Hepster’s Dictionary to create a “rap” poem. This can be done as homework, but may be better done in small groups.

## *Lesson Four: The Blues*

Objectives: Students will be able to identify the various types of music that fall into the genre known as The Blues. Students will be able to identify this with the migration of African Americans from rural to urban centers and how the music changed. Students will be able to understand how The Blues impacts all American music through the use of and changes in technology.

### Materials and Resources:

Map of the United States

### Music and Videos:

The Blues, DVD, for Ida Cox, Big Bill Broonzy and Sonny Boy Williamson

Ida Cox and Coleman Hawkins-CD, "Blues for Rampart Street"

Blues Legends: Junior Wells with Buddy Guy, DVD

Jazz on a Summer's Day, DVD

Denise LaSalle-CD, Right Place, Right Time

Keb'Mo-Keb'Mo CD or

The Blues of Flats Brown, CD

Ruth Brown-CD, Blues on Broadway

Soul Power, DVD-B.B. King or

YouTube-B.B. King, "The Thrill is Gone" (Live at the Summit)

YouTube-Elizabeth Cotton, "Freight Train"

YouTube-Stevie Wonder, "Fingertips Live 60's"

Book: The Blues of Flats Brown by Walter Dean Myers

Pictures of a washboard, jug, kazoo and sewing thimbles

Harmonica, if available or the picture of one

Empty plastic gallon milk containers

Step One: Explain that this lesson is about one of the most popular and influential art forms in American music. This music is called The Blues. Ask students to explain what they think of it from the term, The Blues. Explain that "blues" usually means sadness and early blues was sad most of the time. But as Blues changed, the music had similar style and structure, but was not necessarily sad. It expressed a lot of feeling, but it could be happy and funny.

Step Two: Explain the rhythmic structure of The Blues. Blues music usually has 12 beats, with three stanzas (or lines) with four beats each. You can draw an array using music bars to illustrate; the first two stanzas are the same and the third stanza is different, then the pattern repeats itself (Ramsey, 2003). Play a sample song such as Keb'Mo, "Come on into my Kitchen". Count the beats. Note how the lyrics in the song follow an AAB pattern to go with the stanzas.

Step Three: The instruments will change a lot with Blues. During slavery there were very few instruments and most slaves were not permitted to use the drum. Early Blues singers used what they could find to make music. Show the pictures of the kazoo (a metal pipe), jug (a big hollow bottle) and the washboard (a metal rake), played with

sewing thimbles on the fingers. Demonstrate how the jug was used, by blowing into an empty gallon milk carton, or allowing a student to do so. Pictures and milk cartons can go into the museum. If a musician was fortunate, a string instrument was used. Early blues musicians used a string instrument called a banjo. Play YouTube-Elizabeth Cotton, "Freight Train." She uses a banjo and explains how difficult it was for her to get her first guitar.

Step Four: The guitar became a very important instrument in The Blues. In early Blues the guitar was played acoustically (i.e. without any electricity). Play The Blues, Big Bill Boonzy or Sonny Boy Williams, as examples of early blues guitars. As musicians moved to big cities like Chicago, electricity was available and the sound became different. Play Blues Legend: Junior Wells with Buddy Guy, second selection as examples of the electric guitar. Other examples could be B.B. King from "Soul Power" or YouTube live performance or YouTube-Muddy Water, "The Hoochie Koochie Man," Newport 1960. Explain that the technology helped change the music. Changes in technology and the invention of the radio and record player made blues singers well known.

Step Five: Explain that Blues probably started during slavery, but did not become well known until the invention of the radio or records and record player. Most early Blues musicians were men who travelled around with just a guitar or harmonica. Play YouTube-"Stevie Wonder Fingertips Live 60's," it is a good example of the harmonica. Explain that the travel and the music started in the Mississippi Delta region and followed the train line to Memphis, St Louis and Chicago. Along with New Orleans, these cities were very important in the development of African American music, especially, the Blues. Show the travel route on the map.

