

Listen What I Gotta Say: Women in the Blues

*A Smithsonian Folkways Music Pathway for
students in 6th–8th Grade*



Teacher's Guide

Lesson Hub 2:

Before the Blues: From Africa to the United States

Lesson Overview

The question to consider throughout this Lesson Hub is, *what West African stylistic characteristics can you hear in blues music?*

To trace the roots of blues music, we must go back several centuries to 1619, when one of the most well-known ships carrying enslaved people as cargo landed in Jamestown. Then a British settlement, this land eventually developed into Virginia, which became part of the United States. For many years, people from Africa were forcefully entrapped and enslaved for their labor in the Americas.

Away from their homeland and their families, these people began to blend elements of their African cultural heritage with sounds and traditions they encountered in the “New World.” Over time, new sounds and musical styles emerged, which pulled heavily from West African music aesthetics and were tied to the everyday experiences of its creators and performers.

Field hollers (melodies sung back and forth as people worked in fields) provided enslaved Africans with a way to communicate with each other and maintain a feeling of community. One of the oldest African American performance traditions still alive in North America today is the **ring shout**: A song form that features call and response singing, syncopated rhythm patterns (played with sticks and hand claps) and dance. Ring shouts developed in a religious context—after Sunday worship services and on holidays (often the only times when enslaved people were free to express themselves).

In Lesson Hub 2, students will listen for connections between various West African music traditions and blues music. They will also have opportunities to actively engage (through attentive and engaged listening activities) with two early precursors to the blues: field hollers and ring shouts.

In This Guide:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Lesson Overview | 1 |
| Lesson Paths and Student Objectives | 2 |
| Teaching Plan | 3 |
| Integrated Standards Connections | 13 |
| Additional Reading and Resources | 16 |
| Worksheets | 17 |

Lesson Paths and Student Objectives



1. **West African Connection to the Blues** (approx. 30 minutes)
 - Students will identify musical and stylistic characteristics of the blues that can be traced to West African music traditions.









2. **Before the Blues: Ring Shouts** (approx. 30 minutes)
 - Students will identify and demonstrate some of the main features of ring shouts (a precursor to the blues).
 - Students will describe connections between ring shouts, West African music traditions, and the blues.



3. **Before the Blues: Field Hollers** (approx. 30 minutes)
 - Students will identify and demonstrate some of the main features of field hollers (a precursor to the blues).
 - Students will describe connections between field hollers, West African music traditions, and the blues.

*Note: The learning icons used above signify the type of learning used in each Path. Keep in mind that these Paths are not intended to be sequential; rather, teachers or students may choose which Paths they'd like to use from each Lesson Hub. The time estimate given for each path indicates "in class" time. The + indicates there are optional extension activities and/or a suggested homework assignment.

While all learning types ( History and Culture,  Music Listening,  Music Making and Creation, and  Creative Connections) fulfill 2014 National Music Standards, non-music teachers will be able to use  History and Culture and  Creative Connections Paths without specific musical knowledge.

Teaching Plan

1. Path One: West African Connection to the Blues



To prepare:

- Read through the path.
- Preview **Path 1** of the **Lesson 2 Slideshow** (slides 4–22).
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page. *(If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes.)*
 - Optional: Print the “Blues Characteristics Worksheet,” enough for one per group of about 3 students ([find below](#)).

Path 1 Introduction (Slide 4)

(Visual art connection) This woodcut, entitled *The Music Maker*, is the work of contemporary Nigerian artist Solomon Iren Wangboje (wan-bow-ee). Point out how the angle of the musician’s head and his hands express the energy of his drumming performance. It’s interesting to note that his art, like blues music itself, is a blend of Western and African influences.

1. The Origins of the Blues (Slides 5–12):

- A. Share embedded contextual information** about the origins of the blues. Topics include: **Slavery** (Slide 6), **people** (Slide 7), **time** (Slides 8–9), **location** (Slide 10), **need** (Slide 11), and **musical fusion** (Slide 12).
- B. (Visual arts connection)** The image on slide 6 depicts a West African slave market on the coast of Sierra Leone in Africa. On the right, a white slave dealer sits back watching the activities unfold in the slave market. A Black slave dealer with a long pipe is seen in the foreground.

