

UNIT 8 – THE BLUES

<p>About the unit</p> <p>This unit helps to develop and extend the students understanding of chords. It also looks closely at a particular genre of music and places it in its historical context.</p> <p>During this unit, the students will learn about 7th chords, the blues and its influence on the popular music of today. They will compose their own blues songs, learning about simple word setting and they will improvise using the blues scale.</p> <p>This unit will take approximately 6 lessons.</p> <p>Where the unit fits in</p> <p>This unit follows on from unit 6 – chords and from unit 2 – structure. It also adds another scale, leading on from unit 1 and unit 5. It leads into unit 12 – pop songs and includes historical contexts. It also relates to the Elvis topic in the history GCSE.</p>	<p>EXPECTATIONS:</p> <p>At the end of the unit:</p> <p>All students will have improvised using the blues scale. They will be able to play a simple version of the 12 bar blues chord pattern and they will have participated in a group composition and performance of a blues song. (4)</p> <p>Most students will be able to use G7 and C7 in the 12 bar blues pattern. They will contribute good ideas to their blues song and will perform it effectively. They will make a good attempt to write their ideas down and will show an understanding of where the blues came from and its influence on today’s music. (5)</p> <p>Some students will improvise imaginatively using the blues scale. They will be able to play the 12 bar blues pattern using 7th chords and will compose an effective and convincing blues song. They will be able to place the blues into its historical context and will understand its influence on today’s music. (6)</p> <p>A few students will add extra parts to their blues song – a bass line for example. They will develop their performance of the chords – adding accompaniment patterns or linking passages between choruses. (7+)</p>	<p>PRIOR LEARNING:</p> <p>It is helpful if the students have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed Unit 6 – chords.• Improvised simple ideas• Studied some poetry and understand about rhyming words. <hr/> <p>LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING:</p> <p>Through the activities in this unit, students will be able to understand, use and spell correctly words and phrases relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sounds – 7th chords, ‘blue’ notes, flat, chord pattern, syncopation• Processes – improvisation, call and response, repetition• Context – slavery in America, conditions in the South of the USA around the turn of the 20th century, development of the blues in the 20th century and how it gave birth to rock and roll and rhythm and blues. <p>Speaking and listening: - through the activities students could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the social conditions in the USA in the early 20th century, developing an understanding of the USA today. <p>Reading and writing – through the activities students could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research some of the historical fact related to this topic. <hr/> <p>RESOURCES:</p> <p>Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the workbook: <i>Listening sheets about the blues, chord patterns of varying difficulty, composition worksheets, evaluation sheet.</i>• On the CD: <i>examples of blues – Bessie Smith (from ‘Empress Of The Blues’ - Charly Blues Masterworks)</i>• In the Dept: <i>Examples of Rock and Roll and Rhythm and Blues.</i> <hr/> <p>EXTENSION WORK:</p> <p>Students could go on to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compose songs in related styles such as Rock and Roll.• Trace the developments of the blues into the late 20th century. <hr/> <p>ENRICHMENT:</p> <p>Learning could be enriched by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hearing a live singer singing ‘the blues’
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Students should learn / be taught:	SUGGESTED TEACHING ACTIVITIES:	LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students:	POINTS TO NOTE:
Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is ‘The Blues’? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the Bessie Smith and discuss why the style of the song is called ‘the blues’. Discuss the origins of the blues and get the students to write down the main points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn what ‘the blues’ style/genre is. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good warm up is to sing the register using the blues scale.
Exploration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 12 bar blues chord progression. • The blues scale • The lyric content of blues songs 	<p>What are the different features of the blues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to Bessie Smith again, or another example. Get the students to follow the chords on the sheet. Explain what the chord pattern is. The task is for them to learn the chord pattern. • Explain 7th chords and encourage the students to play the versions with 7th chords. Do the self-evaluation. • Play the students the Empty Bed Blues and discuss the structure of the lyrics and the sound of the melody. Introduce and explain the blues scale and blue notes. • Set the task – students improvise using the blues scale over the chord pattern. Could be a whole class activity or a paired activity depending on the class. • Listen to a blues song – what do the ones we’ve heard all have in common? The sad content of the lyrics. Put the students into pairs or small groups and get them to come up with some appropriate lyrics for a blues song. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to play the 12 bar blues chord progression. • What 7th chords are – some students will learn to play them. • Learn about the blues scale and what it sounds like. • Learn to improvise using the blues scale. • Write their own rhyming lyrics for a blues song. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You could write the chords on the board and point out the changes as they happen. • Could be an opportunity for differentiation – the more able students tackle the 7th chords. • Could be a homework task.
Application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose and perform their own blues songs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the task. Students are to compose and perform their own blues song. It should have at least 3 verses. There is a sheet in the book for them to write down their song in neat. • Perform, record and evaluate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose and perform their own blues song. • Evaluate their work and suggest possible improvements to it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the groups small to ensure that no-one sits on the sidelines.