Step Six: When Blues landed in the cities, women became active participants. Play YouTube-Koko Taylor ft. Little Walter-"Wang Dang Doodle." Other examples would be Ruth Brown, Denise LaSalle, or Bessie Smith. Play the live performance of Big Maybelle, from Jazz on a Summer's Day, DVD, at 43:00. Many blues songs have strong sexual undertones, so make sure to screen before making a choice.

Step Seven: Read aloud "The Blues of Flats Brown." This is the story of two dogs who runs away and become blues musicians. If using the CD to read, there is a song at the end called the "New York City Blues." If the CD is not available (and it is out of print), play the Keb'Mo CD in the background.

Closure: Emphasize that Blues music covers a lot of different kinds of music, but the twelve beat structure tends to stay the same. Ask students to summarize what they learned about the Blues.

Independent Practice: Ask students to pretend they are Blues musicians. They will write an autobiography of themselves as Blues musicians. They should include such things as what kind of instrument they would play, whether they would be from the country or city, would their music be sad, happy or funny etc. They should draw a picture of themselves as blues musician; add to the museum.

## *Lesson Five: All that Jazz*

Objectives: Students will be able to understand and identify the various genres that have been connected with the word “jazz.” Students will be able identify this with migration patterns of African Americans.

Materials and Resources:

Map of United States

Music and Videos:

Ken Burns Jazz DVD’s-episodes 2

Jazz on a Summer’s Day-DVD

Icons Among Us, DVD

YouTube-Duke Ellington, “Mood Indigo”

Kansas City, DVD

Reet Petite and Gone-DVD with Louis Jordan

Beware-DVD with Louis Jordan

Harlem Renaissance-DVD

Miles Davis-Seven Steps to Heaven, CD

John Coltrane-Love Supreme, CD

Ray Charles Live, CD

Books:

Sweet Music in Harlem

Jazz

Picture of “A Great Day in Harlem”

Drawing Paper and drawing supplies

Step One: Inform students that this lesson will focus on “jazz.” Just like the “blues,” the word “jazz” encompasses many different types of music that changed with technology. No one is sure how the name originated. Blues comes from feeling “blue” because it was music that started during a sad period of time by people who were travelling and often homeless. As times became better, the “blues” was not so sad. There are elements of blues in jazz, but jazz came mostly from Ragtime in the early 1900’s. Jazz has been called American Classical Music because it became a very complicated and difficult music to perform. Jazz allows the musician playing the music to improvise; the musicians or band may use a well-known simple tune, but the musician will play different notes and rhythms to make the selection unique.

Step Two: Read aloud the poem “Jazz” by Walter Dean Myers from the book Jazz. Discuss the elements that the writer puts into the music

Step Three: Explain that ragtime and jazz originated in the Mississippi Delta region, the same as “blues.” The difference is that blues originated in the country and jazz originated in the city of New Orleans. As people travelled, the cities that became the centers of jazz would be New York, Chicago, Kansas City, St. Louis and New Orleans. Show these cities on the map. These cities were easy to reach by train and all had large African American neighborhoods where musicians could stay. Travel in the United states for

black musicians was not always safe and very often, black people were not allowed to stay in hotels or neighborhoods that were segregated. This was true, even in cities like New York that did not have segregation laws. The African American neighborhood of Harlem in New York City became the largest center for African American music, especially jazz. Most musicians came from all over the United States but did not become known as entertainers until they went to these big cities, New York, and in particular Harlem. This is why the New Negro Renaissance became known as the Harlem Renaissance.

Step Four: Read aloud, Sweet Music in Harlem. Explain that this story is based on a real event in which a photographer just wanted to get a picture of a few jazz musicians. Word spread he had a picture of 57 of the most prominent jazz musicians in the country who just happened to be in New York that day. This picture is called “A Great Day in Harlem.” Show the picture.

Step Five: Read aloud the poem, “Louie, Louie, How You Play So Sweet”, from the book Jazz. This is a poem about Louis Armstrong, one of the earliest jazz artists to record and become famous. He would influence most other jazz musicians. Play Louis Armstrong, “Up A Lazy River” and “Hold That Tiger,” “Old Rocking Chair Gonna Get Me” or “When the Saints Go Marching In” from Jazz on a Summer’s Day at 59:14. Note changes in speed and use of scatting (rhythmic vocal sounds to imitate instruments). Explain that the trumpet is a difficult instrument to play as it requires a lot of physical strength.

Step Six: Explain that another artist from that time who was from Washington, DC, was Edward Kennedy Ellington, known as Duke Ellington. Duke Ellington started the big band sound. Play Youtube- “Duke Ellington, *Mood Indigo*.” Ask students to compare the two musicians. What can they tell about the personalities of the two men from the music they played? Both started an era of music called “Swing.” Their music and the music of their followers would become America’s Dance music from 1920’s through 1950’s.

Step Seven: Read the poem “America’s Music” from Jazz. Repeat that jazz started as upbeat dance music. It was played mostly in nightclubs and dance halls. Musicians often competed with each other and would have to improvise (i.e. make up what they played as they went along) in order to outdo the other musician. Play dueling saxophone scene from the DVD Kansas City, at scene 12, 57:30. Explain these are current musicians who were acting like jazz musicians of the late thirties. Note that the primary instrument has become the saxophone. Read “Oh Miss Kitty” from Jazz. Play the jitterbug scene from the DVD Harlem Renaissance at 7:34. Have students comment on the dancing. Play Fats Waller, “This Joint is Jumping” from Harlem Renaissance at 14:10. Explain that musicians often took familiar tunes and improvised. Play Louie Jordan, “The Green Grass Grows All Around” from the DVD Reet Petite and Gone at 27:12. An alternative would be to play Louis Jordan, “You Gotta Have the Beat” from the DVD Beware at 30:49.

Step Eight: Explain that in the fifties, jazz started to become more thoughtful. Musicians started playing in smaller groups and started playing more for their own moods and thoughts and less for the pleasure of the audience. Many people stopped listening to jazz and started listening to other kinds of dance music. Many people liked the new thoughtful music. Some of the music was called BeBop. Read the poem “Bebop” from Jazz. Hand out drawing paper and supplies. Ask children to draw how this next Bebop selection makes them feel. Play John Coltrane, “Love Supreme” from the CD of the same name. Note that Coltrane’s instrument was a saxophone. Have children explain their pictures. Read “Session I” from Jazz. Once again, have children draw their feelings as you play Miles Davis, “Seven Steps to Heaven.” Note that Miles Davis used a trumpet. Explain that horns were very important to this period of jazz. Have children explain their drawings.

Step Nine: Note that all of the jazz musicians discussed so far were men. Instrument players were mostly men. Instruments such as the drums and horns required a lot of physical strength, so mostly men played them. There was a woman trumpet player named Violetta Snow, who had a golden trumpet. She went to live in Europe. She was captured and put into a concentration camp where she died. She was considered a big talent. There have been other female instrument players in the past. We will learn about other female instrumentalists soon, but during the swing and Bebop eras, most women participated as singers. Read the poem, “Jazz Vocal” from Jazz. Play Dinah Washington, from the DVD, Jazz on a Summer’s Day at 34:30.

Step Ten: Explain that even though there are not as many artists or fans of jazz as there used to be, there are still many artists and fans. More and more instrumentalists are women. Play Esperanza Spalding playing the cello from DVD, Icons Among Us at 43:23.

Closure: Explain that Jazz has been played for about 100 years. There have been many changes and types of music. Ask students to summarize what they learned about jazz. Ask about student’s favorite musician so far, and why.

Independent Practice: Research and write a short biography of a blues or jazz musician.

### *Lesson Six: Music of the Civil Rights Movement*

Objective: Students will be able to explore and identify the reasons and some of the occurrences of the Civil Rights Movement and how music impacted this period of time.

Materials:

Music and videos:

YouTube: Sam Cooke, “A Change is Gonna Come”

Lyrics for “A Change is Gonna Come”

Soundtrack of a Revolution-DVD

Books:

The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson and E.B. Lewis



Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles and Jerome Lagarrigue  
Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-Ins by Carole Boston Weatherford  
Child of the Civil Rights Movement by Paula Young Shelton and Raul Colon

Step One: Tell students that this lesson will focus on history and music made in the 1960's. This was a time of big changes in America and the music helped create much of that change. Read aloud The Other Side. Discuss how race relations were before the 1960's and the Civil Rights Movement.