2. Attentive Listening: West African Musical Characteristics and the Blues

- A.** (Slide 13) Play short excerpts from the embedded audio tracks and discuss as a class **where the blues characteristics illustrated in each one comes from**.
- Refer back to the previous slides for help (Slides 7, 10–12).
 - Possible answers to the question of *Where do you think these characteristics come from?* include the **merging of African and American music traditions**, the **American south**, and the need to **express feelings**.
 - Optional: Use the attached “[Blues Characteristics Worksheet](#),” either as a class or in small groups, to write down common musical characteristics of the blues illustrated in each embedded audio track.

**Note: we will explore these characteristics, which are rooted in West African musical styles, in the following slides, so this is just an initial listen.*

- B. (Slide 14) **Share embedded contextual information** about the West African connections to blues music.
- C. (Slides 15–19) **Play the four embedded audio examples** of music traditions from several regions of West Africa to identify, as a class, examples of the musical characteristics discussed in this lesson.
- As students listen, they will try to identify each musical characteristic represented.
 - As you go through each slide, **share embedded contextual information about each musical characteristic:**
 - **Slide 16: Call and response**
 - **Slide 17: Polyrhythm** – You might try having half of the students clap one rhythm, and the other half clap the other prominent rhythm while they listen to the “Harvest Song” (used while a priest is pouring libations, or drinks offered to deities).
 - **Slide 18: Narrative storytelling**
 - **Slide 19: Picking style**
- D. (Slide 20) Return to the previous blues tracks to **listen again for West African influences** illustrated in each one.
- Discuss as a class OR split students into small groups to discuss their thoughts and ideas on what identifies each example with the assigned style.
 - Optional: Go back to the “[Blues Characteristics Worksheet](#)” to see if students recognize any of the West African elements more clearly.
 - *Can you hear the West African elements we just learned about?*
 - In “A Good Man Is Hard to Find,” Bessie Smith demonstrates **narrative storytelling** by singing about difficulties in her own relationship.
 - In “Session Blues,” **call and response** can be heard between Big Mama Thornton and the harmonica player (Walter “Shakey” Horton), who “answers” her after she sings each line.
 - In the same song, **polyrhythms** can be best heard in the instrumental break after the first two verses. (You might have students follow the drum rhythm compared to the harmonica or piano rhythm).
 - John Jackson’s style of playing guitar in “Steamboat Whistle” is very similar to the Wolof xalam player, alternating between the thumb and fingers to pick the strings in a rapid ostinato (**picking style**).
- E. (Slide 21) **Prompt students to discuss** whether they have heard any of these musical characteristics in other popular music styles.

- Refer back to Slide 9 to review the blues timeline with the map of popular music styles that are related to the blues.

(Slide 22) **Lesson 2 / Path 1 Learning Checkpoint:**

- *Where, when, and why did the blues develop?*
 - The blues developed at the **beginning of the 20th century**, in the **American South**, because **people needed a way to express their emotions/feelings**.
- *What are some of the musical practices found in the blues that can be traced back to West African music traditions?*
 - **Call and response**
 - **Polyrhythm**
 - **Narrative storytelling**
 - **Picking styles**

(Slide 23) **Lesson Navigation**

2. Path Two: Before the Blues: Ring Shouts



To prepare:

- Read through the path.
- Preview **Path 2** of the **Lesson 2 Slideshow** (slides 24–36).
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page. *(If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes.)*

Path 2 Introduction (Slide 24): Especially if students did not complete Path 1, share the embedded contextual information about the blues.

The blues developed at the beginning of the 20th century, in the American South, because people needed a way to express their emotions/feelings through hardship.

Though the blues developed by drawing from local, African, and European practices, some West African musical characteristics—such as narrative storytelling, polyrhythm, call and response, and guitar picking styles—can be heard in blues music.

