

B.B. KING MUSEUM AND DELTA INTERPRETIVE CENTER

CURRICULUM LESSON PLANS GRADES 9 - 12

A Gift Worth Sharing

Content Area(s):

Language Arts
Geography
Music / Blues
Music Technology
Famous Mississippians

Related Themes:

Careers
Sound Engineering
Acoustics/Recording
Roots Music
Popular Music
Entertainment

Overview of the lesson:

Students will get to know B.B. King through his biographer, a reader's theatre, his music, and a presentation about the collected artifacts of his life.

Proposed Time Frame:

One to two 50-minute class periods, or more.

Materials:

- Recorded Music Technology Handout
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Reader's Theatre

Equipment:

Internet connection and video projector for videos; computer speakers

BIG IDEA: When Riley B. King was nine years old, his mother [from her deathbed] reminded him that he was a good boy, that he should try to *do* good, and he should be kind to others, because the kindness would always come back to him. – *B.B. King Treasures*, by B.B. King with Dick Waterman

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Learn about B.B. King's life through his own words, and the statements of those who have known or worked with him.
- Analyze changes in music technology since the 1930s.
- Determine ways that B.B. King has honored his mother's reminder through the choices he has made in his life.

PROCEDURES

- Lesson Introduction: Ask students what they know about bluesman, B.B. King. Can they name one of his well-known recordings? His guitar? Decide if they need to learn some biographical information about this world-class artist. Other lessons in this series contain biographical information.
- Share the following quote with the students, and ask for their response to the high praise spoken by his biographer.

“B.B.’s fame is worldwide. The details of his life story are full of the history of our times, and that story has much to offer anyone interested in the American South, in the changing economics and sociology of American race relations, and in the impact of technology on the social mechanisms of American society at large. Moreover, there is much to recommend the story of B.B. King as plain human drama.”

“...The trajectory of B.B. King's life that runs through time, space and history from that sharecropper's cabin in Berclair to the Capitol in Jackson* and beyond, has a breathtaking majesty. It's important to step back and contemplate the arc of that curve, because the way stations in his life between those two points are benchmarks in the history of our culture and society. In many ways, the story of Riley B. King, known to the world as the King of the Blues, B.B. King, is the story of America from the first quarter-mark of the twentieth century into the first decade of the twenty-first century.” – B.B. King biographer, Charles Sawyer in *B.B. King Treasures*

* In February 2005, the Mississippi Legislature and Governor presented a proclamation to B.B. King, celebrating B.B. King Day in Jackson, MS.

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
- Genre
- LP (Long Play record)
- Phonograph
- Record Album
- Single
- Tape Recorder

Standards & Competencies:

Reading: Informational Text; Craft and Structure

RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

- Discussion Questions: What devices do you use to listen to music today? [Smart phone, iPod, MP3 player, radio, etc.] Follow up: What else have people used to listen to music – before the devices we use today?
- Before there was television, 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Show the PowerPoint. Ask 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 upon what they have learned, guiding them by sharing ideas or asking specific questions, as needed.
- 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 handout and discussion.
- Ask the students to think about events or people in their lives who have influenced them. Give them a few minutes to think individually and to write down names and thoughts.

Reading History; Key Ideas and Details

RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

Reading Science and Technical; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RST.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia,) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Music: High School General Music, 9 – 12

3. Listen to, analyze, and evaluate music in a variety of forms and styles. (CA)
 - a. Using critical thinking and listening skills, identify and analyze the basic elements of music.

- Divide the class into groups of three or four to share events, names or stories of people who have influenced their lives and why.
- After giving some time for groups to speak, bring the students back together and ask if anyone would like to share with the class.

- Close the lesson by reviewing what Riley’s mother told him (see Big Idea), and what her words have meant to him throughout his life.
- The title of the lesson is “A Gift Worth Sharing.” Ask the students what their understanding is of the title and what it means to them.
- You may also wish to address the concept of change, and how people are required to adapt to a world in which change is a constant.

Note: There are two more lessons in this curriculum for grades 9 - 12

ASSESSMENTS

1. At the beginning of the lesson, determine what students already know about B.B. King, his life and his music. Include biographical information about the artist, or review a time line of his life if doing so will enhance the learning experience for the students.
2. Evaluate the need to facilitate discussions among student groups while they review the Recorded Music Technology Handout.
3. Gauge the students’ analysis of the video performance of *Caldonia*. It may be necessary to review a portion of the video if they are not ready to respond to questions about the performance.
4. Monitor and facilitate the student reflection time as they respond to the question about events and people who have influenced their lives, and as they share in small groups. Determine whether some students will be ready to share with the class while they are working in groups.

LESSON RESOURCES

1. Video: *Caldonia*, 4:42, Montreaux 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>
2. Recorded Music Technology Handout
3. B.B. King Artifacts PowerPoint

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>