

Program Overview



The Blues and Beyond tells the story of African Americans from slavery to present day through music, narration, video and still images. Highlighting both historical and musical legacies, this engaging and entertaining program will leave students profoundly affected and with a new appreciation of how far we've come as a country and how far we still have to go. The interdisciplinary and culturally responsive program provides rich opportunities for connecting to history, literacy, social studies, social emotional learning, and the evolution of African American music in the United States. *The Blues and Beyond* has been developed for three different instructional levels: grades 3-5, grades 6-8 (middle school) and grades 9-12 (high school).

Essential Question

As African Americans have struggled to overcome injustice and achieve equality, their story has been told many ways. How has music reflected that story and changed the course of American history?

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the program, students will:

- Compare and contrast the way American history has been documented – from white European settlers versus African Americans first brought over as slaves.
- Explore the evolution of African American music and how it gradually entered and influenced popular culture
- Analyze and explain the impact of African American music through different musical genres
- Infer connections and relevance of African American history and music to society today.

Curriculum

The program includes educational resources and suggested activities, both before and after viewing the video presentation, to provide context and enrich understanding. These resources and activities are specifically structured for each of the three levels. Examples include:

- Exploration of key words, events and ideas
- Topics for Guided Discussion
- Texts to read and analyze using *The Blues and Beyond* as a backdrop
- Listening and reacting to blues music
- Student-written blues lyrics
- Acrostic Poetry
- Video Read-Alouds
- Student-created protest/awareness signs to form a class “quilt”
- Teacher resources include a glossary and connections to Common Core Standards and National Standards of the National Association for Music Education.

Implementation

This mini-unit is designed to be taught over 12 class periods. Teachers may choose activities and foster discussions focused on their area of expertise: music, social studies, or ELA. *Note: The content of the video for grades 3-5 has been modified to remove some images that may be disturbing for this age group.*

Teacher Training Session: Zoom workshop on how to use the program in the classroom.

Class Periods 1-3

1. Preview Activities and overview of topics.
2. View Part I of the Presentation. Interactive discussion questions will be posed to the students throughout the video. The teacher will pause the presentation to prompt these discussions.
3. View Part II of the Presentation. Interactive discussion questions will be posed to the students throughout the video. The teacher will pause the presentation to prompt these discussions.

Class Periods 4-12:

Go through suggested follow-up activities. Teachers may create detailed lesson plans using the suggested outline and utilizing the many resource materials provided.