Step Two: Explain that the late 1950's was the start of big changes with race relationships among black and white people. In the southern states there were laws that separated black and white people from doing anything together. These were called segregation laws. A lot of black people migrated to northern states to avoid these laws and for better living conditions. Even though the laws were not in the North, conditions often were not any better because of discrimination. Black people across the country started to oppose the segregation laws and discrimination. They would have public meetings and marches called demonstrations. Many white people who thought the laws and conditions were unfair joined the demonstrations. Songs always accompanied these demonstrations.

Step Three: Explain that you will show videos of the songs and some of the protests. Play "We Shall Overcome" segment from Soundtrack for a Revolution at 29:40. Immediately following is the Birmingham Gospel Choir singing "Reign Freedom" which shows footage of the Birmingham bombings, at 31:17. Play "I'm on My Way", at 33:58, which shows footage of the children's demonstration with the water hoses and dogs. Allow for discussion. Most young children have not seen these scenes and they can be frightening. Play "We Shall Not Be Moved," sung by Mary with scenes from the March on Washington at 37:27. Finally, play "Will the Circle be Unbroken," sung by Richie Havens at 49:00. This has pictures of people who were killed during the time of the civil rights protests. Once again, allow for discussion.

Step Four: Explain that all of these songs originated as spirituals and gospel songs that were sung in the churches. The churches became centers for many people to plan and organize protests.

Step Five: Play the DVD, Our Friend Martin. Discuss how things might not have changed if not for Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement.

Step Six: During the 1960's, many musicians and singers joined the demonstrations and wrote music as well. A young singer, who started as a gospel singer, wrote and sang a song that became a theme song for that time period. The singer was Sam Cooke and the song was, "A Change is Gonna Come." Pass out lyrics to the song and play Youtube, Sam Cooke-"A Change is Gonna Come." Even though there is not a live version, students will be able to associate the picture of the man with the song.

Step Seven: Read aloud Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-In, or Freedom Summer or Child of the Civil Rights Movement. If you read Child of the Civil Rights Movement, point out that the writer is the daughter of Andrew Young, whom they heard speaking on the video.

Closure: Explain that this lesson covered a lot of history that changed the United States forever. Many people protested even though they knew they would be hurt or go to jail.

Independent Practice: Have students write the lyrics of a protest song. Tell them that many songs, such as “We Shall Not Be Moved” were made up during a demonstration. You may give them a simple melody, e.g. “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” and have them fit their words to that melody or have them make up their own melody. This can be done as homework or in small groups.

### *Lesson Seven: The Rhythm and the Blues*

Objective: Students will be able to explore and identify the genre called rhythm and blues and the impact of this music on African American history. Students will be able to identify how the genres of blues, gospel and jazz blended to form this art form and they will be able to recognize the elements.

Materials and Resources:

Music and Videos:

Sam Cooke: CD Sam Cooke with the Soul Stirrers

Sam Cooke Portrait of a Legend 1951-1964

Aretha Franklin; CD Amazing Grace

CD I Never Loved a Man

Jazz on a Summer's Day-DVD

Marvin Gaye: What's Going On-DVD

Rhythm and Blues at the Apollo-DVD

Soul to Soul-DVD

Wattstax

James Brown: Live at the Boston Garden-April 5, 1968-DVD

YouTube-Big Mama Thornton ft. You Ain't Nothing but a Hound Dog

YouTube-Elvis Presley-Hound Dog on Ed Sullivan Show

YouTube-Big Joe Turner-Shake Rattle and Roll

YouTube-Elvis Presley-Shake Rattle and Roll

YouTube-My Babe-Lil Walter

YouTube-Mt Babe-Elvis Presley

YouTube-James Brown-Please, Please, Please

YouTube-James Brown-I Feel Good-Ed Sullivan, 1966

YouTube-Temptations-My Girl, 1965

YouTube-Marvelettes-Don't Mess with Bill

YouTube-Edwin Starr-War-1969

Marvin Gaye: What's Going On-DVD

YouTube-Frostie Dancing to Shake Your Tailfeather by Ray Charles

Computer and printer  
Dress up clothes from home

Step One: Explain that we will focus on popular and dance music from the 1950's to the 1980's. This music used to be called "race" music, because the earliest creators were African American. It was sometimes called soul music because it was usually about feelings. Some of the music was called "funk" because the use of electricity made the sound stronger and faster.

