

# B.B. KING MUSEUM AND DELTA INTERPRETIVE CENTER

## CURRICULUM LESSON PLANS, GRADES 6 - 8

### Adapting to Change

#### Content Area(s):

Language Arts  
Geography  
Music / Blues  
Music Technology  
Famous Musicians

#### Related Themes:

Roots Music  
Careers  
Sound Engineering  
Acoustics/Recording  
Popular Music  
Entertainment

#### Overview of the lesson:

Students will analyze the changes in music technology that parallel B.B. King's life. They will view a presentation about artifacts from his life, and identify items from their own lives that have personal meaning to them.

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

#### Materials:

Recorded Music Technology  
Handout  
PowerPoint Presentation  
Reader's Theatre

**BIG IDEA:** Throughout our lives, we collect things: gifts, books, vehicles, souvenirs, jewelry, photographs and more. Because each person's collection is unique, it provides one way of telling a story of who we are.

#### 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 recorded music has evolved, including the way that it has been promoted or marketed, from the 1930s to the present.
3. Use their understanding of B.B. King the man, and B.B. King the musician, to determine what makes him a global music celebrity.

#### PROCEDURES

- Lesson Introduction: 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 guitar.
- Ask the students if they have ever owned something that had their name or initials on it. After hearing a few responses, ask if any students have some special keepsakes - things that they treasure. Follow up with questions about how they store or care for those items, who gave them the item, why it is special to them, etc.
- Throughout his lifetime, B.B. King has owned a lot of different guitars, dress clothes, music players, and more. In this lesson, we are going to look into the kinds of things that have been used during his career.
- Ask the students about different ways that they enjoy music. There should be a wide variety of responses, including singing, use of different types of technology, going to concerts, deejays, taking lessons, etc.
- 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 20<sup>th</sup> Century depended upon recordings and technology to reach their audiences.

**Equipment:**

Internet connection and video projector for videos; computer speakers

**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](http://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
- Genre
- LP (Long Play record)
- Phonograph
- Record Album
- Single
- Tape Recorder

**Standards and Competencies****Reading: Informational**

**Text:** Key Ideas and Details

**RI.8.3** Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g.,) through comparisons,

- Distribute the Recorded Music Technology handout to students. Group them in pairs, threes or fours to discuss the handout.
- Ask the groups 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.
- Today, there are many ways that we can enjoy recorded music. To help us get better acquainted with B.B. King, let's listen to a fast tempo blues, *Caldonia*, from a performance at the Montreux, Switzerland Jazz Festival.
- After viewing the video, ask the students what they noticed about the music, the performance, the guitar solos, the band, the concert venue, the audience response, etc.
- Introduce the PowerPoint presentation about artifacts of B.B. King's life with the following quote from the Links page of the B.B. King website. "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.
- Assign parts for the B.B. King Reader's Theatre. It may be necessary to adjust the number of readers if your class is large. Give students a copy of the script and give them some time to read through their parts and the parts for All. If you wish, choose a student director, who will coach those who read the B.B. King lines, or other sections.
- Perform the Reader's theatre. Ask students to stand in a circle or semi-circle near those with whom they are reading, so that eye contact and unity will be achieved. Facilitate this performance by offering constructive feedback before, during, or afterward.
- It is widely acknowledged that B.B. King is a world-class blues performer. Ask students to think about the video, the artifacts, and the reader's theatre as they begin a writing assignment. Identify and describe three or more qualities they have learned about B.B. King that have contributed to making him a global music celebrity. Express how each of these qualities is evident through his life or his music.
- Decide how student written work will be evaluated and shared.

analogies or categories).

**Speaking and Listening:**

Comprehension and Collaboration

**SL.8.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts and issues, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**Writing:** Text Types and Purposes

**Writing.8.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

**Reading Science and**

**Technical:** Craft and Structure

**RST.6-8.4** Determine the meaning of symbols, key terms, and other domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a specific scientific or technical context relevant to grades 6-8 texts and topics.

**Music: Middle School IV**

3. Listen to, analyze, and describe compositions and performances, including selected global and American music. (CA)  
a. Develop the uses of elements of music as the basis for analysis of musical style and structure.

- Close the lesson by asking students how B.B. King became famous. What are some of the things that other people admire about him? How has he continued to remain an important global music celebrity?
- Remind the students that B.B. King started out life in very humble surroundings, with conditions that made his life very difficult. He rose above those challenges to follow a dream. All of us can learn from his example as we think about who we want to be.

**ASSESSMENTS**

1. Determine what students already know about B.B. King, and whether to include biographical information with the lesson.
2. Evaluate student’s ability to read and discuss the Recorded Music Technology handout page.
3. Analyze student responses to the *Caldonia* music video to determine if they noticed significant music elements and performance aspects.
4. Observe the students’ participation and performance of the reader’s theatre. Determine if repeating the experience will improve it.
5. Evaluate the student writing task to determine the students’ understanding of the qualities that might have led to B.B. King’s celebrity status.

**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>