

Scheme of Learning: YEAR 8 BLUES

Topic Sequence:

1	2	3	4	5	6
BLUES	GROUND BASS	REGGAE	REMIXES	SIGNATURE TUNES	BAND PROJECT

Topic Overview:

This topic will introduce Year 8 to the historically and musically significant topic of the Blues. Pupils will be taught about the origins of Blues in the work songs of slaves and how the musical characteristics are derived from a fusion of traditional African musical heritage and Western European harmony. Pupils will learn to play the 12 bar blues chord sequence and learn to improvise using the Blues scale, producing an instrumental performance. They will also learn about the typical structure and content of a Blues song and will work in small groups to compose and perform their own Blues song incorporating all the main musical characteristics they have learnt about. They will have the opportunity to listen to and discuss a wide range of Blues music and will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through listening and appraisal activities. In addition, they will develop an understanding of how influential Blues has been in the field of popular music ever since and the impact of recording technology on its' growing popularity around the world over the last century.

This topic builds on the prior work pupil have done in Year 7 on chords, rhythms, hooks and riffs, and will continue to build on the vocal, keyboard and guitar skills they have been developing. The learning from this project will feed in to Ground Bass

Lesson Sequence:

Pupils will start the topic by listening to some traditional Blues music and discussing their own prior knowledge of the musical genre and the musical characteristics that they notice. They will then be taught in more depth about the origins and context of the music and learn to play the 12 Bar Blues chord sequence, which is fundamental to all Blues music and also many later styles that were derived from Blues.

In the following lessons pupils will then learn about further key features of Blues music, have the opportunity to identify each characteristic in listening extracts and then explore the feature through practical work, covering the use of walking bass, blue notes, the blues scale, improvisation and call & response and developing their performance skills on either keyboard or guitar. Pupils will demonstrate both their skills and understanding of the Blues at this stage through a short interim performance of an instrumental Blues.

Pupils will then be introduced in more depth to the role of vocals in Blues music, exploring the traditional AAB lyric structure of Blues and examining how a call & response interaction is developed between the vocal and instrumental performers. Pupils will work in small groups to produce their own Blues song which will build upon their previous performance task through the inclusion of vocals, demonstrating an understanding of song structure and also provide the opportunity to develop their vocal and ensemble performance skills further through the use of their voices and a wider range of instruments.

At the end of the topic, pupils will present their finished Blues songs and complete a Listening task in which they will apply their knowledge of Blues to answering a set of questions based on an extract of Blues music.

Sequence of Lessons:		Topic Resources:			
1	The 12 Bar Blues	Knowledge Map:	Yr8 Music 1: BLUES	Any other Resources:	12 Bar Blues Sheet
2	Walking Bass				
3	Improvisation	Assessment:			
4	Instrumental Performance	Knowledge:	10 Question Knowledge Quiz		
5	Blues Song Structure	Application of Knowledge:	Listening Exercise: analysis of Blues extract		
6	Developing Your Song	Practical Skills:	Keyboard/Guitar/Vocal/Sequenced performance, improvisation activity and composition of a Blues Song.		
7	Listening Assessment	Supportive Listening:			
8	Group Song Performance	Robert Johnson	Cross Road Blues		
9		Little Walter	Mean Old World		
10		Bessie Smith	Mean Old Bed Bug Blues		