

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 24 Word Count: 1,846

Book Summary

If you've ever felt sad or disappointed that things aren't going your way, then you've experienced the blues. Blues music became a way for people to express these feelings. *The Blues: More Than a Feeling* is an informational book that traces the history of the blues, beginning with its African roots. Photographs and maps support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of asking and answering questions to understand text
- Make inferences
- Identify and use complex sentences
- Identify and use homophones

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Blues: More Than a Feeling* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- KWL, make inferences, complex sentences, homophones worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:
 Story critical: **blues** (n.), **emotion** (n.), **express** (v.), **performance** (n.), **phonograph** (n.), **rhythm** (n.)
 Enrichment: **call and response** (n.), **composer** (n.), **Great Depression** (n.), **notes** (n.), **plantation** (n.), **pseudonym** (n.), **slaves** (n.), **vaudeville** (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Have students listen to selections of blues music by artists such as Bessie Smith, Muddy Waters, "Ma" Rainey, Robert Johnson, and Charlie Patton. Discuss the types of feelings and images conveyed in the lyrics. Provide CD cases, books, and magazines with pictures of the singers.
- Discuss what students already know about blues music, its style, and its stars.
- Create a KWL chart on the board and hand out the [KWL worksheet](#) to students. Review or explain that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for questions we want to have answered, and the *L* stands for the knowledge we learned. Fill in the first column (*K*) with information students already know about the blues. Have students complete the same section of their KWL chart.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

The Blues: More Than a Feeling

- Ask students what they would like to know about blues music. Have them fill in the second row (W) of their chart. Write their questions on the class chart.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Discuss with students how using prior knowledge and asking questions about a topic can help readers understand and remember the information in a book.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of the information in a book and the way in which it is organized. After reviewing the table of contents, use it to model asking questions.
- **Think-aloud:** *I can use the table of contents to think of questions I'd like to have answered about blues music. For example, two of the chapters are titled "Where Did the Blues Come From?" and "African Roots." This makes me wonder if blues music originally began in Africa. If so, I wonder how this style of music came to the United States and other places around the world. I'll have to read the book to find out. I'll write these questions in the middle column (W) of the KWL chart.*
- Have students look at the other chapter titles. Have them write any questions they have, based on the covers and table of contents, in the W row of their KWL chart.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at photos, captions, glossary entries, and the index. Have them add any additional questions they might have on their KWL chart. Invite students to share their questions aloud. Write shared questions on the class chart.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Make inferences**

- Explain that not all the information in a book is directly stated. Sometimes readers need to make inferences by using prior knowledge and the details in the story to understand the indirect language used. Explain that an inference is a conclusion drawn by connecting clues in text to information that a person already knows. Making inferences allow readers to understand ideas in text on a deeper level.
- Ask students to turn to the table of contents. Point out the chapter titled "African Roots." Ask students to explain why this title might lead readers to think that blues music had its origins in Africa (the word *roots* denotes a place where something began).
- **Think-aloud:** *I know an author does not directly state all the ideas in a story and that I must make inferences to understand the story completely. I know that good readers do this, so I'm going to carefully look at the words and the pictures so I can find any inferences the author might have included.*

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following words from the content vocabulary on the board: *call and response*, *composer*, *notes*, and *rhythm*.
- Give groups of students a large piece of blank paper. Have them divide the paper into four parts. For each word, have them write or draw what they know about the word. Have groups discuss and create a definition for each word using their prior knowledge.


- Write the names *Bach*, *Beethoven*, and *Mozart* on the board. Ask students if they know who any of these people were. Explain that they were all *composers* of music, or people who wrote music. Write the vocabulary word *composers* on the board and say the word aloud with students. Ask students if they know of any modern-day composers. Discuss that some major recording artists write their own music. They are composers and performers. Some recording artists sing songs that other people write for them, so they are not composers.
- Show students pictures of musical notes. Invite students to describe the shapes in the pictures (*ovals*, *flags*, *straight lines*, and so on). Write the word *notes* on the board. Explain that *composers* write music by using different *notes*, or symbols used in written music, to show the type and length of sound to be played. Have students compare the meaning of the word with their prior knowledge. Point out that *notes* is a multiple-meaning word, or a word with more than one meaning. Ask students to share other meanings of the word *notes*.
- Write the word *rhythm* on the board. Ask students to share the definitions they wrote using their prior knowledge. Play a piece of music from the “Build Background” section and point out its *rhythm* by clapping to the beat. Have students identify the rhythm as fast or slow. Explain that rhythm is the regular pattern of beats in music. Point out that different songs have different rhythms. Play a few different songs to illustrate this concept. Have students compare the meaning of the word with their prior knowledge.
- Encourage students to check the meaning of each word using the glossary or a dictionary. Then have volunteers use each word in a sentence.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to find answers to their questions about the blues and write what they learned in the *L* row of their KWL chart. Remind them to use the information they learned to make inferences about events in the story.


