

Jazz in Oklahoma

The Contributions of Oklahoma's Jazz Musicians

Sarah Brewer
Published by *K20 Center*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License

Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	100 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	2 class periods
Course	Oklahoma History		

Essential Question

How did Oklahoma jazz musicians influence the evolution of jazz music? Why and how do we honor the contributions of people from the past?

Summary

In this lesson, students will explore the contributions of Oklahoma's jazz musicians through the analysis of music, images, and text. Students will summarize their understanding by creating Six-Word Memoirs for influential jazz musicians including the Blue Devils, Jimmy Rushing, and Charlie Christian. To extend their learning, students will consider how the contributions of Oklahoma's jazz artists are commemorated and remembered today.

Snapshot

Engage

Students participate in a Fiction and the Facts activity to examine and analyze their prior knowledge about jazz music.

Explore

Students analyze songs and images, recording their observations and inferences to complete a Painting a Picture Chart.

Explain

Students read and Why-Light an article about the cultivation of jazz music in Oklahoma and complete Six-Word Memoirs for important Oklahoma jazz musicians.

Extend

Students examine the history of Bricktown murals found on the walls of the Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark in Oklahoma City.

Evaluate

Students discuss why and how we commemorate the contributions of Oklahoma's jazz musicians. Additionally, the Painting a Picture Chart and the Six-Word Memoirs serve as an evaluation for this lesson.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages
IDT402: Identify a clear central idea or theme in somewhat challenging passages or their paragraphs

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Oklahoma History (9th through 12th grade))

OKH.5.8: Describe the contributions of Oklahomans including African-American jazz musicians, the political and social commentaries of Will Rogers and Woody Guthrie's, Wiley Post's aviation milestones, and the artwork of the Kiowa Six.

Attachments

- Deep-Deuce-and-the-Cultivation-of-Jazz-in-Oklahoma - Spanish.docx
- Deep-Deuce-and-the-Cultivation-of-Jazz-in-Oklahoma - Spanish.pdf
- Deep-Deuce-and-the-Cultivation-of-Jazz-in-Oklahoma-Teacher-s-Notes - Spanish.docx
- Deep-Deuce-and-the-Cultivation-of-Jazz-in-Oklahoma-Teacher-s-Notes - Spanish.pdf
- Deep-Deuce-and-the-Cultivation-of-Jazz-in-Oklahoma-Teacher-s-Notes.docx
- Deep-Deuce-and-the-Cultivation-of-Jazz-in-Oklahoma-Teacher-s-Notes.pdf
- Deep-Deuce-and-the-Cultivation-of-Jazz-in-Oklahoma.docx
- Deep-Deuce-and-the-Cultivation-of-Jazz-in-Oklahoma.pdf
- Lesson-Slides-Jazz-in-Oklahoma.pptx
- Painting-a-Picture-Chart - Spanish.docx
- Painting-a-Picture-Chart - Spanish.pdf
- Painting-a-Picture-Chart-Teacher-Notes.docx
- Painting-a-Picture-Chart-Teacher-Notes.pdf
- Painting-a-Picture-Chart.docx
- Painting-a-Picture-Chart.pdf
- Six-Word-Memoir-Jazz-in-Oklahoma - Spanish.docx
- Six-Word-Memoir-Jazz-in-Oklahoma - Spanish.pdf
- Six-Word-Memoir-Jazz-in-Oklahoma.docx
- Six-Word-Memoir-Jazz-in-Oklahoma.pdf
- The-History-of-Bricktown-Mural-Photograph - Spanish.docx
- The-History-of-Bricktown-Mural-Photograph - Spanish.pdf
- The-History-of-Bricktown-Mural-Photograph.docx
- The-History-of-Bricktown-Mural-Photograph.pdf
- The-History-of-Bricktown-Mural-Teacher-Notes-Jazz-in-Oklahoma.docx
- The-History-of-Bricktown-Mural-Teacher-Notes-Jazz-in-Oklahoma.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)

