

A Unit on The Beatles Grade 5

Objective: Students will learn to appreciate the Beatles and will apply their musical skills to a Beatles song.

Materials:

- Laptop
 - Chords and Lyrics to Yellow Submarine
 - Guitar
 - Answer Sheet
 - Song sign-up sheet
 - Classroom instruments
 - Chords and lyrics to Let it Be
 - Picture of a Sitar
 - Beatles cover songs
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Lesson 1 – Questionnaire opener

- Write these questions on the board and go over each of them one by one
 - What was the first rock band to successfully combine their music with the music of different cultures?
 - What band was the first to use “sampling” or loops (sounds or small sections from other songs) in the recording studio much like today’s rap and R + B artists?
 - What band is the most covered band in History?
 - What band sold more albums in the United States than any other artist in History? (Billions)
 - What band was one of the first to use distorted guitars and successfully record a song with beginning elements of heavy metal?
 - What was the first band to have a more aggressive style of stage presence?
 - What band was the first to popularize the standard rock quartet setup, consisting of drums, guitar or two, bass and vocals?
- Have ready: Helter Skelter, Norwegian Wood, Tomorrow Never Knows/Revolution 9.

Ask what they put down for answers. After they have given their answers let them know the answer to all of these questions: The Beatles.

Explain: Keep in mind; there was nothing like what they were doing anywhere else in the world. What the Beatles have done is now considered to be normal, and they were the first to do it or popularize it.

Show them some songs that they may not have realized were by the Beatles

- Sarah Maclachlan – Blackbird
- Jeff Healy Band – While my Guitar Gently Weeps
- Motley Crue – Helter Skelter
- Grayson Matthews – All You Need is Love

Present to them songs that they will be singing: Yellow Submarine and Blackbird.

Lesson 2 – Beatles song presentation intro.

You are going to research a Beatles song from a list of songs that I will be providing for you. We will go over each song to see if there is any interest. You can work on the song alone or with a partner. We will be going to the library to learn a little bit more about each song. You will be given some information, and some you will need to find out on your own. You and your partner will do a short presentation on the song.

What we need to know find out:

- What album is this song from?
- When was it recorded?
- Who covered it?
- The answer to the question that is provided.

What we have been given:

- 1 to 3 interesting facts about the song.

You will make a presentation to the class about the song. Your presentation can be anywhere between 2 and 5 minutes and should include a presentation board with pictures and text.

Go through all of the songs briefly

Ask the students to choose a partner and sign up for a song to research. The first presentations will be two music classes from today.

If time, sing through Yellow Submarine or Let it Be

Lesson 3 – Library

Lesson 4 – Teacher presentation

- Ob la di, Ob la da it was written in 1968 and it is from the White Album
 - Play them the song
 - Ask: why is this song and important Beatles song?
 - **Possible answers:** It is different
 - This is the first commercially successful ska/reggae song
 - Explain: ska and reggae use off beat rhythms to characterize their style
 - Play Bob Marley's One Love
 - **Explain:** the slow off beat rhythm is in every Raggae tune. Bob Marley is usually accredited with having the first commercially successful Raggae song. The Beatles did it first.
 - These next two songs I am going to show you are considered to be ska. Ska is best described as fast Raggae with horns.
 - Play them Pressure Drop by The Specials
 - This is a more modern version of Ska: Play them Total Hate by No Doubt

With time left over, practice Let it Be or Yellow Submarine

Song sign-up

Helter Skelter

1. _____
2. _____

Rocky Raccoon

1. _____
2. _____

Hey Jude

1. _____
2. _____

Norwegian Wood

1. _____
2. _____

Lovely Rita

1. _____
2. _____

While My Guitar Gently Weeps

1. _____
2. _____

Blackbird

1. _____
2. _____

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

1. _____
2. _____

Come Together

1. _____
2. _____

All You Need is Love

1. _____
2. _____

Yesterday

1. _____
2. _____

Yellow Submarine

1. _____
2. _____

Eleanor Rigby

1. _____
2. _____

Let it Be

1. _____
2. _____

Oh! Darling

1. _____
2. _____

I Want to Hold Your Hand

1. _____
2. _____

Answer sheet

Please answer in **complete sentences**.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Assignment Sheet – A song by The Beatles

You will be given the song that you have signed up for with a couple of facts given to you about the song. You will need to find:

- The answers to the questions that are given _____
- The album that your song is from _____
- The year the album was released _____
- A picture of the album your song is from _____
- The name of two bands that do a cover version of your song _____

As you complete the required sections put a check mark on the blanks across from the item.

