

Delta State University

NEH Landmarks Workshop
The Most Southern Place on Earth

Topic: Sense of Place: References to the rural South in Chicago blues

Grade Level: High School

I. Learner Outcomes

A. Students will:

1. Recognize the geography of the Great Migration
2. Recognize basic blues forms
3. Recognize characteristics of rural life in the early 20th century
4. Define and recognize metaphor
5. Recognize influence of the South on the lyrical content of Chicago blues

II. Procedures

A. Introduction: Day One

1. Define sense of place.
2. Pass out lyrics of songs by a local musician that reflect a sense of place for the community in which the students live. For example, New Jersey students could listen to Bruce Springsteen. Play the songs.
3. List on an overhead themes in the music that students find relating to their sense of place.
4. Define metaphor and list on the overhead any that the students identify in the songs. Discuss their relevance to sense of place.

B. Learning: Day Two

1. Tell students they will next listen to songs composed in Chicago by blues performers who had migrated to the city from the Mississippi Delta.
2. Show the film "Goin' to Chicago" about the Great Migration from the Delta to Chicago.

C. Learning: Days Three and Four

1. Discuss problems of urban life for African-Americans depicted in the film. List on an overhead.
2. Pass out blues lyrics. Play the class songs by Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, and Willie Dixon.
3. First, analyze the songs for themes, images and metaphors dealing with problems unique to urban life. List on an overhead.

4. Point out that other themes, images, and metaphors reflect the Southern roots of the musicians.
5. Discuss the problems encountered by African-Americans in the South that motivated the Great Migration. List on an overhead.
6. In small groups, have students generate a list of images and metaphors reflecting the Southern origins of the musicians. Discuss their findings with the class at large.
7. Discuss the role of sense of place in personal identity.

III. Cumulation, Day Five: Writing Assignment

- A. Pass out handout on basic blues forms (AAB pattern, etc.)
- B. Analyze structure of blues songs.
- C. Assign original song or poem. Either:
 1. Using blues song form as a model, write a song or poem reflecting your feelings about moving from one place to another (school, town, state, country, etc.). The imagery and metaphors of the song/poem should refer to both places. Or:
 2. Write a song or poem about "moving" from one situation to another, such as changing boyfriends/girlfriends, levels in school, sports, etc. Your song/poem should contain imagery and metaphors reflecting your feelings about this change.

IV. Materials

- A. "Goin' to Chicago." Directed by George King. U. of Mississippi. 1994.
- B. Songs of Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and a local musician
- C. Handouts of lyrics
- D. Handout on basic blues patterns

V. Evaluation: Rubric

NAME:		PERIOD:	DATE:
Blues Song Rubric			
Criteria	5-4	3-2	1-0
English Skills: Frag/ROS/CU X1	Writer includes absolutely NO fragments, run-on sentences, or incorrect comma usage. Writer effectively utilizes semi-colons and colons.		Writer includes fragments, run-on sentences, or incorrect comma usage. Writer does not effectively utilize semi-colons and colons.
English Skills: SVA, PAA X1	Writer includes absolutely NO disagreeing subject and verbs and pronoun-antecedent agreement.		Writer includes disagreeing subjects and verbs and pronouns and antecedents.
Prepositions X1	Writer includes absolutely NO inappropriate prepositions.		Writer includes 1 or more inappropriate prepositions

Blues Form X2	Writer effectively uses a standard blues form such as AAB.	Writer uses a standard blues form such as AAB.	Writer does not consistently use a standard blues form such as AAB.
Imagery X2	Writer creates vivid imagery to reflect two places or situations.	Writer uses imagery to reflect two places or situations.	Writer uses little or no imagery.
Metaphor X2	Writer uses at least one vivid metaphor for each place or situation.	Writer uses at least one metaphor for each place or situation.	Writer does not use at least one metaphor for each place or situation.
Tone/Connotation X2	Writer creates a clear and consistent tone to represent feelings for each place or situation.	Writer creates a consistent tone to represent feelings for each place or situation.	Writer does not create a clear and consistent tone to represent feelings for each place or situation.
Using Language X2	Writer effectively uses audience-appropriate and concise vocabulary, grammar, and expression in order to enhance message and fulfill purpose of essay.	Writer somewhat uses audience-appropriate and concise vocabulary, grammar, and expression in order to enhance message and fulfill purpose of essay.	Writer does not use audience-appropriate and concise vocabulary, grammar, and expression in order to enhance message and fulfill purpose of essay.
SUBTOTAL /65	LATE	FINAL SCORE /	GRADE: