THE NEWSPAPER IS A VALUABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

THE HERITAGE OF JAZZ

Black History Month celebrates the accomplishments of black Americans and educates all Americans.

From Ella Fitzgerald to Queen Latifah to Duke Ellington to Thelonious Monk, African American musicians have expressed black experience in jazz, Motown, rap, hip-hop and other forms of popular music.

The Newspaper In Education supplement “The Heritage of Jazz ... African American Influence in American Music” explores the achievements of African American jazz musicians.

This Teacher Guide is designed to help you introduce the newspaper to your students and to use additional deliveries of the paper to extend the lessons of the supplement “The Heritage of Jazz.”

The Teacher Guide contains suggested activities for using the newspaper, as well as several 8½ x 11-inch activity sheets that you may photocopy for students to complete.

As a special teaching feature, each activity is accompanied by a description of the national and state standards and skills it is designed to support.

The NIE program “The Heritage of Jazz” has been made possible by a generous contribution from Ford Motor Company Fund. Take a moment to thank Ford Motor Company Fund by having students write thank-you notes. Mail thank-you notes to “The Heritage of Jazz,” Ford Motor Company Fund, c/o PCG Campbell, 3200 Greenfield Road, Suite 280, Dearborn, MI 48120-1269.

Ford Motor Company Fund

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- Youth News Watch

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1. Community News

African American musicians draw inspiration from activities in their communities and give voice to emotions about those activities. Have students look through the newspaper for stories and photos about African Americans in your city or state. On a chalkboard, create a master list of ways these stories show what life is like for African Americans in your city or state. Challenge students to write a two- or three-paragraph description of the African American community based on the stories.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Locating and describing the diverse cultures and communities of regions or nations; explaining how issues and events affect various people and societies in different ways.

2. Get Connected *

The mark of a good musician is the ability to get listeners to respond to the rhythms, issues and emotions of life. Ask students to read a story about an African American in the newspaper. On the “Get Connected” activity sheet, have each student write out four things learned about the newsmaker from the story. Next to each, have students write a similar activity or experience they have had. Have them write how their response was similar or different from the newsmaker’s. Then challenge them to write how they might express the emotions of such an experience in a song or musical composition. What kind of music would they choose for their song?

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Locating information about local and state cultures and communities from a variety of sources; comparing characteristics of cultures and communities.

3. Music Culture

Music can provide a good way to get students thinking about the diversity of American culture. The music world today is far different from the era in which jazz musicians gave white audiences their first experiences with African American creativity. Have students find listings of music CD sales in the newspaper or on the Internet. Direct them to count the number of top artists who are African American, the number who are white, and the number who are of other ethnic heritage. Ask them to show this information as a graph and write a summary of what the information says about the diversity in American music today.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Acquiring information from multiple sources and then evaluating it; understanding our diverse cultural heritage.

4. Ad Culture

Newspapers convey information about the diversity of the community in stories and photos. They also convey information about diversity through advertising. In pairs or individually, have students look through the display ads in today’s newspaper. Challenge them to find 10 businesses, restaurants or entertainment facilities that are owned by African Americans, that sell products or foods that reflect African American culture or that target an African American audience. Have them write a paragraph about one business describing how it serves the African American community. Ask them to write a second paragraph describing how it serves people beyond the African American community.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Responding to a variety of oral, visual, written and electronic texts by making connections to students’ personal lives and the lives of others.

5. Youth News Watch *

Newspapers might be quite different if your students picked the stories and photos that appear in them. Divide students into teams and have them scan today’s newspaper. Then with the “Youth News Watch” activity sheet, have them design a front page, using six stories or columns and two photos that would be most interesting or important to students. Compare front pages with the actual front page of the daily paper. Have students repeat the activity as though they were designing a front page for a strictly African American community. How does that compare with the actual front page?

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Using written and visual texts to identify and research issues of importance that confront adolescents and their community.
African American Newsmaker!

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**Emotions in Music**

In what kind of song could you express the emotions of one of these experiences—and how?

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**GET CONNECTED**

The mark of a good musician is the ability to get listeners to respond to the rhythms, issues and emotions of life. The newspaper is a good way to examine the connections created by music. Find a story about an African American in the newspaper. The person can be a musician, a sports figure, an entertainer, a politician or a citizen getting involved. In the spaces below, write out four experiences or qualities learned about the newsmaker from the story. Next to each, write a similar experience or quality you have. What emotions do these qualities or experiences make you feel? Discuss how you might express those emotions in a song or musical composition. What kind of music would you choose?
What newspapers report reflects an effort to serve the interests of the community. But newspapers might be quite different if teens or pre-teens picked the stories and photos. Divide into teams and scan today’s newspaper. Then design a new front page, using six stories or columns and two photos that you think would be most interesting or important to students. Compare front pages with the actual front page of the newspaper. Were the differences based on content of the stories, the way they were written, or both? Answer on the back of this activity sheet.
EXPRESSING HERITAGE

From earliest times, the experience of African Americans has been a story of emotion and strength, families and communities. How have African American musicians used their creativity, innovations and techniques to express this experience? The activities in this unit use the newspaper to explore how musicians’ experiments, creativity, sounds and rhythms connect with the community and with universal themes.

1. Picture This *
   Jazz musicians use sounds, rhythms and new techniques to explore the history and emotions of places, situations and relationships. Have students find a news or feature story that contains details describing a setting, activity or relationship affecting your city’s African American community, or another community. Ask them to circle every word or phrase that gives them a picture of what the place is like. On the “Picture This” activity sheet, have them put these words into categories: Adjective, Adverb, Verb, Noun. Then challenge them to pick a musical instrument, or type of music, that they think would express the meaning or emotion of each word. Discuss students’ choices as a class.

   STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying and using the craft of the writer to formulate and express ideas artistically, including, color and use of strong details.

2. Themes in the News
   The themes that inspire great musicians can be found every day in the newspaper. Have students scan the newspaper for a story involving a young person growing up or “coming of age,” or a case of rights and responsibilities, or a story of conflict or cooperation. Have them summarize the 5 Ws of the story—Who, What, When, Where and Why. Then challenge them to write a paragraph summarizing the larger “theme” of the story that could apply to other people or teach a larger lesson.

   STANDARDS/SKILLS: Exploring and reflecting on universal themes from visual and written texts.

3. Describe It
   The best musicians have a talent for depicting situations so that listeners feel they are there, or that they feel what the people involved are feeling. Have students pick a photo of an outdoor or indoor scene involving African Americans in the newspaper. Ask them to write a paragraph describing the situation as vividly as possible from what they see in the photo. Then have them write a second paragraph describing the situation from the point of view of one of the people in the photo. Ask them to compare the descriptions and share with the class.

   STANDARDS/SKILLS: Recognizing and using varied techniques to construct text, convey meaning and express feelings, including different points of view and rich descriptions.

4. Capture the Mood *
   When writing or performing music, musicians build a mood by the way they vary the sounds, pace and rhythms of the music. Photographs also capture the mood of a situation by the point of view, lighting and details chosen by the photographer. Direct students to scan the photos in the newspaper and pick one that involves an African American. On the “Capture the Mood” activity sheet, have them write a list of details or qualities that create a mood in the photo. At the bottom, have them create a title for a song that would convey the mood of the photo.

   STANDARDS/SKILLS: Recognizing and using varied techniques to express feelings to influence an audience.

5. Lyrics
   In jazz or other music, lyrics create a kind of dialog between the musician and listeners. In newspapers direct quotations are used to show how people speak, or how they speak with each other. Challenge students to find a story in the paper that uses direct quotes. From the quotes, have them create lyrics for a song about the issue involved. Share lyrics as a class.

   STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying and using the craft of the writer to formulate and express ideas artistically, including dialog and use of strong verbs.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
Jazz musicians use sounds, rhythms and new techniques to reveal the history and emotions of places, situations and relationships. Find a news or feature story that contains details describing a setting, activity or relationship affecting people in your city’s African American community, or another community. Circle every word or phrase that gives you a picture of what the place is like. In the spaces below, put these words into categories. For each, list a musical instrument, or type of music, that you think would best express the meaning or emotion of the word. Discuss why that is the case.

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CAPTURE THE MOOD

When writing or performing music, musicians build a mood by the way they vary the sounds, pace and rhythms. Photographs also capture the mood of a situation by the lighting and details chosen by the photographer, and by the position from which the photo is taken. Scan the photos in today’s newspaper and pick one that involves an African American, the African American community or another community. In the spaces below, write a list of details or qualities that create a mood in the photo. Then come up with a title for a song that would convey the mood of the photo.

Details of Your Photo’s Mood

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________

Title for ‘Mood’ Song: __________________________
JAZZ & INNOVATION

Jazz combined the songs and rhythms of African American slaves with European influences and traditions. The result was a new and wholly American form of music. Such creativity and innovation can been seen every day in music and other arts in America, and in other fields as well. The activities in this unit explore innovation and creativity through the newspaper.

1. Innovate! *

Jazz greats like Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie and Charles Mingus won wide followings as musical innovators. Who are the musical innovators of popular music today? Ask students to search the entertainment section of the newspaper for stories or photos involving musicians they think are innovators. Ask them to pick one and use the “Innovate!” activity sheet to list reasons why they think this musician is breaking new ground. Finish by having them write the beginning of a music review summarizing why they think this artist is a musical innovator.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Describing how issues and events affect various people and cultures in different ways; locating and describing diverse kinds of communities and explaining their characteristics.

2. Art & Life

Art often is a reflection of the world and time when it is created. Have students look through the newspaper for stories about music or another art form. Ask them to write a short description of how it reflects the concerns of today's world. When they have finished, challenge them to create a rap/rock song or a painting/drawing that reflects an important issue in the news.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Locating information about local, state and national cultures and communities using a variety of traditional and electronic sources and direct observations; using the craft of the illustrator or writer to express ideas artistically.

3. Improvising

One of the things that distinguishes jazz is the way its musicians improvise when performing. As a class, discuss how improvising means to do something different than what is planned or expected. Then talk about ways jazz or other musicians may improvise when performing. Finish by asking students to find people in today's newspaper who improvise in other ways. Have them write a sentence for each explaining what each person has done to improvise. Then have them write whether the result of the improvising was good or bad.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Responding to a variety of oral, visual, written and electronic texts by making connections to students' personal lives and the lives of others.

4. Story Boards

Music videos were a great innovation when they were introduced. Music video directors sometimes sketch out their videos on what is called a “story board.” This is something like a comic strip that shows what kinds of action would take place at different points. Have students pick an issue from the newspaper that involves African Americans or another ethnic group. Direct them to read the story. Then challenge them to draw a story board for a music video for a new song examining the issue they selected. Share story boards as a class.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying and using the craft of the illustrator to formulate and express ideas artistically; using varied techniques to influence an audience.

5. New Ideas

Innovation occurs in every field or career. It is how new ways of doing things are developed. As a class, discuss an example of a recent innovation involving a product people use. Then send them into the news, sports, business and entertainment sections of the newspaper to find three examples of other recent innovations. These innovations can be new products, techniques or practices, or something else entirely. Have them write their examples of innovation on a sheet of paper and write out how important the innovation is to each field.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Acquiring information from multiple sources and then evaluating it; using reading for multiple purposes, such as learning new procedures and increasing conceptual understanding.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
INNOVATE!

Jazz greats like Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie and Charles Mingus won wide followings as musical innovators. Who are the musical innovators of popular music today? Search the entertainment section of the newspaper for stories or photos involving musicians you think are innovators. Pick one and list reasons why you think this musician is breaking new ground as an innovator. Finish by using the back of this sheet to write the beginning of a music review summarizing why you think this artist is a musical innovator.

Musical Artist: ______________________________________

Reason 1: ___________________________________________________________________________
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Reason 2: ___________________________________________________________________________
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Reason 5: ___________________________________________________________________________
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1. Be a Critic! *
Critical thinking skills will help students all through life. They will help them make decisions about everything from where to eat at a restaurant to where they should live. As a class, discuss how critical thinking requires that people weigh both the good and bad aspects of something, and then to offer an overall judgment. This is what newspaper music critics do all the time. Ask students to think of a singer, musician or musical group they like. Then challenge them to think like a music critic. With the "Be a Critic!" activity sheet have them list specific reasons they think the musician is talented or a song of the musician is good. Then have them write a short music review as if it were to run in tomorrow’s newspaper. Share reviews as a class.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Selecting, reading, and responding thoughtfully to both classic and contemporary texts for quality and literary merit.

2. Heritage Watch
The culture that develops in a community influences life and attitudes in the community. And the heritage of the past influences attitudes in the present. This is especially true among African American musicians, whose history and innovations have influenced all American music. Have students search the newspaper for an African American whose talent or innovation has created something new, exciting or popular. Then challenge them to write a short essay in the style of a music review summarizing how heritage, culture and history are reflected in the newsmaker’s innovations. Alert them that the connections may be indirect, not direct.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Investigating and understanding the cultural and historical contexts of themes, issues and our common heritage in literature and other texts.

3. Too Tense Rap *
Tensions between people and communities have been explored by African American musicians, artists, writers and rappers in a variety of creative ways. Have students pick a newspaper story that involves tensions or conflicts between individuals, groups or values. Ask them to read the story carefully and to think about the effect of the tension on those involved. With the “Too Tense Rap” activity sheet, have them write a rap or rhyme about that effect. Encourage students to read or perform their raps, or illustrate them for display.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Identifying and discussing how tensions among characters, communities, themes and issues in literature and other texts are related to students’ own experiences.

4. Draw Your Criticism
Editorial cartoons use art to state opinions on the editorial pages of the newspaper. Sometimes these opinions are positive and sometimes they are negative. Have students think of a musician or music act they like. Ask them to draw an editorial cartoon on a sheet of paper showing how they react to this musical act. Then have them draw a second editorial cartoon showing how they react to this act. Challenge them to give their cartoons eye-catching, creative titles and share.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Investigating various texts for examples of distortion and stereotypes, including those associated with race, gender, culture, age, class, religion or handicapping conditions.

5. Hear the Voices
Different musicians express themselves in different styles. The result is often described as the musician’s “voice.” Newspaper writers also have different voices. Have students pair up and scan stories in different sections of today’s newspaper. Challenge them to pick two pieces they believe have different voices. On a sheet of paper have them draw up a list of differences between the voices of the writers. Discuss choices as a class.

STANDARDS/SKILLS: Recognizing different voices in oral and written communication that persuade, inform, entertain and inspire audiences.

*Includes activity sheet for students.
BE A CRITIC!

Critical thinking requires that people weigh both the good and bad aspects of something, and then to offer an overall judgment. This is what newspaper music critics do all the time. Think of a singer, musician or musical group you like. Then think like a music critic. In the spaces below, list specific reasons you think the musician is talented or why a song of the musician is good. Then use the back of this sheet to write a short music review about this artist, as if it were to run in tomorrow’s newspaper. Share reviews as a class.

Musical Artist: _____________________________________________

Reason 1: ________________________________________________
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Reason 2: ________________________________________________
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Reason 5: ________________________________________________
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Tensions between people and communities are in the news almost every day. These tensions have been explored by African American musicians, artists, writers and rappers in a variety of creative ways. Pick a story in today’s newspaper that involves tensions or conflicts between individuals, groups or values. Read the story carefully and think about the effect of the tension on those involved. On the lines below, write the start of a rap or rhyme about that effect, using the letters of the word “Tension” to begin each line. Read or perform your raps, or illustrate them for display on a bulletin board.

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