Once you find all the information you need, arrange the pictures and facts nicely onto a presentation board. You can decorate the presentation board the way you like. After making a presentation board, you will be presenting it to the class.

THE BEATLES

Beatles fact: they won upwards of 40 grammy awards in their lifetime.

Best selling original album on the UK chart

The biggest-selling original album on the UK chart is *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* by The Beatles, with a reported 4.8 million sales since its release in June 1967.

Fastest selling album

The Beatles album titled *1*, released on November 13, 2000, sold a record 13.5 million copies around the world in its first month, 3.6 million of which on its first day alone.

Greatest advance sales for a single

Can't Buy Me Love by The Beatles, sold 2.7 million worldwide before it was released on 21 March 1964.

Most albums on US chart - simultaneously

The record for the most albums on the US Top 200 at the same time is seven, held jointly by The Beatles, The Monkees and U2.

Most consecutive No. 1 singles - UK chart

The most consecutive No. 1's is held by The Beatles, who had 11 in a row between 1963 and 1966 (from 'From Me to You' through to 'Yellow Submarine').

In just the top 10 of the Rolling Stones Magazine top 500 albums of all time the Beatles appear 4 times. 8 times in the top 30 of the top 500 songs of all time.

The Beatles have 23 songs in the Rolling Stone Magazine's top 500 songs of all time. The next closest is the Rolling Stones at 14.

30 January 2008

Helter Skelter

- This song used the first elements of heavy metal music
- Paul wanted to make a song that was loud and crazy
- It was the heaviest and loudest song ever recorded at that time

QUESTIONS:

1. What does infamous serial killer, Charles Manson, have to do with this song?
2. Why is this album typically called the White album?

Rocky Raccoon

- Paul didn't know the lyrics very well because it was written so quickly
- The name was changed from Rocky Sassoon to Rocky Raccoon because it sounded more like a cowboy

QUESTIONS:

1. What style of music is this?
2. The White Album was originally named what?

Hey Jude

- It was written by Paul McCartney for John Lennon's son, Julian.
- It was changed to "Jude" because "Jules" didn't sound right when sung.
- Ringo almost missed his cue in the song. The song had already started recording while he was in the bathroom.

QUESTIONS:

1. This song holds the record for the longest what?
2. How many songs were on this album?

Norwegian Wood

- This was the first rock song to feature a sitar, which is an East Indian instrument.
- John Lennon got the idea for the song while on a skiing holiday with his wife.

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you find a picture of a sitar and maybe a video of someone playing it?
2. This album, Rubber Soul, is ranked #___ in the Rolling Stone magazine top 500 albums of all time.

Lovely Rita

- It was written about a meter maid, who had given Paul a parking ticket.
- The piano was played by George Martin.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is George Martin?
2. Sgt. Pepper's was ranked #___ in the Rolling Stone magazine's top 500 albums of all time.

While My Guitar Gently Weeps

- This song was written by George Harrison
- He decided to write a song about the first two words he saw in the first book he opened. Those two words happened to be 'gently weeps.'

QUESTIONS:

1. What famous musician played the lead guitar track on this song?
2. Which Beatle quit the band for a brief period during the recording of The White Album?

Blackbird

- Paul McCartney played guitar and sang in this one.
- They used sounds recorded from actual Blackbirds in the song.
- The song switches from 2 beats a measure, to three beats a measure and then to 4 beats a measure.

QUESTIONS:

1. The guitar part to this song is based on what piece by what 17th century composer? Can you find a sound clip of this piece?

All You Need is Love

- Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones, Keith Moon of the Who, Eric Clapton, actress Jane Asher, and Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones were members of the choir in this recording.