1. **Opening Discussion: Introduction to Ring Shouts** (Slides 25–26):

- A. (Slide 25) **Watch the embedded Smithsonian Folkways video**, featuring the McIntosh County Shouters.
- B. (Slide 26) After watching the video, **discuss the question**: *What is a ring shout?*
 - Consider using a “think/pair/share” strategy to think about this question:
 - Students “think” about the question and write down their ideas.
 - Students “share” their ideas with a partner or small group.
 - One student “shares” the group consensus within the context of a full class discussion.
 - The next three slides will help to answer this question. For now, take any and all ideas. Help students to use musical language (e.g., call and response, homophonic, polyphonic, instrumental, choral)

2. **The Ring Shout** (Slides 27–29):

- A. (Slides 27–28) **Share embedded contextual information** about ring shouts and the McIntosh County Singers.
- B. (Slide 29) Share information about West African influences in shouts.
 - **(Visual art connection)** This photo of the McIntosh County Shouters was taken by Margo Rosenbaum, who describes her work as “drawing with light.”

Her work has been exhibited all over the United States and is used as cover art on several Folkways releases.

- Note: Slides 31.1 and 32 also feature photographs by Margo Rosenbaum.

3. **Elements of the Ring Shout** (Slides 30–32):

- A. (Slide 30) **Watch a video of the McIntosh County Singers** performing the song “**Jubilee**,” providing three observation questions to the students:
 - *What do you notice about the movement? What do you notice about the rhythm? What do you notice about the song structure?*
 - Pause the video to discuss each question as you go. More guidance will be given in the next slides.
- B. (Slide 31.1) After watching the video, **lead a short class discussion** based on student responses to these questions, and adding the following observations:
 - *What did you notice about the movement?*
 - The dancers **moved together in a circle**, they had **their own style of dance**, their **feet did the same movement**, and the movement was focused mainly in the **feet and knees**.
 - *What did you notice about the rhythm?*
 - The rhythm in the claps and stick of the singers was **syncopated**, the rhythm in the feet of the singers was **straight**. The combination of these rhythms created a **polyrhythmic** sound.
 - *What did you notice about the song structure?*
 - The song structure was a **call and response** form.
- C. (Slide 31.2) **Watch the video again**, uninterrupted. *What else can students identify?*
- D. (Slide 32) **Share the embedded contextual information** about “Jubilee.”

4. **Engaged Listening: “Jubilee”** (Slides 33–35):

- A. (Slide 33) Play the audio track of “Jubilee,” and **prompt students to learn the repeated rhythmic pattern (handclap) by ear**.
- B. (Slide 34) **Share embedded contextual information** about this rhythmic pattern. **The syncopated rhythmic pattern we just performed is often referred to as a 3+3+2 pattern.**
 - To move the rhythm into the students' bodies as well as teaching notation, practice clapping and saying each pattern with the students.
 - The second and third illustrations demonstrate two different, and equally helpful, ways to count the pattern. As you practice each one, start slowly and then gradually speed up to give the students the time to get it into their bodies.

C. (Slide 35) Next, **listen to the two main melodic response patterns**, and prompt students to learn them by ear.

- When students are ready, ask them to practice singing the response while clapping the rhythmic pattern (along with the recording).
- This may be difficult for some students to do. Feel free to have half of the class clap while the other half sings, swapping so that all students have practice with each pattern.

(Slide 36) **Lesson 2 / Path 2 Learning Checkpoint:**

- *What are ring shouts?*
 - **A ring shout is a group practice—combining call-and-response singing, syncopated percussive rhythm, and expressive dancelike movement—that has survived in continuous practice since before the Civil War.**
- *What are some of the musical practices found in ring shouts that can be traced back to West African music traditions?*
 - **Call and response**
 - **Syncopated rhythmic ostinato pattern**
 - **The importance of ritual and dance**

(Slide 37) **Lesson Navigation**

3. Path Three: Before the Blues: Field Hollers



To prepare:

- Read through the path.
- Preview **Path 3** of the **Lesson 2 Slideshow** (slides 38–36).
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson landing page. *(If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow” link, which will not show the notes.)*

Path 3 Introduction (Slide 38): Especially if students did not complete Path 1, share the embedded contextual information about the blues.

