Title: Textual Analysis of Blues Music: Understanding the Historical Context of the Mississippi Delta and the Experience of the Great Migration

Level: AP United States History – Period 7

Overview/Objective: In this lesson, students will analyze the lyrics of Blues songs. A primary goal of this lesson is to provide an opportunity for students to hone their historical thinking skills. Students will “source” selected Blues songs where they will consider the creator/author, point of view, audience, and type of source. Students will also contextualize the selected Blues songs by connecting the content of these texts to the immediate context of the Mississippi Delta and/or Chicago (during the Great Migration), the entire region of the South, and the nation as a whole.

While this lesson can be taught as part of a high school United States History class and is aligned to the Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, it was designed to connect to the following thematic objectives within the AP United States History Framework:

**CUL-2.0** Explain how artistic, philosophical, and scientific ideas have developed and shaped society and institutions.

**CUL-4.0** Explain how different group identities, including racial, ethnic, class, and regional identities, have emerged and changed over time.

**MIG-2.0** Analyze causes of internal migration and patterns of settlement in what would become the United States, and explain how migration has affected American life.

**GEO-1.0** Explain how geographic and environmental factors shaped the development of various communities, and analyze how competition for and debates over natural resources have affected both interactions among different groups and the development of government policies.

**NAT-4.0** Analyze relationships among different regional, social, ethnic, and racial groups, and explain how these groups’ experiences have related to U.S. national identity.

**WXT-1.0** Explain how different labor systems developed in North America and the United States, and explain their effects on workers’ lives and U.S. society.

I. Hook: Play some Blues music for the students. I suggest using Robert Johnson’s (1936) “Crossroad” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yd60nI4sa9A> <http://www.songlyrics.com/robert-johnson/crossroad-blues-lyrics/>). Instruct the students to describe what they hear and the feelings that the music evokes. Students should be encouraged to describe instruments and techniques they notice (guitar, one singer, percussion, repetition…), the particular qualities of the music (slow, sad…), and the lyrics (focus on everyday life, pain…). Tell the students that this song was written in 1936. Have them brainstorm what historical events are going on at the time. Encourage students to think about the national context of the Great Depression and the New Deal, as well as the regional context of the South and the multiple forms of oppression faced by African Americans. Explain that this lesson will focus on the historical context in which this form of music emerged and explain the significance of influence of Blues music on other music forms, most significantly Rock n’ Roll (Mention the Muddy Waters song title “The Blues had a Baby and They Named it Rock And Roll”).

II. Introduction to the Mississippi Delta:

Give an introduction to the Mississippi Delta in the Post-Reconstruction Era focusing specifically on the geographic, economic, political, and social context. Key ideas that should be emphasized include:

Geography: (You can use a map found at the following link: <http://mwp.olemiss.edu//mll/delta.html>)

* Mississippi River
* Swamp area – Cyprus Trees
* Origins of the name “Delta” – Marketing the Region
* Fertile Land
* Settled 1890’s – “Last Place” – Need for labor to build levees, drain swamps, build roads and railroads
* 1927 Flood

Economic Context:

* Cotton Plantations
* Labor System of Sharecropping
* Mostly white-owned (exceptions include the African American Community of Mound Bayou)

Political Context:

* Power held by whites in local, state, and federal government
* Disenfranchisement of African Americans – Poll Taxes, Literacy Tests, and Grandfather Clauses
* White Terrorism - Lynching

Social Context:

* Jim Crow Segregation
* Diversity – Chinese, Jewish, Italian, Lebanese settlers
* “Bible Belt” – segregated churches
* Migration (Post Flood…)

Ask students why the Mississippi Delta has been called “The Most Southern Place on Earth” and “The South’s South.” Have students read the first three paragraphs of the “Welcome Letter” to the workshop at the following link and discuss:

<http://deltacenterdsu.com/welcome-letter>

III: Overview of the Blues

Give students an overview of Blues Music, specifically the Delta Blues. Key ideas that should be introduced include:

Context:

* Emerged turn of 20th Century – Rural “Deep” South – People moving around for work – sharecropping, sawmills, levee camps, domestic work and movement to the Northern and Southern cities for work
* Musicians flooding into sharecropping region take advantage of case flowing in the Fall – Picked cotton during the day and play at night
* The Plantation – i.e. Dockery Farms – Bluesmen charged admission
* Auditorium – mirrors and lamps
* Juke Joint