- Painting a Picture Chart (attached, one per student)
- Painting a Picture Chart-Teacher Notes (attached)
- Six-Word Memoir handout (attached, one per student)
- The History of Bricktown Mural (attached, one per group)
- Deep Deuce and the Cultivation of Jazz in Oklahoma (attached, one per student)
- Deep Deuce and the Cultivation of Jazz in Oklahoma-Teacher Notes (attached)
- Computers (or other devices that provide internet access)
- Highlighters
- Sticky notes

- Portable speakers (optional)

10 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation and Context

In preparation to teach this lesson, review the songs, images, and article used in the Explore and Explain sections of this lesson. For additional context and background information about the significance of jazz musicians in Oklahoma, view the sources referenced at the end of the Deep Deuce and the Cultivation of Jazz in Oklahoma article and/or listen to these episodes.

Begin this lesson by dividing students into small groups of 3-4.

Using **Lesson Slides**, show **slide 3**. Explain to students that they are going to participate in an activity called Fiction and the Facts. Have them consider the three statements listed on the slide:

1. Even though jazz is rooted in both the musical traditions of West Africa and Europe, it is considered an American art form.
2. Jazz music was originally developed by Black musicians across the American South.
3. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is considered the birthplace of jazz music.

Two of the statements are true and one of the statements is false. Ask students to discuss with their groups which statements they believe to be true or false and why.

Once students have determined which statement is false, call on several groups to share out with the whole class, asking them to justify why that statement is false and why they believe the other statements to be true.

Teacher's Note: Fiction and the Facts

Throughout this discussion if the following points regarding the Fiction and the Facts statements are not brought up organically by your students, consider adding the following information to the discussion:

1. True. Music travels with people. Europeans immigrated to what is now America. Africans were forced to the United States through the slave trade, bringing their music with them. Jazz resulted as a blend of Black folk music influenced by West African culture and White folk music rooted in European classical music.
2. True. Jazz music was first developed and played by Black musicians across the South; however, it was quickly adapted and performed by both Black and White musicians. The popularity of jazz coincided with the early 20th century so while jazz, popular among both Black and White audiences, bands and music venues were unwilling to let both groups of people attend performances at the same time. It was not until 1938 when Benny Goodman, a popular White jazz band leader, began playing and recording with Black musicians that integration in jazz bands began.
3. False. While New Orleans, Louisiana, is considered the birthplace of jazz music, it is important to note that as jazz spread across the country, Oklahoma City became a major musical crossroads that fostered a prominent jazz scene, which produced several influential jazz musicians.

Show **slide 4**. Conclude the discussion by noting that throughout this lesson students will continue to learn about the contributions of Oklahoma's jazz musicians by exploring these essential questions:

- How did Oklahoma's jazz musicians contribute to the evolution of jazz music?
- Why and how do you we honor the contributions of people of the past?

Show **slide 5**. Review the lesson objectives.

30 minutes

Explore

Show **slide 6**. Distribute the attached **Painting a Picture Chart** handout to each student. Explain to students that the Painting a Picture strategy is about using observations of what they see and hear together with any background or prior knowledge they have to make inference about the content being explores. In other words, students will use multiple resources to figuratively paint a picture of the topic being studied. In this case, students will use the observations they make in response to songs and photos to "paint a picture" of the significance of Oklahoma's jazz musicians.

As students listen to the following songs they should think about what they hear and what they see and record their observations in the chart.

To begin this activity, display **slide 7**, showing the "Blue Devil Blues" video.

- Play 1:10-2:15.
- If students are still recording observations at the 2:15 marker, let the song continue to play until the end or stop it when you think students have finished making their observations.
- When students have finished recording their observations, give students about a minute to discuss their observations with their small groups, adding any additional information gleaned from the small group discussion to their charts.
- When ready, call on a few volunteers to share their thoughts with the whole class. From here, you can either affirm the types of observations students are making or offer them more guidance and direction.

See the attached **Painting a Picture Chart-Teacher's Notes** for possible student responses.

