

# Warm-up Activity: Jazz

- 1) Copy the following statements about jazz. If you agree with the statement, place a positive symbol (+) next to the number; if you disagree with the statement, place a negative symbol (-) next to the numbered statement.
  - Jazz is noise.
  - Jazz is music that's always different.
  - Jazz is an American art form.
  - Jazz is revolutionary.
  - Jazz is the same as bebop, hip-hop, and the blues.
  - Jazz is new and old.
- 2) Now, Go to <http://www.pbs.org/jazz/lounge/>. What are the basic elements of a jazz song? List and describe them (Hint: Look at "Music 101").
- 3) List and describe several different styles of jazz music from the website!
- 4) Now, are you ready to work in groups to create your own song? What elements, style and themes of the 1920's do you plan to use for your song?

# Lesson: Jazz Talk

## Objective:

Students will analyze work songs, spirituals, blues, and gospel songs in order to develop an appreciation for the origins of jazz music. They will also examine works of poetry from African American artists and create their own poems. After completing this activity, students should be able to describe the impact of African American songs and writings on American culture.

1. Listen carefully to the music and the people who made it. Choose TWO songs with lyrics and write down the titles. Examine the words and listen to the way these songs were sung. What are your impressions of the moods and images represented in the music?
  2. Select and read the poetry of TWO African American writers. Write down the titles. Read the poems aloud and listen for the rhythm and tone. Is it possible to put these words to song? What is the attitude of the poet? What emotions do you hear and feel as you hear the poem?
  3. Create your own work of poetry. Choose from one of the following styles:
    - Narrative – the speaker is the poet
    - Dramatic – the speaker is clearly someone other than the poet
    - Lyric – writers express their thoughts and feelings about a subject in a brief but musical wayYou may choose to write a poem from the standpoint of a sharecropper in the south or a youth on his/her way to Chicago. Another possibility is the use of personification (e.g., write a poem about what it's like to be a jazz instrument). Your poetic style might be to write about a landscape or city. Yet another choice might be to write a credo as a poem.
- \*Please see "Jazz Talk Poetry" extension for further directions and requirements for the poem...**
4. Create your own jazz-inspired song to be performed in front of the class!!! The lyrics must be your own but the background music can either be student-created or borrowed from another jazz artist of the 1920's! The lyrics must reflect themes of African-American culture. You can use a free music creation software like Garage band or Audacity. 45 SEC long!

# **Lesson: Jazz Talk Poetry Extension...**

## **"Dreams"**

**By Langston Hughes**

**Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.  
Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.**

**Directions for poem - Write one paragraph about a dream you have for your life. In the paragraph, you should include steps that you are taking to achieve your dream. After you write the paragraph, you are going to create a seven line poem about your dream following the same rhyming pattern of Hughes' poem.**

# The Negro Speaks of Rivers

by Langston Hughes



I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the  
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.  
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.  
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.  
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln  
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy  
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:  
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

**EXAMPLES:**  
**Let's examine this**  
**Langston Hughes**  
**poem, as the author**  
**reads it!**

Website link:

[http://www.oets.org/vi  
ewmedia.php/prmM  
ID/15722](http://www.oets.org/vi<br/>ewmedia.php/prmM<br/>ID/15722)



Langston Hughes –

“I, too, sing America”

I, too, sing America.  
I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed -  
I, too, am America.

- Langston Hughes, 1925

**Task: What is Langston Hughes' dream in his poem  
“I, too, sing America”?**

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
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"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed -

I, too, am America.

- Langston Hughes, 1925

"Harlem"

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore -  
And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over -  
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?*

- Langston Hughes, 1951

**More poems  
to analyze!**

# Here's some artists and websites:

## Louis Armstrong

<http://www.time.com/time/time100/artists/profile/armstrong.html>

[http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist\\_id\\_armstrong\\_louis.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_armstrong_louis.htm)

<http://www.redhotjazz.com/louie.html>

## Duke Ellington

<http://museum.media.org/duke/essence/index.html>

<http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Harlem/text/ellington.html>

## Bessie Smith

[http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist\\_id\\_smith\\_bessie.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_smith_bessie.htm)

<http://bluesnet.hub.org/readings/bessie.html>

<http://www.rockhall.com/hof/inductee.asp?id=190>

## Benny Goodman

<http://www.redhotjazz.com/goodman.html>

[http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist\\_id\\_goodman\\_benny.htm](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/biography/artist_id_goodman_benny.htm)

## George Gershwin

<http://www.gershwin.com/>

[http://www.songwritershalloffame.org/exhibit\\_home\\_page.asp?exhibitId=70](http://www.songwritershalloffame.org/exhibit_home_page.asp?exhibitId=70)

## F. Scott Fitzgerald

<http://www.sc.edu/fitzgerald/index.html>

<http://www.lawlessdecade.net/25-1.htm>

<http://www.fitzgeraldsociety.org/>

## Langston Hughes

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/writers/hughes>

<http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/83>