The blues developed at the beginning of the 20th century, in the American South, because people needed a way to express their emotions/feelings through hardship.

Though the blues developed by drawing from local, African, and European practices, some West African musical characteristics—such as narrative storytelling, polyrhythm, call and response, and guitar picking styles—can be heard in blues music.

1. (Slide 39) **What is a field holler?** Share the embedded contextual information about field hollers.
2. **Listening to Field Hollers** (Slides 40–46):
 - A. (Slide 40) **Attentive Listening: Play the embedded example of a field holler** (“Field Call,” by Annie Grace Horn Dodson). As students listen, ask them to think about these questions (Consider listening to four short excerpts and asking students to listen to one specific question each time.):
 - *Who do you think is singing?*
 - Possible answers include: **a person who is older.**
 - *What do you think the singer is feeling?*
 - Possible answers include: **sadness, loneliness, tiredness.**
 - *What do you notice about the texture?*
 - Possible answers include: **there are no instruments, there is one singer.**
 - *What do you notice about the structure?*
 - Possible answers include: **there is a repeated melodic line on different vowels.**
 - B. **More information about field hollers**
 - (Slides 41–42) Share additional embedded contextual information about this recording, the performer, and field hollers in general.
 - (Slide 43) Prompt students to:

- *give ideas for what kind of coded messages could be sent through a field holler, OR*
- *if they wrote their own field holler song, what kind of coded messages could they send to their friends or family?*
- Also, you might mention that this photo along with many others in this pathway (e.g., slide 49), are on view in the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. This museum highlights the richness and diversity of the African American experience.

C. Play another example of a field holler (“Greeting Call,” by Annie Grace Horn Dodson).

- (Slides 44–45) As students listen, *ask them to identify similarities and differences between this recording and the previous recording.*
 - Possible answers include:
 - **Similarities: one singer, and it sounds melancholy.**
 - **Differences: there are words, and the melody isn’t a repeated pattern.**
- (Slide 46) Then, share embedded contextual information about this recording.

3. Performance Activity (Slides 47.1–47.7): Use the suggestions provided in the slideshow to customize an active music-making experience that matches the age and experience level of your students.

Choose from these options. You are free to do as many of the activities as you would like and in any order:

1) Echo Sing (Slide 47.2)

- Lead the students in echo-singing short melodic patterns on the first three notes of a minor scale in a key of your choice.
- Optional: Ask individual students to lead short patterns that you and the rest of the class echo. Students can lead these short patterns by singing or playing them on a melodic instrument.

2) Echo Sing with Call and Response (Slide 47.3)

- Join the students in singing along with Annie Grace Horn Dodson in the song “Field Call.”

3) Engaged Listening (Slide 47.4)

- This time, sing along only with the “responses.”

4) Perform (Slide 47.5)

- Split the class into two halves and perform the song with the recording two times, switching which half of the class sings the “call” and which sings the “response.”

- After that, feel free to do it without the recording if students feel confident and comfortable.
- Give the opportunity for small groups of students and/or soloists to lead the song.

5) Use Notation (Slide 47.6)

- Have the students sing the notated pattern first, then listen to the recording second to compare and contrast their version with Annie Grace Horn Dodson's version.
- Prompt discussion with the following question: *Is it possible to accurately represent this pattern using staff notation? Why or why not?*
 - Lead discussion on how **field hollers can be improvisational**, and the nature of improvisation is to make it **unique and individual**.

6) Extension Activities (Slide 47.7): Improvising, Creating, and Documenting
(Optional: provide students with staff paper and pencils or lined white boards and markers)

- Ways to sequence the first activity:
 - the teacher leads the "call" and students "respond" simultaneously with their own patterns.
 - the teacher leads the "call" and students "respond" as a solo.
 - a student leads the "call" with the class "responding" simultaneously with their own patterns.
 - a student leads the "call" with another student "responding" as a solo.
- Ideas for the second activity:
 - Place students into small groups and have them take turns leading by notating a "call" that they sing, and their peers "respond" to, by notating and singing their own.
 - Ask individual students to notate a "call" on the board for the class to "respond" to.

