



Jazz in America Glossary for Lesson III - Jazz's Beginnings

blues: A form of music introduced in the early 20th century derived from the African American work songs as principle source material; the most persistent characteristic form is a 12-measure pattern: three phrases of four measures each; related to the blue notes, i.e., the notes found "between" the keys of the piano; the lowered 3rd, 5th, and 7th notes of a major scale are often referred to as blue notes, having a "bluesy" sound common in blues compositions and performances.

break (AKA stop time): During a tune this occurs when all but one of the band members stop playing except the member who is improvising a solo.

collective improvisation: Concurrent improvisation by the musicians in a combo.

combo: Same as small band or small ensemble (duo to nonet); an assemblage of musicians with a common purpose.

ensemble: A group of musicians commonly known as a band or combo

mute: The device brass players insert in the bell of their instrument to diminish the loudness of their instrument and create various effects.

polyrhythm: Two or more contrasting rhythms played simultaneously; two or more rhythms superimposed.

ragtime: A non-improvised, notated late 19th-early 20th century style of piano-based music characterized by its syncopated, distinctive so-called "ragged" right hand movement on the keyboard; an influence on early jazz.

solo: The passages of a tune during which one or more of the musicians improvises within the context of the tune; that person is known as the soloist.



Jazz in America Student Handout--Lesson Plan III--American History Essay 1

Slavery in America: Struggle and Survival

For over two centuries the institution of slavery influenced nearly every aspect of American life. Millions of people were captured on the African continent and transported to the Western Hemisphere as bound laborers. In 1619 a Dutch frigate brought twenty Africans to the Jamestown colony who, like white laborers transported from England, became indentured servants. However, most Blacks brought to Virginia after 1640 had no contracts and could not look forward to their freedom or receiving a small plot of land as could white indentured servants. By the 1660s Virginia law recognized that Africans imported to the colony as laborers were to be perpetual servants. Slavery was firmly entrenched in the Virginia colony by the passage of the slave code of 1705 (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p268.html>). Other British colonies in North America took similar measures. In fact, the Massachusetts colony in 1641 became the first to recognize slavery as a legal institution.

As the demand for slave labor increased, the slave trade became more profitable. The reprehensible traffic in human cargo, known as the "middle passage" (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p277.html>) became the blight of the eighteenth century. The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African includes a vivid first-hand account of the condition on board a slave ship bound for the Americas. Equiano's description of the "middle passage" recounts the horrors he suffered during his forced migration to the Americas (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1h320t.html>).

In 1808 the United States government prohibited the overseas slave trade that had been guaranteed in the Constitution for a period of 20 years. Its abolition did nothing to stop a flourishing domestic slave trade. Slaves were bought and sold in slave markets throughout the South and transported from one state to another and into the territories (except for the prohibition of slavery in the Northwest Territory by the Ordinance of 1787).

Read accounts of slavery in America from a textbook or encyclopedia tracing the institution from its origins in the British colonies of North America through the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865. To gain a better understanding of the human experiences examine the writings of former slaves that describe the nefarious "peculiar institution." The resource bank of the PBS website, "Africans in America" (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html>) provides easy access to a number of primary source readings and brief narratives that place these documents in their historical context. The following are a few of the sources available through the "Africans in America" website:

- Cato's Letter to the Pennsylvania Assembly (1781)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h73t.html>
- A Memorial to the South Carolina Senate (1791)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h70t.html>



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- Rebel's statement from Gabriel's Conspiracy (1804)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h493t.html>
- David Walker's Appeal in Four Articles, Together with a Preamble to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular and very Expressly to Those of the United States of America (1829) <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2931t.html>
- Richard Allen's "Address to the Free People of Colour of these United States" (1830) <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h512t.html>
- Charles Ball's narrative: Fifty Years in Chains (1836)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part3/3h508t.html>
- Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (published in 1861)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h2924t.html>
- Jacob Stoyer, My Life in the South (published in 1879)
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h3438t.html>

Questions to consider:

1. Discuss how Africans endured lifelong slavery and the consequences of slavery on American history. How did this influence jazz in the 20th century?
2. As an extended activity, research how religious practices, dances, and songs were used to retain and transmit the cultural heritage of Africans who had been enslaved in North America. How did this eventually lead to jazz?



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Jazz in America Student Handout--Lesson Plan III--American History Essay 2

Jim Crow America

Following the Civil War, Southern states began passing laws that virtually reinstated slavery through a series of "Black Codes" that governed political, economic, and social status of former slaves freed by the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865. The enactment of these restrictive codes aroused a storm of protests in the Republican controlled Congress and ushered in a new policy of Reconstruction that divided the South into five military districts and initiated new amendments to the Constitution to guarantee equal rights and extend suffrage to African American males. The 14th Amendment, ratified in 1868, defined citizenship and prohibited states from limiting civil rights and liberties of a citizen under the due process and equal protection clauses of the amendment (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.amendmentxiv.html>). The 15th Amendment, ratified in 1870, guaranteed that the rights of citizens to vote "shall not be abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

The constitutionality of the 14th Amendment came into question within a few years after ratification. In a 5-4 decision in the Slaughterhouse Cases in Louisiana (1873), the Court narrowly interpreted the "privileges and immunities" clause in the first section of the 14th Amendment. In an 1883 decision in the Civil Rights Cases, the Court, by an 8-1 decision, held that the 14th Amendment only prohibited states and not individuals from discriminating on the basis of race. The decision left it up to state governments to determine if private interference of a person's civil rights were in violation of the law. The majority opinion in the case asserted that the U.S. Congress did not have the authority to prohibit private interference with the rights to vote, to serve on juries, or to appear as a witness in state courts as these matters were solely within the realm of states rights.