Step Two: Explain to students that they will first watch one of the roots of Rhythm and Blues, aka R and B. Play Mahalia Jackson, "Didn't It Rain" from Jazz on a Summer's Day at 1:12:45. Ask students to identify the music. If they identify the music as gospel or religious, ask why people were dancing to the music

Step Three: Explain that R and B music is made up of a combination of jazz from the swing era, blues and gospel. The guitar will become the leading instrument, but singers will be featured and instrumentalists will often be hidden. Many singers started by singing gospel and then moved to R and B. Play Sam Cooke, "Peace in the Valley" from Sam Cooke With the Soul Stirrers and then Sam Cooke, "Everybody Likes the Cha-Cha-Cha" from Portrait of a Legend. Another example would be Aretha Franklin. Play Aretha Franklin, "Oh Mary, Don't You Weep" from Amazing Grace and then "Respect" from I Never Loved a Man.

Step Four: Explain that African American musicians would create early R and B music. However, often, once their music was published or released, a white musician might do the same song. Because the musician was white, the media (i.e. radio and television) would promote the white musician and the black musicians may never receive the same fame and popularity. Play YouTube, Big Mama Thornton-"You Ain't Nothing But a Hound Dog" and then play YouTube, Elvis Presley-"You Ain't Nothing But a Hound Dog" on the Ed Sullivan Show. Explain that going on the Ed Sullivan Show made musicians very famous. Big Mama Thornton never made it onto the Ed Sullivan Show. In the 1950's African American musician became popular by doing live performances at theatres like the Uptown in Philadelphia or the Apollo in Harlem, New York City. Play Big Joe Turner, "Shake Rattle and Roll" from Rhythm and Blues at the Apollo. Explain there were theatres like this throughout the country. The Uptown in Philadelphia is closed and is in serious need of repair but has not been destroyed because of the history of all the R and B performances. The Apollo Theatre closed for some time, but was restored and opened and is now used more than before. It is optional to show the YouTube performance of Elvis Presley, as well as the Lil Walter and Elvis Presley performances of "My Babe."

Step Five: R and B became the new dance music. It took over after jazz was no longer "swing" music. Everyone loved to dance to R and B. Play YouTube-Frostie Dancing to "Shake Your Tailfeather" by Ray Charles. Frostie is a cockatiel bird that loves to dance and demonstrates how this is such natural dance music.

Step Six: Explain that one of the most copied musicians was Chuck Berry. Play Chuck Berry doing “Sweet Little Sixteen” on Jazz on a Summer’s Day at 46:38 or YouTube-Chuck Berry, “Johnny B Good.” Note his style of playing a guitar while standing and singing and dancing. As white musicians copied his music and style, the genre became known as “Rock and Roll.”

Step Seven: Explain that record companies created a lot of groups who would also dance while they sang. Usually one singer would sing the lead while two to four others sang back up music. Play YouTube, The Temptations-“My Girl” and The Marvelettes, “Don’t Mess With Bill.”

Step Eight: Explain that as the 1960’s progressed, protests and social change demands got stronger and so did the music. The sound grew stronger and the music was called “funk.” The musician that symbolized “funk” was James Brown. Play YouTube-James Brown, “I Feel Good” on the Ed Sullivan Show. Note that more and more African American musicians were starting to appear on the Ed Sullivan show. James Brown did a lot of dancing. Play YouTube-“James Brown Gives You Dancing Lessons.” Explain this is a James Brown impersonator who has studied James’ dance movements. Show video again and allow students to practice some of the moves. Play YouTube-James Brown, “Please, Please. Please.” Note how emotion was incorporated into James’ music.