4. Field Hollers and Blues Connections (Slides 48–49):

A. (Slide 48): Share embedded contextual information about the connection between field hollers and the blues.

B. (Slide 49): Share embedded contextual information about field hollers after the Civil War.

- (Visual art connection) Point out the photo of cotton being weighed. Explain that this photo may have been taken after the Civil War, so we do not know for certain under what conditions the people were working when the photo was taken. Explain that in any case, field hollers gradually became less common after the Civil War and the legal end of slavery.

(Slide 50) **Lesson 2 / Path 3 Learning Checkpoint**

- *What are some common features of field hollers?*
 - Field hollers are **improvisational, sometimes in unison, and sometimes as call and response. They were used to foster community and as a form of communication between friends and families in the fields of plantations.**
- *What are some of the musical practices found in field hollers that are also found in the blues?*
 - **Improvisation**
 - **Call and response**
 - **Vocal style of bent pitches**

(Slide 51) **Lesson Navigation**

(Slide 52) **Lesson Hub Media Credits**

Integrated Standards Connections

2014 National Core Music Standards:

MU:Pr4.2.7a Explain and demonstrate the structure of contrasting pieces of music selected for performance and how elements of music are used.

- Can I demonstrate the common musical characteristics of field hollers through performance and explain how this use of music elements differs from ring shouts?

MU:Pr4.2.7c Identify how cultural and historical context inform performances and result in different music interpretations.

- Can I explain the historical and cultural significance of field hollers and ring shouts?
- Can I explain the typical performance context of field hollers and ring shouts?

MU:Pr4.3.7a Perform contrasting pieces of music demonstrating their interpretations of the elements of music and expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, timbre, articulation/style, and phrasing) convey intent.

- After repeated opportunities to listen, can I expressively interpret and perform a field holler and excerpt from a ring shout?

MU:Pr6.1.7a Perform the music with technical accuracy and stylistic expression to convey the creator's intent.

- After repeated opportunities to listen, can I perform a field holler in a way that conveys the creator's intent?

MU:Re7.1.7a Select or choose contrasting music to listen to and compare the connections to specific interests or experiences for a specific purpose.

- Can I compare the purposes of ring shouts and field hollers at the time when they developed?

MU:Re7.2.7a Classify and explain how the elements of music and expressive qualities relate to the structure of contrasting pieces.

- Can I explain how elements of music and expressive qualities are usually applied in ring shouts and field hollers (song structure, rhythm, movement, pitch)?
- Can I explain how musical characteristics found in the blues can be traced back to West African traditions?

MU:Re7.2.7b Identify and compare the context of music from a variety of genres, cultures, and historical periods.

- Can I explain and compare the context within which ring shouts and field hollers were/are performed?

MU:Re8.1.7a Describe a personal interpretation of contrasting works and explain how creators' and performers' application of the elements of music and expressive qualities, within genres, cultures, and historical periods, convey expressive intent.

- Can I describe my interpretation of how the McIntosh County Singers (ring shouts) and Annie Grace Horn Dodson (field hollers) used certain expressive qualities to convey expressive intent (e.g. ritualistic movements, vocal timbre, tempo, bent pitches, ululations).

MU:Cn10.0.7a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.

- Can I identify characteristics of the blues that can be traced to West African music traditions?
- Can I identify characteristics of ring shouts that are also found in blues music?
- Can I identify characteristics of field hollers that are also found in blues music?
- Can I explain why Black Americans incorporated characteristics of West African traditions into their musical practices?

MU:Cn11.0.7a Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

- Can I identify the context within which ring shouts and field hollers were/are performed and how they connected to daily life for Black Americans during the 17th–19th centuries??