QUESTIONS:

1. What or who asked John Lennon to write this song?
2. What was this album based off of?

Yesterday

- Where most songs we listen to on the radio have 4 or 8 measure phrases, this one has 7 measure phrases.

QUESTIONS:

1. This song holds the world record for what?
2. On the "Help!" album cover, the 4 Beatles are seen using flag semaphore, which is used in airports to spell out words. What letters are they trying to portray.
3. What came first, the movie or the album?

Yellow Submarine

- It was originally written as a children's song
- Ringo Starr sings this one, it was his first lead vocal for a Beatles single.

QUESTIONS:

1. What movie was this song the basis of?
2. The album, "Revolver," is listed as #___ in the Rolling Stone magazine's top 500 albums of all time.

Eleanor Rigby

- None of the Beatles play any instruments in this song. It is all done by hired musicians.
- Paul McCartney wrote the song but John Lennon openly took most of the credit for it.

QUESTIONS:

1. Was Eleanor Rigby a real person?
2. What album is regarded as one of the greatest achievements in rock music history? Why?

Let it Be

- It was actually written during the White Album session two years before but not recorded until January 1970
- The song is based on a dream that Paul had.

QUESTIONS:

1. What album was the last release before the band broke up?
2. Who is Mother Mary?

Oh! Darling

- Paul would only record the vocals once per day, if it wasn't right he would try it again the next day instead of right away.
- John Lennon always thought that he could do it better than Paul.

QUESTIONS:

1. In what style is this song?
2. The album cover of "Abbey Road" is one of the most famous album photos of all time. Find pictures of other people trying to imitate this album cover?
3. What was the name of the recording studio where this album was recorded?

I Want to Hold Your Hand

1. What makes this song important for the Beatles?
2. What song was the Beatles first #1 in the UK?

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

-The song appears twice on this album.

Once as an introduction and once as a good-bye song.

-This song was never performed by the Beatles

QUESTIONS:

1. The album that this song belongs to is a prime example of a "song cycle."
What is a "song cycle?"
2. The album cover has many different people on it, many of which were inspirations to the Beatles. Can you recognize any of these people? (find a list)
3. This album cover won a grammy for what in 1968?

Come Together

-John Lennon was sued for writing this song because it was said to be very similar to a Chuck Berry song.

-John Lennon would not let any of the other Beatles do any vocal tracks or piano tracks on this song.

QUESTIONS:

1. The Rolling Stone magazine ranked this song as #_____ on their list of the 500 best songs of all time.
2. This album, Abbey Road, won a grammy in the year it was released for what?

Revolution 9

- This is the longest song that the Beatles ever released. It clocks in at 8:22.
- Paul McCartney and The Beatles manager argued against including it on the record.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the “Revolution 9” loop thought to have said when played backwards?
2. What rumour is this soundscape known for spreading?
3. This can be better described as a soundscape or Musique Concrete. It is a style in modern music that uses only recorded sounds and loops. What well known Musique Concrete composer is this soundscape inspired by?

Revolution

- This was the version of the song that was released to radio.
- It was very controversial when it was released because of the highly political content in the lyrics.

QUESTIONS:

1. What song from The White Album is “Revolution” a re-make of?
2. What Chinese Communist leader does this song make reference to?

The Long and Winding Road

- This song was number 1 on the billboard in 1970.
- This was the Beatles last single ever.

QUESTIONS:

1. This song played an integral role in breaking up the band. Why did Paul McCartney take the rest of the Beatles and the production team to court over this song?
2. Who played bass in this song?
3. Can you find a recording of the original version of this song before the orchestra and the choir was added?

The Songs needed for this Unit are on the “Music” page.

Supplement with:

- Video: FG – The Beatles available on the “Videos” page under “The Beatles”
- Lesson Opener for the Beatles located in the “Lesson Plans” section under “Power Point Presentations.”
- Power point for “Ob-La-Di-Ob-La-Da” located in the “Lesson Plans” section under “Power Point Presentations.”
- Any other questions can be forwarded to me through the “Contact” page.

I usually play the song after each presentation and a cover version of it.