

## Jazz from A to Z

*Lesson Plan- Coltrane's "Alabama" & The Birmingham Bombing  
Dobson High School*

### *Common Core Standards for Reading, Writing, or Speaking and Listening*

**CCR. 7.** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.\*

**11-12.RH.7.** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**CCR. 8.** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

**11-12.RH.8.** Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

**CCR. 9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

**11-12.RH.9.** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

**CCR. 9.** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**11-12.WHST.9.** Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### *Arizona Social Studies Standards*

**S1C1 PO 5** Evaluate primary and secondary sources for:

- authors' main points
- purpose and perspective
- facts vs. opinions
- different points of view on the same historical event (e.g., Geography Concept 6 – geographical perspective can be different from economic perspective)
- credibility and validity

**S1C1 PO 6** Apply the skills of historical analysis to current social, political, geographic, and economic issues facing the world.

**S1C1 PO 7** Compare present events with past events:

- cause and effect
- change over time
- different points of view

**S1C10 PO 1** Describe current events using information from class discussions and various resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, television, Internet, books, maps).

**S1C10 PO 2** Identify the connection between current and historical events and issues using information from class discussions and various resources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, television, Internet, books, maps).

**S1C9-PO3:** Describe aspects of post World War II American society:

c. protest movements (e.g., anti-war, women's rights (Betty Friedan), civil rights, farm workers, César Chavez, American Indian Movement)

**S1C9-PO2:** Describe aspects of American post-World War II domestic policy:

b. Civil Rights (e.g., Birmingham, 1964 Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, Constitutional Amendments, Montgomery Bus Boycott, Little Rock Nine, Sit-ins, Freedom Rides, marches on Washington)

c. Supreme Court Decisions (e.g., the Warren and Burger Courts, Brown v. Board of Education)

### **Overview (Brief description of lesson):**

Students will use a variety of sources (music, video, readings) to interpret (and describe the impact of) the events of 1963, specifically the bombing of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church & John Coltrane's song "Alabama". Students will analyze and discuss the various sources and relate them to the overall goals and efforts of the Civil Rights movement and its leaders. Students will also use music to show how art reflects life.

### **Essential Question(s):**

- What is the relationship between music and its content inspiration(context in United States History)? How does that explanation compare to looking at art as its own individual/unique piece?
- How did the events of 1963 alter/change the efforts of the Civil Rights movement?
- How is music a "cultural mirror" into history? How does music impact society in a time of change? How does music express the feelings and emotions of a time?

### **Key Vocabulary:**

- Possible jazz (music) vocabulary: Non-music centered students (but all will have access) will receive a packet of selected vocabulary words from the NEA Jazz Glossary (<http://www.neajazzintheschools.org/lesson4/glossary.php?uv=s>) that specifically pertain to Coltrane's "Alabama"
- Civil Rights vocabulary: TBD

### **Lesson Objective(s):**

- The students will be able to identify key figures and events during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's (John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., Eugene "Bull" Connor, March in Birmingham, MLK Letter from

Birmingham Jail, John Coltrane, Brown v. Board of Education (50's), 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church Bombing)

- The students will be able to explain the relationship between art and history, as well, as be able to analyze/interpret art on its own merit, without the context of other events
- The students will be able to explain how the Civil Rights movement had brought about (or not brought about) change in 1963. They will be able to identify how the events of 1963 created/encouraged change.
- The students will be able to compare John Coltrane's music and expression/protest to other artists throughout time.

### Procedure to Teach the Lesson:

#### Beginning (set) - Day 1

- First, students will listen to Coltrane's "Alabama" (lights turned off, only the music to create a mood and allow students to "feel" the music)- Sheet music for "Alabama" will be provided as well
- As the music is playing, the students will write down, on a sheet of paper, what comes to their mind as they are listening to music (any feelings, emotions, images, etc.). They are listening to the music as art- no historic backdrop, just the feelings and emotions of the song.
- After the song is over, a brief discussion will take place to allow the students to express their beliefs, identify aspects of the music.
- Next, students will be asked to use the song in the context of the time. What stories, images, historic examples (that we have talked about from the 1950's & 60's) come to mind when is song is playing (song will be played again in the back ground).