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Standards:

D2.His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

- Can I analyze connections between the development of different types of African American music genres (secular and sacred) on a historical timeline?
- Can I explain connections between West African music traditions and the emergence of field hollers, ring shouts, and the blues in the United States?

D2.His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

- Can I explain why the McIntosh County Singers are seen as historically significant (in terms of cultural preservation)?

D2.His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

- Can I explain why field hollers and ring shouts are considered precursors of blues music?
- Can I explain factors (causes) that led to the development of blues music (related to themes like time, people, location, and need)?
- Can I explain why many defining elements of the blues can be traced back to West African music traditions?

D2.Geo.2.6-8. Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions, and changes in their environmental characteristics.

- On a map of West Africa, can I locate places (modern-day countries) from which audio examples in this lesson were drawn?

D2.Geo.6.6-8. Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.

- Can I identify important musical instruments and characteristics in several West African cultures that influenced the development of blues music?

Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- Can I engage in meaningful collaborative discussions about West African influences in blues music?

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

- Can I explain the meaning of (and use) terms like *polyrhythm*, *syncopation*, *improvisation*, *narrative storytelling*, *blue notes*, *call and response*, *homophonic*, *polyphonic*, *rhythmic ostinato*, *texture*, *timbre*, and *structure/form*, as they related to music?
- Can I explain what a *coded message* is?
- Can I explain the difference between *religious* and *secular* music?

Additional Reading and Resources

- Allen, William Francis, Charles Pickard Ware and Lucy McKim Garrison, eds. 1995 [1867]. *Slave Songs of the United States*. New York City, NY: Dover Publications. <https://store.doverpublications.com/products/9780486285733>.
- Charters, Samuel. 1972. *Roots of Black Music in America*, liner notes. New York City, NY: Folkways Records, FW02694. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/FW02694.pdf>.
- Courlander, Harold. 1951. *Negro Folk Music of Alabama, Vol. 1: Secular Music*, liner notes. New York City, NY: Folkways Records, FW04417. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/FW04417.pdf>.
- Kubik, Gerhard. 1999. *Africa and the Blues*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- Parrish, Lydia. 1992 [1942]. *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press. <https://ugapress.org/book/9780820323893/slave-songs-of-the-georgia-sea-islands/>.
- Rosenbaum, Art. 1984. *Slave Shout Songs from the Coast of Georgia*, by The McIntosh County Shouters, liner notes. New York City, NY: Folkways Records, FW04344. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/FW04344.pdf>.
- Rosenbaum, Art, Freddie Palmer, Carletha Sullivan and Brenton Jordan. 2017. *Spirituals and Shout Songs from the Georgia Coast*, by The McIntosh County Shouters, liner notes. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, SFW40214. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/SFW40214.pdf>.
- Waterman, Richard and Harold Courlander. 1951. *Negro Folk Music of Africa and America*, liner notes. New York City, NY: Folkways Records, FW04500. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/FW04500.pdf>.
- Welding, Pete. 1969. *Mississippi Delta Blues Jam in Memphis, Vol. 1*, liner notes. El Cerrito, CA: Arhoolie Records, FW04500. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/FW04500.pdf>.

Worksheets

Blues Characteristics Worksheet

What clues in the songs demonstrate each characteristic? Use the vocabulary below to help you get started.

| Narrative Storytelling | Polyrhythms | Call and Response | Style of Playing |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | | | |

| Instruments / Timbre | Structure / Form | Style | Texture | Meaning | Time / Rhythm |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| (Which instrumental timbres do you hear? Acoustic instruments? Electric instruments? Vocal timbre, range of singer) | (chord structure; lyrical structure; overall form of song; call and response; homophonic; polyphonic) | (How do the musicians express the sounds? Do they interact? Is there improvisation? Guitar picking/stumming patterns; blue notes? Yells?) | (Many instruments? Only a few instruments? Do they play at the same time? Take turns?) | (What is the song about? How do you know?) | (Beat, are there repeated rhythmic patterns, simple?, complex?, strumming patterns, syncopation) |