Roots and Themes:

* Spirituals
* Emerged from call-and response songs, field Hollers, and work songs (Secular Songs) – Sang of daily life, plowing, picking cotton, laying railroad track, cutting woods
* Themes addressed (Based on Exhibit at the BB Museum <http://bbkingmuseum.org>) included:
	+ Working - “Blues came out of the fields, baby” Sam “Lightening” Hopkins
	+ Suffering – illnesses, natural disasters (droughts and floods), boll-weevils, powerlessness
	+ Leaving – economic hardships, failed romances, oppression
	+ Needing - poverty
* Sang about themselves – strict restrictions of life in the Delta, yet some freedom created with music and lifestyles
* Regional and Local Character – “Delta Blues”

Sounds:

* Acoustic guitar
* Percussion
* Slide

Significant Artists and Links for Biographical Information:

* Charlie Patton – “Father of the Delta Blues” – Dockery Farms – Percussion and Guitar –intensity in singing and playing – dance quality – minimalism- Played flat – “Hawaiian Style” – Broke bottle for slide – 1st recorded –Father Bill Patton had land on Dockery Farms and sharecroppers and logging business – established a circuit of plantations and house parties
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/charley-patton-birthplace>
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/charley-pattons-grave>
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/birthplace-of-the-blues>
* Robert Johnson – The Mythology – The Crossroads – Little Zion Church – learned under “Son” House
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/robert-johnson-birthplace>
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/robert-johnson-gravesite>
* B.B. King – “King of the Blues” – b. 1925 - Family of sharecroppers – Indianola, MS – tractor driver – Beginnings in Gospel– Moved to Memphis - Toured the world - embraced by white audiences beginning in the late 1960’s – “The blues are the Three L’s – living, loving, and hopefully, laughing.”
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/b-b-king-birthplace>
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/kilmichael-b-b-kings-roots>
	+ <http://bbkingmuseum.org>

IV: Textual Analysis of Delta Blues Songs

Using the graphic organizer, model for students how to analyze the lyrics of a Blues song. (More documents (songs) than there is space for analysis on the graphic organizer have been included to allow for greater choice or an opportunity to provide students with different songs to analyze.) Play the song and pass out the lyrics. Perform a close read for students modeling the thinking process used to answer the questions in the graphic organizer. See pp. 6-10 for songs and pp. 14-15 for the graphic organizer

Put students into pairs or small groups and instruct them to analyze the songs together. When they have completed the analysis, the students should complete the follow-up questions. Engage the students in whole class discussion when they have completed the graphic organizer and questions.

IV. The Great Migration Overview (Day 2)

In this part of the lesson, students will use Blues music as a vehicle to explore the Great Migration. Explain to the students, that in the face of the various forms of oppression, many African Americans migrated to Northern cities. The majority of African Americans from the Delta migrated to Chicago. When they migrated they took their culture with them, including the Blues. The Delta Blues transformed in the new context of Chicago.

Provide Students with and overview of the Great Migration. Be sure to focus on the following ideas:

“Push” Factors

* Racial Oppression – Jim Crow, Segregation, Sharecropping
* Economic Setbacks – Boll Weevil
* Agricultural Mechanization – Cotton Picker – Cause or effect of migration?

“Pull” Factors

* Perception of racial equality
* Labor demand ex. industrialization
* Geographic mobility ex. “rambling lifestyle”
* Money, dignity, and excitement

Chicago Context

* “The biggest city in Mississippi”
* Rapid and diverse economic growth – manufacturing and meatpacking
* Bronzeville = Southside Chicago
* Black Institutions – NAACP, Urban League, CORE, Pullman Porters, *Chicago Defender…*
* Chicago Storefront Churches – religious and secular function

V. Textual Analysis of the Blues of the Great Migration

Explain that the Blues artist, Muddy Waters, who came from the Delta personified this experience of the Great Migration and according to John Strait can be considered the “voice of the diaspora.” His music addressed “home” of the Delta, the challenges of the context of Chicago, and empowerment. He is credited with transforming Delta Blues into Chicago Blues.

