



Stopping Time

1.) An Overview:

Stopping Time is a 60-minute interactive lesson for elementary school students. During this 1-hour workshop, students will learn about the relationship between the blues and poetry. They will use the following skills:

- Guided listening
- Rhythm recognition
- Use of descriptive language
- Use of rhythmic patterns in language
- Vocal articulation

The center of this project will be Muddy Water's blues classic, "Mannish Boy." In this particular song, he uses a musical device called the stop-time to allow for silent moments where he can tell his story, line by line. Students will listen to key examples of the blues and become familiar with the overall context from which this unique musical genre emerged. After listening to Muddy Water's version of "Mannish Boy," they will experiment with their poetry.

2.) Outline:

The 60-80-minute workshop includes the following sections:

- 10 minutes: Introduction to the blues. (Examples: "Weary Blues" by Langston Hughes and "Louisiana Blues" by Muddy Waters)
- 10 minutes: Guided discussion on blues aesthetics and historical context.
- 10 minutes: Listening to "Mannish Boy" (2x), and discussion of stop-time musical device and poetic devices used.
- 10 minutes: Teacher demo of writing similar poem and reciting it over "Mannish Boy" instrumental.
- 10 minutes: In break out rooms, students start with "when I was a young child..." like in the song, and continue to write their own poem, line by line, as a group.
- 10 minutes: Share-out from brave volunteer student or from teacher, performing student creations.

3.) Material Provided:

Remote

- Zoom link
- Audio of blues music
- Song lyrics
- Break out rooms
- Parent/Student volunteers

4.) Cost:

- 60 minutes: \$300

5.) Excerpt of Script:

The blues is an integral part of the American musical legacy. It has also inspired the evolution of many other art forms, like poetry. In the examples we just listened to, we noticed how, when done correctly, poetry responds to blues melodies in a truly organic way. And now, we will experiment with building our poetic responses. As we listen to an instrumental of "Mannish Boy" again, let's begin thinking about what lines we can come up with to replace his. We should all start with "When I was a young child..." just like he did.

If you are interested in bringing *My Favorite Things* to your organization, please contact:

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