

Delta State University
NEH Landmarks Workshop
"The Most Southern Place on Earth"
July 11 - 17, 2010

Submitted by Carole D. LaBonte'
E-Mail: prof.labonte3@gmail.com

Theme: The Delta Blues Along Highway 61 in Mississippi, also known as "The Blues Highway" and "Freedom Road"

Topic: "Falling in Love With the Blues"

Grade Level: 12th but can be modified to fit grades 9 - 11.

Overarching questions: The Blues, what is it? How does this form of music reflect the African American experience of those living in the Delta?

Text: The Blues from the Delta by William Ferris, The History of the Blues: the roots, the music, the people by F. Davis

Article " *Traveling the Blues Highway*", National Geographic Magazine

Supplemental Material : Current Map, Various Blues CDs, DVDs, Webcam, Dictionary, or [Dictionary.com](#)

[The Blues Markers](#)

Learning Objectives

To explain the Delta Blues

To recognize the structure and lyrics of the "Blues" lyrics

To clarify why Highway 61 is known as "The Blues Highway" and "Freedom Road"

To compare and contrast the musical elements and styles of the Delta Blues

To explain ways in which the Delta Blues represent the culture of the era and the places in which it was created

Goals

Students will locate Mississippi and Highway 61 on the map.

Students will explain their understanding of the Blues.

Students will listen to and respond to all information shared about the Blues.

Students will compose their own Blues lyrics.

Students will understand the roles and functions, and places of Blues and the Blues musicians in cultures, times, and places.

Students will understand how Highway 61 came to also be known as "Freedom Road".

Learning Procedures

INTRODUCTION

Using the lyrics from the song "Walking in Memphis", students will read the lyrics displayed on the screen and then give their interpretation of the lyrics.

"Put on my blue suede shoes

And I boarded the plane

Touched down in the land of the Delta Blue

In the Middle of the pouring rain.

Then I'm walking in Memphis
Walking with my feet 10 feet off of Beale.
Walking in Memphis, But do I really feel the way I feel"?

Students will share interpretations. Why Memphis? Why Freedom Road?

THROUGHOUT THIS LESSON UNTIL THE CULMINATING PROCEDURE, STUDENTS AND TEACHER WILL READ THE BIOGRAPHIES OF VARIOUS MUSICIANS AND FOLLOW THEIR LIVES FROM ITS APPEARANCE ON THE HIGHWAY 61 UNTIL ITS END.

Based on what has been learned from reading the biographies, each student will choose a favorite artist and create a metaphor to describe the artist in 50-100 words.

For further study, students will make a timeline of a Delta Blues Artist of interest, tracing his life along the Blues Highway. He will also construct a timeline which will trace the progression of highway 61 to freedom.

Throughout the course, students will listen to the recordings of various artists and use the Socratic method of discussion as an assessment.

Students will create their own Blues and perform it for the class. A Power Point may be created by those individuals who are too shy to perform in front of the class.