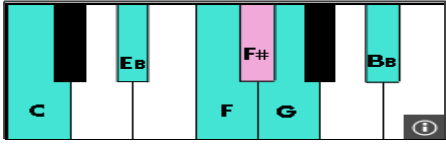



# Year 9 Knowledge Organiser: The Blues

**Overview of topic:** This topic explores the history and development of Blues music. You will learn how music developed from African slave songs, developed across America in to Country Blues and developed again in too the Blues we know today. You will learn the key musical features of a typical Blues songs and how to pay them: The Blues scale, The walking bass and the 12 chords.

Key content/ ideas/ concepts		Keywords/ Glossary	
<p><b>Origins</b> – African slaves brought their musical traditions with them when they were transported to work in the North American colonies. These <b>Work songs</b> were sung rhythmically in time with the task being done. Their songs were passed on orally (word of mouth) and were never usually written down. They used <b>call and response</b> where phrases from a lead singer were followed by the others. Early styles of Blues was known as <b>country blues</b> and was usually a solo singer accompanied on guitar or piano sometimes with added harmonica or drums.</p>	<p><b>Improvisation</b> – Improvisation is where music is performed ‘on the spot’. Music that is improvised isn’t traditionally written down, and the performers will use their musical knowledge to perform something from scratch. In Blues music, the improvisation is usually the notes from the Blues scale.</p>	<p><b>Song Structure</b>– Modern Blues songs can sometimes follow modern pop song structure (Verse-Chorus). Older Blues songs usually consist of 3 lines. Lines 1 &amp; 2 are the same, and line 3 is usually different. (This also ties in with the 12 chords).</p>	<p><b>12 Bar Blues</b> – The structure used in Blues music. There are 3 lines of 4 bars.</p>
<p><b>12 Bar Blues</b> – The 12 bar blues is the name of the structure used in blues music. It is split in to 3 sections, which have 4 bars each.</p>	<p><b>Blues Scale</b> – The blues scale is a certain selection of notes that have been put together to sound ‘bluesy’. The scale is often used to create the improvisation.</p> 	<p><b>Lyrics</b> – The lyrics of Blues songs were often about depression, lack of money/employability, loneliness and them missing their family. The lyrics of line 1 &amp; 2 are usually the same, with line 3 being different.</p>	<p><b>Blues Scale</b> – A selection of notes that are put together to create a ‘bluesy’ scale. The blues scale is used for the notes during improvised sections of music.</p>
<p><b>Chords</b> – A chord is 3 notes played together at the same time. A chord is also called a <b>triad</b>. Blues music only uses 3 chords which are played at the start of every bar.  <b>C/// C/// C/// C///</b>  <b>F/// F/// C/// C///</b>  <b>G/// F/// C/// C///</b></p>	<p><b>Walking Bass</b> – The walking bass is the main part of any Blues song. This is usually played by the bass guitar. The tempo of the bass line should be steady, which is why it is called the “walking” bass.</p> 	<p><b>Musical Elements</b> – Musical elements are often used separately and together to help create the mood and expression the emotion on a song.</p>	<p><b>Chords</b> – The chords are played at the beginning of each of the 12 bars. The chords used in Blues are C, F &amp; G.  <b>Rule for a chord: play a note – miss a note – play a note – miss a note – play a note.</b></p>
		<p><b>Composers</b>–            Robert Johnson            Muddy Waters            Etta James</p>	<p><b>Improvisation</b> – Improvisation is where music is played and made up ‘on the spot’. Music that is improvised is not usually written down, and not pre-planned.</p>
			<p><b>Walking Bass</b> – The name for the bassline heard in Blues music. It is usually played at a “walking” tempo.</p>
			<p><b>Call and Response</b> – A performed plays/sings a ‘call’ and the other performers will ‘respond’.</p>
			<p><b>Wider reading</b>  <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/popular_music/blues2.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/popular_music/blues2.shtml</a>  <a href="https://www.misswardmusic.com/blues.html">https://www.misswardmusic.com/blues.html</a>  <a href="https://www.educationquizzes.com/ks3/music/jazz-improvisation-01/">https://www.educationquizzes.com/ks3/music/jazz-improvisation-01/</a></p>

## Year 9 Knowledge Organiser: The Blues

Self-Quiz Questions	Self-Quiz Questions	Challenge Self-Quiz Quizzing
1. How many notes are in a chord?	1. What does call and response mean?	1. Explain the reason behind many Blues songs and their lyrics.
2. What 3 chords are used in blues music?	2. What did blues singers sing about?	2. After slavery was abolished, Blues songs still existed, why was this?
3. Where did blues music originate?	3. What country did blues music develop?	3. Which genre of “modern” music uses the walking bass?
4. Where would early Blues songs be heard? (in the past)	4. Name a blues composer.	4. <u>TASK</u> : Imagine you are a slave working on a plantation, taken away from your home. Create some lyrics for a song explaining you emotions and feelings (remember the fact about repeating lines).
5. What is the name for the blues bass line?	5. What is improvisation?	5. <u>TASK</u> : Create a fact file about a Blues musician; explain in detail why they sing about the blues and give a brief background of their life.
6. How fast should the blues bass line be?	6. What ‘element’ of blues used is used for improvisation?	6.
7. Name the genre of music that is very similar to Blues.	7. What was early blues known as?	7.
8. How many bars are in the blues?	8. Which 2 notes are flat (♭) in the walking bass.	8.
9. What instruments would usually accompany a Blues singer?	9. Name a genre of music, other than Jazz, that Blues has influenced.	9.
10. How were work songs passed on to other people?	10. Which 2 lines of lyrics are usually repeated?	10.
Total score	Total score	Total score