Provide Students with and biographical overview of Muddy Waters. Be sure to focus on the following ideas:

* Tractor Driver
* Yearning for Escape
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/muddy-waters-birthplace>
	+ <http://msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/muddy-waterss-cabin>
* “Rural” Delta Blues🡪 “urban” Chicago Blues goes Electric/Band Format
* Electric Rhythm - need amplification in new and different context

In pairs or small groups, students should analyze the Blues music of the Great Migration from Muddy Waters and other artists of the diaspora and complete the Graphic Organizer and Follow-up Questions. See pp. 11-13 for the songs and pp. 16-17 for graphic organizer. As a class, discuss the completed graphic organizer and questions when completed.

VI. DBQ Essay

In order to apply and synthesize what they have learned, students will write a DBQ essay that has been modified from a DBQ created by the College Board. Rather than use the documents provided by the College Board, students should use the lyrics from the Blues songs that we analyzed in class. The context has also been expanded to the twentieth century.

(See AP United State History Curriculum Framework for the original question at the following link:

<https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-us-history-course-and-exam-description.pdf> (pp. 136-140.)

DBQ Directions:

In your response you should do the following.

* State a relevant thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
* Support the thesis or a relevant argument with evidence from the documents (Blues songs).
* Supports the thesis or a relevant argument by accounting for historical complexity, relating diverse historical evidence in a cohesive way.
* Focus your analysis of each document (song) on at least one of the following: author’s point of view, author’s purpose, audience, and/or historical context.
* Support your argument with analysis of historical examples outside the documents (songs).
* Connect historical phenomena relevant to your argument to broader events or processes.
* Synthesize the elements into a persuasive essay.

Analyze major change and continuities in the social and economic experiences of African Americans who migrated from the rural South to urban areas in the North during the twentieth century.

Delta Blues Songs

Document 1

“High Water Everywhere” (1929) by Charlie Patton

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=336dDZsU1Eg>

<http://www.songlyrics.com/charley-patton/high-water-everywhere-pt-1-lyrics/>

Well, backwater done rose all around Sumner now,

drove me down the line

Backwater done rose at Sumner,

drove poor Charley down the line

Lord, I'll tell the world the water,

done crept through this town

Lord, the whole round country,

Lord, river has overflowed

Lord, the whole round country,

man, is overflowed

You know I can't stay here,

I'll go where it's high, boy

I would go to the hilly country,

but, they got me barred

Now, look-a here now at Leland

river was risin' high

Look-a here boys around Leland tell me,

river was raisin' high

Boy, it's risin' over there, yeah

I'm gonna move to Greenville

fore I leave, goodbye

Look-a here the water now, Lordy,

Levee broke, rose most everywhere

The water at Greenville and Leland,

Lord, it done rose everywhere

Boy, you can't never stay here

I would go down to Rosedale

but, they tell me there's water there

Now, the water now, mama,

done took Charley's town

Well, they tell me the water,

done took Charley's town

Boy, I'm goin' to Vicksburg

Well, I'm goin' to Vicksburg,

for that high of mine

I am goin' up that water,

where lands don't never flow

Well, I'm goin' over the hill where,

water, oh don't ever flow

Boy, hit Sharkey County and everything was down in Stovall

But, that whole county was leavin',

over that Tallahatchie shore Boy,

went to Tallahatchie and got it over there

Lord, the water done rushed all over,

down old Jackson road

Lord, the water done raised,

over the Jackson road

Boy, it starched my clothes

I'm goin' back to the hilly country,

won't be worried no more

Part II:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2yqMQ0t7yA4>

<http://www.songlyrics.com/charley-patton/high-water-everywhere-pt-2-lyrics/>

Backwater at Blytheville, backed up all around

It was fifty families and children come to sink and drown

The water was rising up at my friend's door

The man said to his women folk Lord we'd better go

The water was risin' got up in my bed

I thought I would take a trip, Lord, out on the big ice sled

Oh, I can hear, Lord, Lord, water upon my door

I couldn't get no boats there, Marion City gone down

So high water was risin' our men sinkin down

It was fifty men and children come to sink and drown

Oh, Lordy, women and grown men drown

I couldn't see nobody home and was no one to be found

Document 2:

“Pea Vine Blues” (1929) by Charlie Patton

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GznTA-uwQh4>

<http://www.songlyrics.com/charley-patton/pea-vine-blues-lyrics/>

I think I heard the Pea Vine when it blowed

I think I heard the Pea Vine when it blowed

It blow just like my rider gettin' on board

Well, the levee sinkin', you know I, baby...