Teacher's Note: Making Observations

Some students might be hesitant about the uncertainty that this activity creates. Remind students that their observations can be basic and straightforward and there are no "right" answers. If students need further guidance, ask them to consider some of the following questions as they listen to the songs and watch the videos to help them record relevant observations:

- What kind of music do you hear?
- How does the music make you feel?
- What instruments do you see/hear?
- How are the instruments being used/played?
- What do you notice in the images/video you see about the people, places, clothes, instruments, technology, etc?

Show **slide 8**.

- Have students listen to the "Going to Chicago" video.
- Play the first 15 seconds where Jimmy Rushing introduces the song; then skip to the 1:00 mark and play the video through to at least the 2:00 mark.
- If students are still recording their observations at the 2:00 marker, continue to play the song, stopping it when students have recorded their observations.
- Ask students to record their observations on the Painting a Picture chart.
- Give students about a minute to discuss their observations with their small groups, adding any additional information gleaned from the small group discussion to their charts.
- When ready, call on a few volunteers to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Teacher's Note: Flying Home Video

Beginning in 1935, Benny Goodman was one of the few jazz musicians to hire Black musicians and to appear in public with an integrated band. While most music venues were still separated by color 1938, Goodman brought several Black musicians with him to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City, including Count Basie and Lester Young, who were originally part of the Oklahoma City Blue Devils. A year later, in 1939, Benny Goodman introduced Charlie Christian at the Carnegie Hall performance featured in the Flying Home video.

Show **slide 9**.

- Have students listen to the "Flying Home" video.
- Play the video from the beginning through to at least 2:21. Then, repeating the same process as above, give students about a minute to discuss their observations with their small groups adding any additional information gleaned from the small group discussion to their charts.
- When ready, call on a few volunteers to share their thoughts with the whole class. See the Painting a Picture Chart-Teacher's Notes for possible student responses.

Show **slide 10**. Ask students to make inferences based on the observations they recorded. Remind them to record their inferences in the second column in Painting a Picture chart.

Give students about 5-10 minutes to review their observations and work with their groups to record their inferences. You might consider modeling this for your students. For example you could say - *an observation I made was, I heard instruments like the saxophone, clarinet and trumpet which are associated with jazz music so I can infer that the Blue Devils are a jazz band.* As groups are working, walk around to assess student progress, answer questions, and provide guidance as needed.

Teacher's Note: Making Inferences

Explain to students that an inference is a conclusion they can reasonably make based on their observations and prior knowledge. If students need further guidance as they make inferences, ask them to consider some of the following questions:

- What predictions can you make about the music you heard?
- What type of music is this?
- What era or decade would you guess this music was popular/developed?
- Why might this music and/or the musicians be significant?
- How does this music/the musicians relate to Oklahoma history?

Once groups have recorded their inferences, ask each group to share out at least one inference they have made. As students share, add any additional information you think is important to point out. Encourage students to change and add to their charts based on the whole class discussion. See the Painting a Picture Chart with Teacher's Notes for possible student responses.

Show **slide 11**. Give students about 10 minutes with their small groups to record their observations for each of the three document sets in the packet. Remind students that observations are simply what they see. As groups work, walk around to assess student progress, answer questions, and provide guidance as needed.

Show **slide 12**. Introduce Document Set 1: Oklahoma City Blue Devils. Once students have completed their observations, ask several to share out their observations about the Oklahoma City Blue Devils images.

Show **slide 13**. Introduce Document Set 2: Jimmy Rushing. Ask several groups to share their observations about Jimmy Rushing images.

Show **slide 14**. Introduce Document Set 3: Charlie Christian. Ask several groups to share their observations about the Charlie Christian images.

Be sure each group has a chance to share at some point throughout the process. Refer to Painting a Picture Chart with Teacher's Notes for possible student responses.

Display **slide 15**. Have students return to their groups to complete the inferences section of their charts. Remind students that an inference is a conclusion based on their observations from the photos.