State laws establishing a rigid segregation policy came to be called "Jim Crow" laws. The term "Jim Crow" is believed to have originated from a 19th-century minstrel song and dance act, "Jump Jim Crow." The Tennessee legislature passed the first "Jim Crow" law in 1881 requiring segregation of the races on railroad cars. Shortly thereafter states throughout the South passed similar laws strictly forbidding the mixing of races (http://www.nps.gov/malu/documents/jim_crow_laws.htm).

In 1894 the Supreme Court agreed to hear a case involving a challenge to a Louisiana Jim Crow that required railroads operating in the state to provide "equal but separate accommodations for white and colored raced." In 1896 the Court rendered its decision in the Plessy v. Ferguson case (<http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/post-civilwar/plessy.html>). For the next half-century "separate but equal" became the litmus test for cases involving racial segregation. African Americans were at the mercy of bigoted state laws that enacted a rigid segregation policy. Jazz musicians were continually plagued by Jim Crow America, often not being able to stay at the same hotels or dine at the same night clubs in which they were performing. Refusing to accept a status of second-class citizenship, individuals and organizations persistently challenged Jim Crow legislation and ultimately prevailed when the Supreme Court reversed the Plessy v. Ferguson decision in 1954.



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Questions to consider:

1. How did the Supreme Court reinterpret the 14th Amendment to justify segregation?
2. What was the purpose of Jim Crow laws? How effective were these laws?
3. What was the Court's ruling in the Plessy case? What effect did the decision have on government policy between 1896 and the 1950s?
4. As an extended activity, take the interactive tour of Jim Crow America on the National Civil Rights Museum website (<http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/gallery/jimcrowlaw.asp>).
5. How did Jim Crow laws effect jazz musicians? How did they effect the music?

Further reading:

The Strange Career of Jim Crow by C. Vann Woodward

For further information and/or to order this book from amazon.com, click on the following URL address:

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ISBN%3D0195018052/reasonmagazineA/002-2935177-1954456>

African and European Influences on Jazz

Jazz is the result of the blending of African and European musical traditions. However, jazz is neither African nor European, it is American. The contribution of American political concepts and culture were vital to the birth and development of jazz. Below is a listing of Africa's and Europe's primary influences. As there is much overlap, the following list of jazz elements should only be considered "more African" or "more European" in origin.

African	European
improvisation (especially collective improvisation)	improvisation
percussion instruments	musical instruments (woodwinds, brass, piano)
syncopation	chord progressions; harmony
polyrhythms; cross rhythms	form
rigid maintenance of tempo	melody
overlapping call-and-response format	call and response
infrequency of loudness changes	musical literacy
prominent role of percussion	formal concerts
extensive repetition of brief patterns	
solo breaks	
bass ostinatos	
rough timbres; buzz tones	
blue notes	
glissando	
audience participation	
repetition; riffs	
emotional intensity	
double-entendre lyrics	
festivals	



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Jazz in America Student Handout--Lesson Plan III--Jazz Biography 1

LOUIS "SATCHMO" ARMSTRONG, TRUMPET (1901-1971) Biography

(<http://www.redhotjazz.com/louie.html>)

Just as jazz helped open doors in segregated America, it likewise became a means of building understanding during the Cold War. Jazz musicians on international tours became a new breed of diplomats. Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong was one of the most effective. He charmed audiences throughout the world earning him the title "Ambassador Satch."

Consider the following questions as you read the biography of Louis Armstrong:

1. Why was Louis Armstrong considered one of the world's greatest jazz musicians?
2. What influence did Joe "King" Oliver have on Armstrong's career?
3. How did Armstrong's early musical career and his migration to Chicago in 1922 coincide with the spread of jazz?
4. What accounts for Armstrong's popularity during his more than 50 years in the profession? How was he able to remain in the limelight through the shift over time from "New Orleans Jazz" through Swing and big band jazz to Bebop?

Draw inferences from your readings in contemporary American history and discuss how jazz musicians became ambassadors of good will during the era of the Cold War.

Jazz in America Student Handout--Lesson Plan III--Jazz Biography 2

BIX BEIDERBECKE, TRUMPET (1903-1931) Biography

(<http://www.redhotjazz.com/bix.html>)

Trumpeter Leon "Bix" Beiderbecke's short professional career lasted less than 10 years. However in that short span of time he became known as one of the great jazz musicians. Beiderbecke was one of the very few early white musicians who recognized the role African Americans played in the development of jazz. In an interview in 1929, Beiderbecke remarked that jazz reflected the suffering and anguish of African Americans.

Consider the following questions as you read the biography of Bix Beiderbecke:

1. How did the young Beiderbecke's infatuation with music cause conflict with his parents?
2. How did his poor skills in reading music affect his career?
3. What role did Paul Whiteman play in Beiderbecke's career?
4. How did Beiderbecke typify the "Jazz Age?"
5. What inferences can you draw from this biographic sketch about the importance of music in Beiderbecke's life.