(spoken: Baby, you know I can't stay!)

The levee is sinkin', Lord, you know I cannot...

I'm goin' up the country, mama, in a few more days

Yes, you know it, she know it,

she know you done done me wrong

Yes, you know it, you know it,

you know you done done me wrong

Yes, you know it, you know it,

you know you done done me wrong

Yes, I cried last night and I ain't gonna cry anymore

I cried last night an' I, I ain't gonna cry anymore

'Cause the good book tells

us you've got to reap just what you sow

Stop your way o' livin' an' you won't...

(spoken: You won't have to cry no more, baby!)

Stop your way o' livin' an' you won't have to cry anymore

Stop your way o' livin' an' you won't have to cry anymore

I think I heard the Pea Vine when it blowed

I think I heard Pea Vine when it blowed

She blowed just like she wasn't gonna blow no more

Place in body part

Document 3

“34 Blues” (1934) by Charley Patton

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHdY-NHHArk>

<http://www.songlyrics.com/charley-patton/34-blues-lyrics/>

I ain't gonna tell nobody, '34 have done for me

I ain't gonna tell nobody what, '34 have done for me

Took my roller, I was broke as I could be

They run me from Will Dockery's, Willie Brown, I want your job

They run me from Will Dockery's, Willie Brown, I want your job

(spoken: Buddy, what's the matter?)

I went out and told papa Charley,

"I don't want you hangin' round on my job no more"

Fella, down in the country, it almost make you cry

Fella, down in the country, it almost make you cry

(spoken: My God, children!)

Women and children flaggin' freight trains for rides

Carmen got a little six Buick, big six Chevrolet car

Carmen got a little six Buick, little six Chevrolet car

(spoken: My God, what solid power!)

And it don't do nothin' but, follow behind Holloway's farmer's plow

And it may bring sorrow, Lord, it may bring tears

It may bring sorrow, Lord, and it may bring tears

Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, let me see your brand new year

Document 4

“High Sheriff Blues” (1934) by Charlie Patton

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeihehysuTI>

[https://play.google.com/music/preview/T4yg6dm4oeg7cduotlnu2az6zmu?lyrics=1&utm\_source=google&utm\_medium=search&utm\_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0#](https://play.google.com/music/preview/T4yg6dm4oeg7cduotlnu2az6zmu?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0)

Get in trouble at Belzoni, there ain't no use a-screamin'

And cryin'

Get in trouble in Belzoni, there ain't no use a-screamin'

And cryin'

Mr. Will will take you, back to Belzoni jailhouse flyin'

Le' me tell you folksies, how he treated me

Le' me tell you folksies, how he treated me

An' he put me in a cellar, just as dark as it could be

There I laid one evenin', Mr. Purvis was standin' 'round

There I laid one evenin', Mr. Purvis was standin' 'round

Mr. Purvis told Mr. Will to, let poor Charley down

It takes booze and blues, Lord, to carry me through

Takes booze and blues, Lord, to carry me through

But it did seem like years, in a jailhouse where there is

No boo'

I got up one mornin', feelin' awe, hmm

I got up one mornin', feelin' mighty bad, hmm

An' it might not a-been them Belzoni jail I had

(Blues I had, boys)

While I was in trouble, ain't no use a-screamin'

When I was in prison, it ain't no use a-screamin and

Cryin'

Mr. Purvis the lonliest man could, ease that pain of mine

Document 5

“Mississippi Boweavil Blues” (1929) by Charlie Patton

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU3A44SRAos>

<http://www.songlyrics.com/charley-patton/mississippi-boweavil-blues-lyrics/>

Sees a little boll weevil keeps movin' in the, Lordie!