Step Nine: Explain that many changes were occurring in the United States. The segregation laws had ended in 1964 with the passing of a national law called the Civil Rights Bill. A voting rights bill had also passed so that all Americans had the right to vote. However, there were still many reasons for protests. The United States was in a war in Viet Nam that many people were against. There was still a lot of discrimination and a lot of people were fighting for affirmative action for all people of color and women. There were more demonstrations than ever. Rhythm and Blues music was created to express these protests and the need for social change. Play YouTube-Edwin Star, “War, What is it Good For.” Play Marvin Gaye “What’s Going On,” Chapter 6 at 26:30. There is footage of Watts riot and Viet Nam War and why Marvin created the song “What’s Going On.” The phrase “War is not the answer” from that song, is used by people today who are protesting the wars in the Middle East.

Step Ten: This was a time when African Americans had a sense of pride in being black and of their heritage from Africa. In 1971, a group of mostly R and B musicians went to Ghana in West Africa for a music festival. This festival was called Soul to Soul. Play Wilson Pickett “Wait Till the Midnight Hour” from Soul to Soul DVD. In 1976, a similar festival was held in Zaire, connected with the Muhammed Ali fight, Rumble in the Jungle. Play James Brown and Miriam Makeba from Soul Power DVD.

Closure: Ask students to summarize what they learned about Rhythm and Blues music.

Independent Study: Assign students into groups of three or four. Allow use of the computers for students to research rhythm and blues groups. Have them choose a group and select one of their songs. Have students research the lyrics to their song. Give them

one week to practice in groups to sing the songs. At the end of a week, they can dress up and present a talent show either by singing or lip-syncing. Most of the groups were sharply separated by gender. Use your discretion as to how you will group.

### *Lesson Eight: The Sound of Philadelphia*

Objective: Students will be able to identify various musicians from Philadelphia. They will be able to explain how and why Philadelphia was a major center for the output of many great musicians.

#### Materials and Resources:

Map of the United States

#### Music and Videos:

YouTube-Marian Anderson Sings at the Lincoln Memorial

YouTube-Marian Anderson "Ave Maria" by Shubert

YouTube-Paul Robeson "Ol' man River" (Showboat, 1936)

Lyrics of "Ol' Man River" ([www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/showboart/olmanriver.htm](http://www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/showboart/olmanriver.htm))

YouTube-Paul Robeson-"Old Man River" by banjostead

YouTube-Paul Robeson-"Shenandoah"

YouTube-Patti LaBelle, "A Change is Gonna Come" or

Patti Labelle: Live! One Night Only

Love Train; The Sounds of Philadelphia: Live in Concert

Diva-DVD

#### Books:

When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson by Ryan and Brian Selznick

Paul Robeson by Eloise Greenfield

Step One: Explain that there are several major cities that were considered centers for African American music. New York City would be considered the largest center for music in general. Other cities of great importance are New Orleans, St. Louis, Kansas City, Chicago and later Los Angeles. Musicians came from all over the country, but they had to go to these cities to become successful in music. Experts do not usually mention Philadelphia; however, many great musicians came from or have lived and studied in here. During the jazz lesson, we listened to John Coltrane. He lived in Philadelphia when he was young and started studying music and playing here ([en.wikipedia.org/wlkl/John\\_Coltrane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wlkl/John_Coltrane)). In this lesson we will study musicians from Philadelphia.

Step Two: Explain to students that in the early 1900's, a little African American girl stood in front of the Academy of Music. This is a famous concert hall in downtown Philadelphia. It is known for having perfect sound and many concerts and operas have been performed there. This little girl used to stand in front of the Academy and tell white people going in that she was going to sing there when she grew up. This was unheard of to most white people at that time, and they laughed at her. When Marian Anderson grew up, after many battles, she sang in the Academy of Music, many times. Read aloud

When Marian Sang. It will tell the story of Marian Anderson's denial to sing in Constitution Hall by the Daughters of the American Revolution because they would not allow a black singer. The wife of the President (Eleanor Roosevelt) arranged for Marian to sing at the Lincoln Memorial instead. Play YouTube-"Marian Anderson Sings at the Lincoln Memorial." Play YouTube-Marian Anderson "Ave Maria" by Schubert. She sings with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, probably at the Academy of Music.

