

B.B. KING MUSEUM AND DELTA INTERPRETIVE CENTER

CURRICULUM LESSON PLANS, GRADES 4 - 5

Changing With The Times

Content Area(s):

Language Arts
Geography
Music / Blues

Related Themes:

Roots Music
Careers
Sound Engineering
Acoustics/Recording
Music Technology
Popular Music

Overview of the lesson:

Students will view a presentation about the collected artifacts of B.B. King's life. They will identify items from their own lives that reflect who they are.

Proposed Time Frame: One to two 50-minute class periods, or more.

Materials:

Recorded Music Technology
Handout
PowerPoint Presentation

Equipment:

Internet connection and video projector for videos; computer speakers

BIG IDEA: From his first guitar to today's Lucille, B.B. King has held on to many artifacts of his life. These items help tell the story of a boy who sang and played music in church, all the way to a man who has circled the globe to sing and play Blues music.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will...

1. Learn about B.B. King's life through the kinds of things that he owned or used.
2. Discover ways that music technology has changed since the 1930s.
3. Reflect upon qualities that make B.B. King's music endure.

PROCEDURES

- **Lesson Introduction:** Ask students to look around them for something that they have that could be identified as theirs, i.e., a backpack, a key holder, a unique book cover, a pencil case, etc. Invite one or two students to say why their item is important to them, what makes it unique, or who gave it to them. Close this topic by mentioning that each of us has belongings which are valuable to us. In this lesson we'll find out about what belongs to B.B. King, and what he has collected through his long career as a blues singer.
- **Ask students** if they have heard of B.B. King, and if they can describe who he is and what he does. Listen to the responses, adding to or clarifying the students' information. If anyone mentions his guitar, Lucille, invite the students to watch the video *How Lucille Got Her Name*. Fact: B.B. King has called every guitar Lucille since 1949. In 1980 the Gibson Guitar Company began making a special edition Lucille.
- **Discussion Questions:** What is a music consumer? [Anyone who listens to music, downloads music, buys concert tickets, attends performances, etc.] In what ways do we enjoy music today? What objects or items do we need to enjoy or share music? Encourage a wide variety of responses, asking for rationale and clarifying any misunderstandings.
- Before there were televisions, computers, or portable technology devices, most people heard music on the radio or bought recordings. These older types of technology have gone through many changes. Performers who worked during much of the 20th Century depended upon recordings and technology to reach their audiences.

Curriculum Resources:

- *The Arrival of B.B. King*, an authorized biography by Charles Sawyer, 1980
- *B.B. King Treasures* (with CD) by B.B. King and Dick Waterman, 2005
- B.B. King Museum and Interpretive Center, <http://www.bbkingmuseum.org>
- *B.B. King official website* www.bbking.com
- Mississippi Blues Trail, information and maps; videos and curriculum guide <http://msbluestrail.org>

Vocabulary:

- AM or FM Radio
- Amplifier or Amp
- Cassette Tape
- LP (Long Play record)
- Phonograph
- Record Album
- Single
- Tape Recorder

Lesson Extensions

- Visit the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center
- View additional YouTube or GuitarTube videos of selected performances by B.B. King
- Listen to examples of blues music by other blues performers (preview first)

- Distribute the Recorded Music Technology handout to students. Group them in pairs, threes or fours to discuss the handout. Ask them to respond to the following questions: 1) What items have you heard of? 2) What items have you seen? 3) What items have you used or touched?
- Close the discussion of recording technology by asking for any student discoveries, questions or comments.
- The next segment of the lesson is about the artifacts of B.B. King's life. Introduce the PowerPoint presentation with this quote from the B.B. King website's links page. "He started life as Riley B. King in one of America's most impoverished places, the Mississippi Delta. He had little but the dream in his heart and a destiny that would take him around the world. Now he's an international music icon, and Blues aficionados from all over the planet want to hear more and know more about B.B. King."
- Show the PowerPoint. Invite individual students to read the text on the slides aloud, encouraging them to read audibly and with confidence.
- Feel free to stop on any slide to respond to student questions, offer additional information, or share personal experiences.
- At the conclusion of the PowerPoint, ask students to reflect on what they have learned, guiding them through ideas or with questions, as needed.
- View a performance of B.B. King playing *Caldonia*, an up-tempo blues song. Ask the students to look for evidence of music technology during the performance. Suggest that they look beyond what the camera is focused on. At the end of the video, ask them for responses. Also, ask for anything that they knew was there, but might not be seen. [guitar amplifier, a sound mixer, microphone cables, guitar power cords, monitor speakers, video camera, etc.]
- After viewing the video, ask the students to reflect upon the reasons why B.B. King's music remains popular with all kinds of audiences in America and abroad.
- Assign a writing task. Identify two or three possessions that have importance to the writer – things that they would keep or save throughout their life. Ask the students to write about one of the items, saying how they came to own it, why it is special to them, or why they would like to keep it. They could even write from the viewpoint of the object itself, *i.e.*, Lucille could talk about her experiences traveling with B.B. King. Invite students to read or share their writing, if you choose.
- If your class is planning a visit to the B.B. King Museum, remind them to look for objects and artifacts that have been introduced through this lesson.
- Close the lesson by reminding students that each of us can decide who we want to be. Oftentimes, the things we value or spend time doing as young people will lead to good career choices. Knowing the things you care deeply about as a young person can help guide the decisions you make as you begin life as an adult.

Standards & Competencies:

ELA Reading: Informational Text; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

ELA Reading: Foundational Skills; Fluency
RF.5.4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

ELA Writing: Text Types and Purposes
W.5.2 Write informative or explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
b. develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

Music: Middle Level II (5th)
3. Listen to and describe a varied repertoire of compositions and performances, including American popular music. (CA)
c. Identify and describe characteristics of musical styles.

- B.B. King, offers some simple advice. “I would say to all people, but maybe to young people especially--black and white or whatever color-- follow your own feelings and trust them, find out what you want to do and do it, and then practice it every day of your life and keep becoming what you are, despite any hardships and obstacles you meet.”

Note: There are two more lessons in this curriculum for grades 4 - 5

ASSESSMENTS

1. Observe students’ responses to discussion questions at the beginning of the lesson to determine if they need additional background information.
2. Evaluate students’ understanding of the content and images of the PowerPoint presentation through their questions or discussions.
3. Evaluate student responses to the question about the enduring qualities of B.B. King’s music.
4. Use a rubric or standard classroom practice to evaluate the written assignment.
5. If a museum visit follows this lesson (or others in the curriculum), ask students to respond to their experience by writing their reflections to the museum experience, creating a reader’s theatre to describe their experience, or writing a blues song to describe what they have learned.
6. Consider whether to extend the lesson by assigning research, designing student projects, or assigning presentations to groups of students.

LESSON RESOURCES

1. Video: How Lucille Got Her Name (1:04), recorded in 2010
<http://www.bbking.com/2010/11/09/why-b-b-kings-guitar-is-named-lucille-2/>
2. Recorded Music Technology handout.
3. PowerPoint presentation: B.B. King Artifacts.
4. Video: *Caldonia*, 4:42 Montreux Jazz Festival. BB performing *Caldonia*, a jump blues song, first recorded in 1945 by Louis Jordan and his Tympany Five
<http://www.guitar-tube.com/watch/bb-king-caldonia>

Extend the lesson:

Lesson plans, PBS Blues Classroom:
<http://www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/lessons.html>

Lesson Plans, Mississippi Blues Trail Curriculum
<http://www.msblustrail.org/Curriculum>