You can plant your cotton and you won't get a half a bale, Lordie

Bo weevil, bo weevil, where's your native home? Lordie

"A-Louisiana raised in Texas,

Least is where I was bred and born", Lordie

Well, I saw the bo weevil, Lord, a-circle, Lord, in the air, Lordie

The next time I seed him, Lord, he had his family there, Lordie

Bo weevil left Texas, Lord, he bid me "fare ye well", Lordie

(spoken: Where you goin' now?)

I'm goin' down the Mississippi, gonna give Louisiana hell, Lordie

(spoken: How is that, boy?)

Suck all the blossoms and he leave your hedges square, Lordie

The next time I seed you, you know you had your family there, Lordie

Bo weevil meet his wife, "We can sit down on the hill", Lordie

image: http://static.urx.io/units/web/urx-unit-loader.gif

Bo weevil told his wife, "Let's trade this forty3 in", Lordie

Bo weevil told his wife, says, "I believe I may go North", Lordie

(spoken: Hold on, I'm gonna tell all about that)

"Let's leave Louisiana, we can go to Arkansas", Lordie

Well, I saw the bo weevil, Lord a-circle, Lord, in the air, Lordie

Next time I seed him, Lord, he had his family there, Lordie

Bo weevil told the farmer that "I 'tain't got ticket fare", Lordie

Sucks all the blossom and leave your hedges square, Lordie

Bo weevil, bo weevil, where your native home? Lordie

"Most anywhere they raise cotton and corn", Lordie

Bo weevil, bo weevil, "Outta treat me fair", Lordie

The next time I did you had your family there, Lordie

Blues Songs of the Great Migration

Document 6

“I Be’s Troubled” (1941) by Muddy Waters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGNryq08kU>

[https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tyzetr6nr5bqlcm7lafobolnq4u?lyrics=1&utm\_source=google&utm\_medium=search&utm\_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0#](https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tyzetr6nr5bqlcm7lafobolnq4u?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0)

Well if I feel tomorrow, like I feel today

I'm gonna pack my suitcase, and make my getaway

Lord I'm troubled, I'm all worried in mind

And I'm never bein' satisfied, and I just can't keep from cryin'

Yeah, I know my little ol' baby, she gonna jump and shout

That ol' train be late girl, and I come walkin' out

Lord I'm troubled, I'm all worried in mind

Yeah and I'm never bein' satisfied, and I just can't keep from cryin'

Yeah, I know somebody, who' been talkin' to you

I don't need no telling, girl, I can watch the way you do

And I be troubled, I be all worried in mind

Yeah and I'm never bein' satisfied, and I just can't keep from cryin'

Yeah, now goodbye baby

Got no more to say

Just like I been tellin' you, girl, you're gonna have to leave my way

Lord I'm troubled, I'm all worried in mind

Yeah and I'm never bein' satisfied, and I just can't keep from cryin'

Yeah my baby she quit me, seem like mama was dead

I got real worried gal, and she drove it to my head

I be's troubled, I be all worried in mind

Yeah and I'm never bein' satisfied, and I just can't keep from cryin'

Document 7

“My Home’s in the Delta” (1964) by Muddy Waters

[https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tubogq2hfr2phcp6bzllikkgyem?lyrics=1&utm\_source=google&utm\_medium=search&utm\_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0#](https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tubogq2hfr2phcp6bzllikkgyem?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGUxRvMyoo0>

Well, my home's in the delta

Way out on that farmer's road

Now you know I'm leaving Chicago

And people, I sure do hate to go

Now you know I'm leaving here in the morning

Won't be back no more

Well, I know my little baby

This girl don't know what a shape I'm in

You know I haven't had no lovin'

Boy, you know, in God-knows-when

Now you know I just been sittin' here thinkin'

Wondering where in the world she benn

Look out

Well, I feel like cryin'

But you know, the tears won't come down

I feel like cryin'

But you know, the tears won't come down

Ah, you know I got a funny feelin'

I'm gonna have to leave your town

Hm-mm-mm have mercy

Hm-mm-mm

Ah, you know I just been sittin' here thinkin'

Wondering where in the world she been

Document 8

“When do I get to be called a man?” (1955) by Big Bill Broonzy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBKhqvam8Yg>

<http://www.oldielyrics.com/lyrics/big_bill_broonzy/i_wonder_when_ill_get_to_be_called_a_man.html>

I was never called a man, and now I'm fifty-three

I wonder when,

I wonder when,

I wonder when will I get to be called a man

Do I have to wait till I get ninety-three?