#### Middle Day 1/Day 2

- Students will then be introduced to the title, artist and intention of the song
- Before the specific events of the bombing is given, students will provide a quick review of the March in Birmingham and police brutality earlier in 1963, Letter from Birmingham Jail (from the lesson from the day before).
- John F. Kennedy's Civil Rights speech will then be either shown (through YouTube video) or read (through transcript reading). Students will discuss President Kennedy's expectations and compare to the events in the immediate aftermath
- Next will be the detailed events of the bombing at the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church (through powerpoint/lecture/discussion)
- Homework after Day 1- *Read Martin Luther King Jr.'s Eulogy for the Martyred Children.*

- Day 2- Go over the Eulogy, go into detail about Coltrane and the meaning/intentions of the song "Alabama". Students will then look back at their interpretations of the song from the day before. Discussion about music as art compared to music as a "cultural mirror" with history.
- Students will then be told how "Alabama" inspired other artists to create their own interpretations (much like King's Eulogy inspired Coltrane). Poems from various artists will be around the room for students to analyze and compare to the music and events

### **End (closure) - Day 2**

- Students will write a quick paragraph about the relationship between art and history and how that compares to looking at art as a stand alone piece ...as well as how the Civil Rights has changed/not changed by 1963
- Students will then be introduced to other musicians who took a political stand like Coltrane - Examples: Bob Dylan, Public Enemy, Rage Against the Machine, Greenday

### **Assessment:**

- Quick write paragraph about the music and history
- Optional assignment #1 (extra credit maybe)- Students will choose another Jazz song from the time (artist of their choosing) , and by using the emotions/feelings of the song, create a slideshow of images that they feel go along with the mood and message of the music
- Optional assignment #2 Students choose another artist/group who wrote music to protest, then play the song and discuss with the class- what they were protesting/hoping to accomplish with the music
- Optional assignment #3 Students create another piece of art for the Civil Rights movement- write a poem, create a painting/drawing, write their own score/music piece about an event

### **Sources of Information:**

- NEA Jazz In the Schools - Lesson 4: From the New Frontier to the New Millennium  
<http://www.neajazzintheschools.org/lesson4/index.php?uv=s>
- Birmingham Civil Rights Institute- <http://www.bcri.org/index.html>
- National Civil Rights Museum <http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/>
- International Civil Rights Center and Museum  
<http://www.sitinmovement.org/>
- John F. Kennedy Presidential Library Archives:  
<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/Historic-Speeches.aspx>
- Modern American Poetry: About the 1963 Birmingham Bombing  
[http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m\\_r/randall/birmingham.](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/randall/birmingham.)

- [htm](#) (includes news stories from various outlets, speeches, short stories, poems and links to other sources)
- National Park Service- Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement: “We Shall Overcome” <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/>
  - NPR- 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church Bombing <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1431932>
  - Jazz Profiles on NPR- John Coltrane - [http://www.npr.org/programs/jazzprofiles/archive/coltrane\\_2.html](http://www.npr.org/programs/jazzprofiles/archive/coltrane_2.html)
  - YouTube videos/news of the bombing <http://youtube.com>
  - Pictures (from my personal collection) of Birmingham, the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Church, etc.

### Materials Needed:

- Prior Knowledge (before the lesson)- Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter From Birmingham Jail”, John F. Kennedy’s Civil Rights Speech June 11, 1963
- Sheet music of Coltrane’s “Alabama”, Music (computer or other recorder needed)
- Martin Luther King Jr.’s Eulogy for the Martyred Children in Alabama - September 18, 1963
- Poems: “Ballad of Birmingham” - Dudley Randell; “Birmingham Sunday” - Langston Hughes; “Birmingham 1963” - Raymond Patterson; “How to Change the USA” - Harry Edwards; “Here Where Coltrane Is” - Michael Harper
- Short Story: “The Day the Children Died” - Kyle Smith and Gail Cameron (appeared in People Magazine)
- Primary Source Analysis sheet (for music, poetry, readings)