During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Guide the reading: Have students read to the end of page 11. Remind them to read for information about the blues that will answer questions on their KWL chart. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.
 -  When they have finished reading, have students circle any questions on their KWL chart that were answered and underline the information in the book that answered those questions. Have them write on their KWL chart any additional questions they generated as they read.
- Model answering a question on the KWL chart and filling in additional information.

Think-aloud: *I wanted to know if blues music began in Africa and, if so, how this type of music came to the United States and other places in the world. I learned that the blues style of music began when slaves were brought to the United States from West Africa. They brought with them their work songs. However, after these people came to the United States, the songs changed from those that reflected daily life to those that reflected their life as slaves. I'll write what I learned in the L column of my KWL chart. This information made me want to know more about the songs they sang and how these songs influenced modern music. I will write this question in the W column of my KWL chart.*
- Ask students to use information in the text and their prior knowledge to infer why the instruments in blues music often got as much attention as the voices (the combination of the voices and instruments resembled the call-and-response style that was the foundation of early blues music). Have students identify information from the text that supports their inferences. (Page 9: It represented the call and response style that was part of the blues. Page 8: Call and response was a distinctive element of early blues music; the style resembled a form of communication, or voices, between slaves working in the fields.)
- Introduce and explain the [make inferences worksheet](#) and have students record this information on their worksheet.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students write answers they found while reading in the *L* row on their KWL chart and additional questions they raised in the *W* row. Invite them to share the information they learned and the additional questions they generated as they read the book. Record shared responses on the class KWL chart.
- Have students read to the end of page 14. Have them write answers they found while reading on their KWL chart. Invite them to share the information they learned and the additional questions they generated as they read the book. Based on the information in the book, ask students to infer why the blues queens developed a style that excited everyone (the music and performance were entertaining to a variety of people; people may have related to the lyrics of the songs). Have students share the story clues and prior knowledge they used to make that inference. (Page 12: The Queens of the Blues started as entertainers, so they might have known how to capture an audience; the music was vibrant and entertaining to all kinds of people. Page 7: Blues music had a strong beat; the songs reflected specific feelings and emotions.)
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for answers to their KWL chart questions and use information learned to make inferences. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to their chart as they read.


 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read the word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- **Think-aloud:** *I wanted to know more about the songs that the slaves sang in the fields and how those songs influenced modern music. I found out that the type of music that is directly linked to blues is rock 'n' roll, and without early West African work songs, there would be no rock 'n' roll. I also read that R&B gets its big beat from the blues.*
- Ask students to share questions they added to their KWL chart while reading and ask them what questions were answered (or not answered) in the text.

 Have students circle the questions on their KWL chart that were answered by reading the book and underline the information in the book that answers those questions. Then have them write answers they found while reading.

- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps students interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find the answers to their questions and helps them understand and remember what they have read.


Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Ask students to reread page 15. Ask what can be inferred about why record companies started the search for new stars in the South (people from this area were more likely to sing and play blues music). Have students share the story clues and prior knowledge they used to make that inference. (Page 6: The slaves in the South created a style of music known as the blues.) Have them record this information on their [make inferences worksheet](#).
- **Independent practice:** Have students turn to page 17 and reread the page. Ask what can be inferred about why record sales fell (people could no longer afford records). Have students record on their [make inferences worksheet](#) the information they used to make that inference (Page 17: The Great Depression led to no money and scarcity of jobs; people were likely saving money for essential items, such as food, clothing, and shelter.) Have them record this information on the back of their [make inferences worksheet](#).

