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Musical Harlem

How is jazz music reflective of the Harlem Renaissance?

Grades: 3-5 | **Subject:** Music | **Secondary Subject:** English & Literature

Summary

In this **3-5 lesson**, students will learn about the Harlem Renaissance and create original jazz artwork. They will listen to audio samples, analyze elements of jazz, research musicians, and learn how jazz became a unifier between community and culture.

Learning Objectives

Research and gather historical information about the Harlem Renaissance and the evolution of jazz.

Compare different types of jazz and jazz musicians.

Identify jazz terminology and concepts.

Analyze different musical sounds and instruments to understand how music may be used to express ideas and emotions.

Create original artwork incorporating color, line, and shape as visual representations of the technique and/or emotions found in jazz.

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Standards Alignment

National Core Arts Standards

- VA:Cr2.1.5a
  Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice
- MU:Pr4.2.5
  Explain how context (such as social, cultural, and historical) informs performances.
- MU:Pr4.2.4a
  Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, and form) in music selected for performance.

NATIONALCORE ARTSSTANDARDS

https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/content/national-core-arts-standards

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State Standards

- ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8
  Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2
  Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE

http://www.corestandards.org/

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Background & Materials

Recommended Materials

- 1:1 computer or device, headphones (optional), drawing paper or digital drawing software, drawing pencils/pens, colored construction paper, Harlem Map, Tour Harlem Landmarks, Slide: Nightclub Tour, Instrument Spotter's Guide

- **Audio**: Black and Tan Fantasy, Mood Indigo, Minnie the Moocher, Harlem Holiday, Weepin Willow Blues, CLIP 1, CLIP2, CLIP 3

Teacher Background

- Teachers should have a basic understanding of jazz music and the Harlem Renaissance. Familiarity with Bessie Smith, Cab Calloway, and Duke Ellington would also be helpful.

Student Prerequisites

- Students should be familiar with the Harlem Renaissance (the era, the people involved, the influences), different styles of music (especially jazz), and instruments and their sounds.

Accessibility Notes

- Modify handouts and give preferential seating for visual presentations. Allow extra time for task completion.

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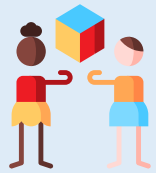
Instruction

Engage



1. **Play Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy."**

2. **Have the students describe what they heard.** *Was the music fast, upbeat, fun, and/or melodic?* Ask students to "turn and talk" to a peer and share how the music made them feel. Write student responses on chart paper or an interactive board. Write the word "Jazz" at the top of the chart paper or interactive board and explain to students that they were listening to jazz music.

3. **Tell students that jazz is a type of music that largely originated from African American communities in New Orleans, Louisiana, in the late 19th/early 20th century.** Jazz was a means of self-expression that stemmed from African musical heritages (especially West African musical traditions), blended with other musical influences (i.e., the blues, brass band music, and classical music), and evolved into different styles (New Orleans jazz compared with Chicago jazz, for example). Jazz's popularity spread across the United States, including its major impact in African American communities in New York, and around the world.

4. **Ask students about a time when music played a major role in their own lives.** Share some of your own experiences with them like a wedding day song or a song from a favorite trip. *Ask students: How did the song make you feel in the moment?*

Build

1. **Explain to the students that in the early 1920s many African American artists, writers, musicians, and performers lived in a neighborhood in New York City called Harlem. This vibrant area was the central location for the cultural movement known as the Harlem Renaissance.** Add the words "Harlem Renaissance" to the chart. Continue the discussion by explaining that a huge migration to the North from the South after World War I brought African Americans of all ages and walks of life to the thriving New York City neighborhood called Harlem.

2. **View the Harlem Map and take a Tour of Harlem.** Have a class discussion about the location of Harlem.

3. **Tell students that jazz was a new type of music in the 1920s and 1930s.** It became very popular amongst musicians in Harlem. Explain that a number of American cities like New Orleans and Chicago had rich jazz scenes, but this lesson will focus on artists who were famous in Harlem.

4. ***Ask students: Where do you think people went to listen to jazz?*** (Examples can include jazz clubs, music clubs, and concert halls.) Explain that there were many popular places where jazz was played. Then show students the Slide: Nightclub Tour. Some important landmarks to view include the Apollo Theater, The Cotton Club, Lennox Lounge, and the Savoy Ballroom.

5. **Tell students they are going to talk about the instruments used in jazz bands.** Have the students listen to Duke Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy" again. Ask students to name the instruments they hear (trumpet, piano, saxophone, drums). Write their answers on chart paper or an interactive board.

6. **Explain that there are many instruments used in jazz bands.** Each instrument has its own important role in communicating mood, lending to the tempo (beat), supplying melody, etc.

7. **Use the "Instrument Spotter's Guide" to help students determine what these instruments look and sound like.** If you have access to the instruments from your school's band or orchestra program, have them available for students to handle and play. If any of your students study these instruments, invite them to come into the classroom and perform for the rest of the class.

Apply

1. **Play "Mood Indigo" by Duke Ellington.** Brainstorm with students what they feel is the "mood" of the music. Introduce mood as an expression of feelings about a situation that can take many forms in art and music *(i.e., happy, excited, sad, nervous, etc.)*. *Ask students: What is the mood of the music? How did it make you feel? Did you like the music? Why or why not?*

2. **Play "Minnie the Moocher" by Cab Calloway.** *Ask students: How does it make you feel? How would you describe the mood of the music? When you visualize the music, what do you see?*

3. **Tell students they will be "drawing" the music.** Replay "Mood Indigo." Explain to students that they will create artwork that reflects the mood of a jazz selection they've heard by selecting different types of materials and using them in different ways. Have the students use both realistic forms, like the actual shape of an instrument they hear being played, as well as abstract forms, like swirls, blocks of color, zig-zag lines, etc.

4. **You can demonstrate by cutting out the shape of a guitar or trumpet from a piece of paper and gluing it onto another sheet of paper.** Once applied, paint around the instrument with particular colors, lines, or forms to reflect a particular mood.

5. **Have the students present their artwork to the class and explain why they chose certain colors, lines, and/or shapes.**

Reflect

1. **Have students listen to an audio clip from each of the three musicians:** Calloway (CLIP 1), Smith (CLIP 2), and Ellington (CLIP 3). *Ask students: Which artist do you think is singing or composing?* Discuss with students the differences between the musicians and their styles.
2. **Assess students' knowledge of jazz music styles and musicians associated with the Harlem Renaissance.** Display images of Bessie Smith, Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington, and have students respond to the following writing prompt: *How can music be used as a tool to express ideas and emotions? How is the Harlem Renaissance reflected through jazz music?*

Extend

1. **Create a class size "Interactive Word Wall."** Divide students into groups and assign each group terms to define from the following list: *rhythm, drum, saxophone, mood, jazz, communication, melody, tempo, blues, jam session, improvisation, set, Ella Fitzgerald, Cab Calloway, and Duke Ellington*. The "Word Wall" is slowly built up as groups decide when their definitions are correctly defined and add them to the wall.

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Credits

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"*Musical Harlem*"

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