When Uncle Sam called me, I know'ed I'd be called a real McCoy

But I got none of this, they just called me soldier boy

I wonder when,

I wonder when,

I wonder when will I get to be called a man

Do I have to wait till I get ninety-three?

When I got back from overseas, that night we had a ball

Next day I met the old boss, he said "Boy get you some overalls"

I wonder when,

I wonder when,

I wonder when will I get to be called a man

Do I have to wait till I get ninety-three?

I've worked on the levee camps, and axer gangs too

Black man's a boy, don't care what he can do

I wonder when,

I wonder when,

I wonder when will I get to be called a man

Do I have to wait till I get ninety-three?

They said I was uneducated, my clothes were dirty and torn

Now I've got a little education, but I'm still a boy right on

I wonder when,

I wonder when,

I wonder when will I get to be called a man

Do I have to wait till I get ninety-three?

Document 9

“Mannish Boy” (1955) (excerpts only) by Muddy Waters

[https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tosunrp5l7e3yvk7gxgdcizbyzu?lyrics=1&utm\_source=google&utm\_medium=search&utm\_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0#](https://play.google.com/music/preview/Tosunrp5l7e3yvk7gxgdcizbyzu?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics&u=0)

Ooooooh, yeah, ooh, yeah

Everythin', everythin', everythin's gonna be alright this mornin'

Ooh yeah, whoaw

Now when I was a young boy, at the age of five

My mother said I was, gonna be the greatest man alive

But now I'm a man, way past 21

Want you to believe me baby,

I had lot's of fun

I'm a man

I spell mmm, aaa child, nnn

That represents man

No B, O child, Y….

I'm a man…

I'm a rollin' stone

…

Yeah

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Delta Blues Textual Analysis | Document #\_\_\_ | Document #\_\_\_ | Document #\_\_\_ |
| 1. What does this document (song) reveal about the economic, political, and/or social context of the Mississippi Delta? In your response, provide specific textual to evidence (words or phrases) to explain your answer. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? |  |  |  |
| 2. Who is the source of this document (song)? What can you infer about this individual’s perspective? How do you know?How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective? |  |  |  |

Follow-up Questions:

Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Be sure to support all of the responses with specific textual evidence when relevant.

3. What common themes and ideas are seen across all of the songs? What are some of the differences?

4. What are the occasion(s) in which these songs might be played? Who is the intended audience? How might that impact the content of these songs?

5. What do these songs reveal about the South and America beyond the Delta during the early twentieth century?

6. What are the limitations and challenges of using the lyrics of Blues music as a primary source? What other types of historical evidence would be necessary to better understand the context in which this music is written?

7. To what extent is the Blues similar to and different from the spirituals sung by slaves that we studied earlier in the year? How are the contexts in which these two forms of music emerged similar and different?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Blues of the Great Migration Textual Analysis | Document #\_\_\_\_ | Document #\_\_\_\_ | Document #\_\_\_\_ |
| 1. What does this document (song) reveal about the economic, political, and/or social context of the Chicago? In your response, provide specific textual to evidence (words or phrases) to explain your answer. How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? |  |  |  |
| 2. Who is the source of this document (song)? What can you infer about this individual’s perspective? How do you know?How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective? |  |  |  |

Follow-up Questions:

Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Be sure to support all of the responses with specific textual evidence when relevant.

3. What do these songs reveal about the Great Migration and the experiences of African Americans in Northern cities?

4. To what extent is the Blues similar to and different from contemporary music? Be sure to give specific examples of forms of music, artists, and songs to support your answer. How are the contexts in which these two forms of music emerged similar and different?

Sources:

In addition to the links embedded in the lesson plan, the content of this lesson was very much a synthesis of my notes on the presentations by the following individuals:

Lee Aylward (7/11/16)

Charles Reagan Wilson (7/12/16)

Bill Abel (7/12/16)

Edgar Smith (7/13/16)

David Evans (7/13/16)

John Strait (7/16/16)