Step Three: Explain that Paul Robeson was a great singer like Marian Anderson. Both had studied opera. Marian Anderson did many concerts singing opera arias (solos) and spirituals. Paul Robeson sang some opera and acted in movies, but he did mostly spirituals and songs of freedom for black people around the world. He was considered a civil rights activist in the 1930's long before the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's. Play YouTube-"Shenandoah" in the background while you read Paul Robeson. Pass out lyrics to "Ol' Man River." Explain that the misspellings are because the song is written in dialect, the way the writer thought black people spoke. Play YouTube-Paul Robeson "Ol' Man River for Showboat" (1936). Note the lyrics, "You get a little drunk and you land in jail" and "I'm tired of living and scared of dying." Play YouTube-Paul Robeson, "Old Man River." Have students follow along with the lyrics. Note that Robeson is older and has been through a lot of turmoil. He does not sing in dialect and the words to the lyrics have changed. Ask students how they have changed and why they think Robeson changed the dialect and words.

Step Four: Explain that several African Americans performing European classical music have come from Philadelphia. (It is optional to play an excerpt of opera singer Wilhelmenia Wiggins Fernandez from the 1981 movie *Diva*). There are also many jazz musicians from Philadelphia. Many of the artists first learned music in the schools. Philadelphia has become best known for its rhythms and blues artists, especially because of the Sound of Philadelphia Record Company. The record company is located in downtown Philadelphia and has started many great artists, for example Musiq Soulchild. Play excerpts of various artists from Love Train: The Sound of Philadelphia. It is optional to play YouTube examples of these artists when they were younger. Students would enjoy the outfits of the early 1970's.

Closure: Ask students to summarize what they learned about musicians from Philadelphia.

Independent Study: Students will choose a musician from Philadelphia. They will research and write a report on how this musician started learning and performing. What resources in Philadelphia did this artist use?

### *Lesson Nine: Hip Hop*

Objective: Students will be able to identify hip-hop music and elements of the culture that surrounds it. Students will be able explain how and why hip-hop has a great impact on culture in the United States as well as around the world.

## Materials and Resources

### Music and Videos:

CD-Hip Hop Speaks to Children

CD-Queen of the Scene

YouTube-"Jocko Rhythm Talk"-Disco Rap 45rpm

YouTube-Public Enemy, "Fight the Power"

YouTube-Will Smith, "Parents just Don't Understand"

YouTube-2pac, "Dear Mama"

YouTube-Rennie Harris "Pure Movement" (male and female versions)

YouTube TLC "Waterfalls"

DVD-Do the Right Thing

DVD-Bruce Lee Enter the Dragon

DVD-Hip Hop for Kids: Pop! Lock! And Breaking!

### Books:

Hip Hop Speaks to Children edited by Nikki Giovanni

Queen of the Scene by Queen Latifah and Frank Morrison

Step One: Explain that this lesson will be about the music known as Hip Hop and the effects that it has on today's culture. Ask students to define hip hop music and how long they think it has been around. This lesson will explore the poetry of rap music and how similar it is to poetry and language in the past and the influence of the music. Do people dress a certain way? Do people talk differently, using the language that they hear in rap music?

Step Two: Without telling, read Langston Hughes poem "Motto." Ask students when they think that poem was written. Inform them that this poem is by Langston Hughes and was written 60 years ago. If their grandparents are younger than 60 years old, then this poem is older than their grandparents. Ask if rappers use slang in their poetry. Remind students of the lyrics in Cab Calloway's song, "Are you Hep to the Jive?" Those lyrics and the slang terms in Dr. Hepster's Dictionary, are 30 years older than Langston Hughes poem "Motto." 60 plus 30 is 90 years ago that we know slang was used because the music was recorded and Cab Calloway wrote the terms in a dictionary.