- Ask students to think about what can be inferred about why blues music grew in popularity as southerners moved north (southerners took their blues music traditions with them and passed them along; people had more money to spend on music). Have students record on the back of their [make inferences worksheet](#) the information they used to make that inference. (Page 10: As people move, they take their traditions with them, just as the work songs of the slaves were brought over from West Africa. Page 17: People made more money in the North and could afford records.) If time allows, discuss students' responses.
- **Enduring understanding:** Blues music was strongly influenced by traditional African music. Blues music then influenced other types of music styles, such as rock 'n' roll and R&B. Now that you know this information, what might be some influences on modern music? How does this affect your understanding of the origins of ideas, traditions, and practices within cultures?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Complex sentences

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Josh invited a friend to join him _____ he had two tickets to the movies.*
- Have students read the sentence and suggest words that might fit in the blank to complete the sentence (*because, since, when*).
- Review or explain that a *conjunction* is a word that joins together two parts of a sentence. Point to the examples students suggested to complete the sentence on the board. Explain that these conjunctions join together parts of sentences to form a *complex sentence*.
- List examples of subordinating conjunctions on the board (*after, although, as, as if, because, before, for, it, once, since, than, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, whether, while*).
- Reread the sentence on the board with a conjunction. (*Josh invited a friend to join him because he had two tickets to the movies.*) Underline *Josh invited a friend to join him*. Explain that this part of the sentence is called the *independent clause* because it is a complete thought. Circle *because he had two tickets to the movies*. Explain that the part of the sentence that follows the conjunction is called the *dependent clause*. Point out that even though both sentence parts contain a subject and verb, the dependent clause does not express a complete thought and is not a sentence that can stand alone.
- Ask students to turn to page 10. Write the following sentence from the book on the board: *Because many were plantation farmers before being brought west as slaves, they had developed songs specific to their work on the farm.*
- Have students identify the conjunction (*because*), the dependent clause (*Because many were plantation farmers before being brought west as slaves*), and the independent clause (*they had developed songs specific to their work on the farm*). Point out that in this example, the dependent clause comes at the beginning of the sentence.
- Have students reread the sentence with the independent clause at the beginning. (*They had developed songs specific to their work on the farm because many were plantation farmers before being brought west as slaves.*) Point out that either sentence is correct. However when the dependent clause is at the beginning of the sentence, a comma often separates the clauses.
-  **Check for understanding:** Have students highlight the following sentence from page 7 in their book: *When you hear blues music, you can easily tap your toe or clap along with the beat.* Have students underline the dependent clause (*when you hear blues music*) and circle the independent clause (*you can easily tap your toe or clap along with the beat*). Ask students to identify the conjunction (*when*).
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [complex sentences worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: Homophones

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Blues music became popular here.* Circle the word *here*. Ask students to explain what the word refers to (a place).
- Write the following sentence on the board: *The only way to hear music was to hear a live performance.* Circle the word *hear*. Ask students to explain what the word means (to sense sound).
- Ask students to identify which words in the sentences sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings (*here, hear*). Write these words on the board. Explain that words that sound the same but are spelled differently and have different meanings are called *homophones*. Repeat the process for *buy* (page 6) and *by* (page 7), and *two* (page 13) and *to* (page 15).
- Point out that the words *happy* and *sad* have opposite meanings. Explain that two words with opposite meanings are called *antonyms*.
- Invite students to share other homophone pairs they may know. Write these pairs on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the homophones *here, hear, buy, by, two, and to* on the board. Have students use each word in a sentence on a separate piece of paper. Invite them to share their sentences aloud.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [homophones worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently or with a partner. Encourage repeated timed readings of a specific section of the book.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students investigate a room in their home with someone at home. Have them use clues to make inferences about what events may have taken place previously or what may happen in the future.

Extend the Reading

Writing and Art Connection

Have students write their own lyrics to a call-and-response song. Direct them to page 8 of the text and review the example of this type of song. Remind them that the singer sings one line, repeats it (usually word for word), and then comments about it in the third line. Students may write about an experience they had on the playground, a feeling they had about taking a test, or anything else that they may have felt “the blues” over. If time allows, have volunteers perform their song for the rest of the class.

Social Studies Connection

Have students use the Internet to research a blues artist mentioned in the text (Mamie Smith, “Ma” Rainey, Bessie Smith, Son House, Robert Johnson, Charlie Patton, or Muddy Waters). Have them write a research paper identifying the major contributions of that individual during his/her life and evaluate his/her impact on musical history. Allow time for students to present their papers orally.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently ask relevant questions about the topic prior to and during reading; locate answers to their questions in the text and understand that not all answers are found in one source
- use story clues and prior knowledge to make inferences during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify the parts of complex sentences during discussion; write complex sentences on a worksheet
- accurately identify and understand the use of homophones during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**