

## Supporting the *Write Your Own Blues Song* lesson/graphic organizer

### Overview

This graphic organizer would support a lesson in a high school level music appreciation class.

In this activity, students will "compose" a blues song. Students will make creative, musical choices in choosing key, rhythmic accompaniment instrumentation and song structure. They will be supported in writing original lyrics to their "blues" tune.

### Prior Knowledge

- While not part of an instrumental music instruction, or ensemble class. Some kids might know how to play a chordal instrument.
- Song form and structure. Students understand verse, chorus and solo sections.
- Some basic elements of music theory
  - Meter
  - Counting
  - Musical alphabet

### Skills to Introduce/Review

- 12 Bar Blues Form
- Shuffle rhythm pattern
- Common Blues song form and rhyme scheme

### IL Music Standards

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. MU Cr. 1.1 a. Compose and/or improvise melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic ideas for simple melodies and accompaniments for given melodies.

Anchor Standard 3: Revise, refine, and complete artistic work MU Cr. 3.1.I b. Present the final version of a personal composition or arrangement, using musicianship and originality to utilize various compositional techniques and convey expressive intent

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. MU Pr 4.1.I b. Demonstrate or analyze, using music reading skills, how compositional devices of musical works impact and inform prepared or improvised performances.

## Lesson Elements

### **Please choose the key for your song**

Each student, or small group, can choose a key for their song. This section is really for anyone in the group who plays a chordal instrument. They can choose a key based on their experience and ability.

### **Please fill in the chord progression for your song**

This section has multiple purposes. The class can review song form/structure and the I IV V blues chord progression. Students can also review the musical alphabet and assign chords to the Roman Numerals. Each student or group will create a map for performance.

### **Choose your rhythmic backing**

Although not part of an "authentic" blues song this section will allow for class participation. The idea is for students to choose percussion instruments and create a one measure rhythmic loop to accompany the song. Students can practice the blues shuffle rhythm and the teacher can review the idea of a backbeat and which instruments would be appropriate to play on which beat. Students will assign instruments to every beat of the 4 beat measure template.

### **Listen to Sweet Home Chicago**

*Sweet Home Chicago* will be the model that is used for the student composition. Students can familiarize themselves with the audio recording of the song.

### **Use the model of the lyrics to rewrite a verse and chorus**

The idea of this section is to provide students with a scaffolded tool to write lyrics to a song. The students can take the melody, rhythm and rhyme scheme of the original lyrics and rewrite using their own words. This might be an appropriate place to discuss historical themes of blues lyrics and the histories stories of blues artists and their communities.

### **Notate your song structure**

As an extension of this project, students can create their own song structure which can include multiple verses and solos.

Please choose the key for your song

E A D G C

Please fill in the chord progression for your song

I	I	I	I
IV	IV	I	I
V	IV	I	I(V)

Choose your rhythmic backing

Snare	Shaker	Clave	Conga/Djembe	Tambourine	Bass Drum
SN	SH	CL	D/C	TM	BD

Practice your shuffle rhythm.



Choo-ka; choo-ka; choo-ka; choo-ka

Notate your rhythmic pattern

<b>4</b> <b>4</b>	Beat 1	Beat 2	Beat 3	Beat 4
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Listen to Sweet Home Chicago



# Please use the model of the lyrics below to rewrite a verse and chorus

## Chorus

C'mon	baby don't you want to	go	
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C'mon	baby don't you want to	go	Back to the
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same old place	sweet home	Chicago	
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## Verse

One and one is two	Four and four is eight	C'mon baby don't you	make me wait Heid-y
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Hey	baby don't you want to	go	Back to the
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same old place	sweet home	Chicago	
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Notate your song structure

Chorus Intro Verse Solo Outro

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Please choose the key for your song

E **A** D G C

Please fill in the chord progression for your song

I <b>A</b>	I <b>A</b>	I <b>A</b>	I <b>A</b>
IV <b>D</b>	IV <b>D</b>	I <b>A</b>	I <b>A</b>
V <b>E</b>	IV <b>D</b>	I <b>A</b>	I(V) <b>A</b>

Choose your rhythmic backing

Snare  
**SN**

Shaker  
**SH**

Clave  
CL

Conga/Djembe  
D/C

Tambourine  
**TM**

Bass Drum  
**BD**

Practice your shuffle rhythm.



Choo-ka; choo-ka; choo-ka; choo-ka

Notate your rhythmic pattern

**4/4**

<b>SH BD</b> Beat 1	<b>SH TM SN</b> Beat 2	<b>SH</b> Beat 3	<b>SH TM SN</b> Beat 4
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Listen to Sweet Home Chicago



Please use the model of the lyrics below to rewrite a verse and chorus

**Chorus**

C'mon Oh my...	baby don't you want to I never did think I'd	go see	
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C'mon Oh my...	baby don't you want to I never did think I'd	go see	Back to the All the
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same old place people on the road	sweet home drive so close to	Chicago me	
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**Verse**

One and one is two Not looking left or right	Four and four is eight or stopping on the line	C'mon baby don't you driving way too fast	make me wait all of the time	Heid-y
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Hey Oh my...	baby don't you want to I never did think I'd	go see	Back to the All the
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same old place people on the road	sweet home drive so close to	Chicago me	
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Notate your song structure

Chorus Intro Verse Solo Outro

Intro

Verse

Chorus

Verse

Chorus

Solo

Chorus