Step Three: Explain that modern Hip Hop started around the end of the 1970's with rappers like Grand Master Flash and Curtis Blow. But, their style of music started about ten years earlier with DJing or MCing. That is, disc jockeys on the radio would talk over songs to their audiences. The DJ's became more popular than the songs. In Philadelphia there was a disc jockey in the early 1960's named Jocko Henderson. Play YouTube, "Jocko Rhythm Talk." In the movie Do the Right Thing, actor Samuel L. Jackson demonstrates this. Play the DVD at 4:22. DJ's often "rapped" over the music to keep people from recording the music, rather than buying it. The DJ's became more popular and now talking over an established song is called "sampling."

Step Four: Explain one of the first rap artist groups after DJing is Public Enemy. Their rap, "Fight the Power" is used throughout the movie Do the Right Thing. Either play the

beginning of Do the Right Thing or the version on YouTube. The version on YouTube openly mocks the March on Washington as not relevant to urban problems. That can be part of a discussion. Ask the students what “Fight the Power” means. Explain the early rap could be called “socially conscious” rap because of its messages about protests and social change.

Step Five: Explain that Hip Hop was and is about life in the cities or urban life. Most rap music tries to relate to things that go on in the everyday lives of young people; that has made this music so popular. People can identify with the rappers and the message they send. Play 2-Pac “Dear Mama” and Will Smith, “Parents Just Don’t Understand.” Compare and contrast the two poems. How are the lives of the two rappers and the messages the same? How are they different?

Step Six: Reiterate that rap is poetry. Using the CD for the book, Hip Hop Speaks to Children, have the students listen to Langston Hughes poem, “Dream Boogie,” as they read along. Inform them that they were listening to the voice of Langston Hughes, the same poet who wrote “Motto.” Read aloud or have students listen to a selection of the poems. End this session having students read along to the Sugar Hill Gang’s “Rapper’s Delight.”

Step Seven: With most African American music, dance went with the music. During the 1970’s and 1980’s especially, young people would watch martial arts movies on Saturdays. According to hip hop choreographer Rennie Harris, young people would then meet and practice a lot of the moves in a dance form and that’s how dances styles called pop locking and breaking started. Watch YouTube, Rennie Harris “Pure Movement” both the male and female versions.

Step Eight: Play “Hip Hop for Kids: Pop! Lock! And Breaking!” Allow students to watch first and then follow along with the lessons.

Step Nine: There are almost as many females in the Hip Hop music scene as males. Unfortunately, females have not always gotten an equal or lead part in performing. Of the women who started in Hip Hop, Queen Latifah has been very successful. She now does mostly acting in movies and has done jazz singing. While she was still doing rap, she wrote a book for children, girls especially, called Queen of the Scene. Read aloud or use CD to allow students to listen to Queen of the Scene. Discuss the message of the poem. It is optional to play TLC “Waterfalls” and discuss the message of that song.

Closure: Ask students to summarize what they learned about “hip hop” music from this lesson. Modern hip hop that we listen to today has been around for about 35 years, but if we go back to Cab Calloway, we go back 90 years. If music has been with us that long, it helps to influence everything around us. We know how important music has been for protest and social change. Hip Hop music continues to help us carry important messages.

Independent Study: Some hip hop artists, just like other musicians, can use only improvisation and create as they go along, without any thing written. Other artists write.



Students will be asked to write their own rap song, individually. They may choose an R and B song to play low in the background, for “sampling” when they perform their rap. What resources in Philadelphia did this artist use?

## **Appendix**

### *State Standards Applied*

#### Literacy

- 1.1G Describe major ideas or themes
- 1.1C Use letter to sound correspondence
- 1.1H Retell and summarize major ideas
- 1.1E Read a variety of genres
- 1.5F Acquire a reading vocabulary

#### Math

- 2.1D Use diagrams and models to concept of fraction as part of a whole
- 2.1F Apply number patterns

#### Social Studies

- 8.1A Chronological thinking
- 8.1C.1 Historical interpretation
- 8.3D.3 US history influences of continuity and change
- 6.2C.2 Economic interdependence to compare means of payment
- 7.1B.1 Basic geography location of places and regions

#### Science

- 3.1.4A Unifying themes, know that natural and human made objects are made up of parts

### ***Resource Bibliography for Teachers***

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