Bring the whole class back together. Ask each group to share at least one inference they made. As students share, add any additional information you think is important to point out. Encourage students to change and add to their charts based on the whole class discussion.

35 minutes

Explain

Show **slide 16**.

Pass out the article **"Deep Deuce and the Cultivation of Jazz in Oklahoma."** Explain to students that they will continue to explore how Oklahoma jazz musicians influenced the music scene. Ask students to read the article in their groups and use the Why-Lighting strategy to highlight information that answers the essential —*How did Oklahoma musicians contribute to the evolution of jazz music?* Have them justify their reasoning for highlighting information by writing their notes in the margins.

After students have finished Why-Lighting the article, call on each group to share at least one thing they highlighted and why. Encourage students to continue to highlight and/or make notes on their articles based on the whole class discussion. Add any other important information to the conversations that students might have missed. See the **Deep Deuce and the Cultivation of Jazz in Oklahoma-Teacher's Notes** for possible student responses.

Show **slide 17.**

Have students, individually, use the information from their charts and from the article to create a Six-Word Memoir for the following: the Blue Devils, Jimmy Rushing, and Charlie Christian. Each memoir should summarize students' understanding of the significance of the contributions and influence of the Blue Devils, Rushing, and Christian on the development and evolution of jazz music.

Have students record their responses on the attached **Six-Word Memoir** handout, or have students record them on sticky notes and post them on a white board so they can easily view each other's work. If students record them on a sticky note, be sure to have them put their names on the sticky note.

Optional Technology Integration

Have students post their responses digitally using Padlet to add a technology component to the lesson.

Possible Student Responses

Blue Devils

- This band ignited Oklahoma's jazz scene.
- Oklahoma jazz began with Blue Devils.
- Blue Devil jazz. Only the beginning.
- Blue Devils pioneered the jazz movement.

Jimmy Rushing

- Jazz singer with an enormous voice.
- Belted it out with Count Basie.
- His soaring voice wowed jazz audiences.
- Carrying a tune with jazz greats.

Charlie Christian

- Jazz guitar genius with electrifying solos.
- Guitar front and center, amplifying jazz.
- His electric guitar solos changed jazz.
- Changed how the guitar was played.

15 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Bricktown Murals

The Bricktown Mural is a six-panel mosaic mural, located on the walls outside the Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark in Oklahoma City, OK. You may want to print out the attached **History of Bricktown Mural** handout and distribute color copies of these images to each student or group. Advise students that they are going to analyze two of the six mural panels. Alternatively, you could simply show **slides 19-21** on your white board or you could share the images with students digitally to be viewed on their own devices.

Show **slide 18**. Introduce the **History of Bricktown Mural** by artist Susan Morrison. Ask students to look at each mural panel and identify familiar words and images. Have them explain their significance based on what they have learned during this lesson. This can be done in small groups and/or as a whole class.

Show **slides 19-20**, which show panels 1 and 2 in the mural individually. Ask students to identify familiar images in the mural.

Possible Student Responses

Panel 1

- "Oklahoma Jazz"
- "The Black Dispatch" and image of the the newspaper building
- Image of musicians playing the clarinet and the bass
- "Ruby's Grill" and "Slaughter's Hall"
- "Aldridge Theater" and the image of the theater building
- "2nd Street" on the street sign image
- "Charlie Christian" and the image of a man standing with a guitar

Panel 2

- "Calvary Baptist Church" and image of the church building
- Sign that says "Deep Deuce"
- Musicians playing the guitar and piano
- Drum that says "Blue Devils"
- "Mr. Five by Five" referencing Jimmy Rushing

See the attached **History of Bricktown handout-Teacher's Notes** for further explanation.

Show **slide 21**. Ask student groups to discuss these questions:

- What story does the mural tell?
- What is the purpose of the mural?

When students are ready, ask each group to share what their group discussed in response to both of these questions with the whole class.

10 minutes

Evaluate

Show **slide 22**. Have student groups discuss the final questions:

- How do these murals help us, as a collective society, remember our past and honor the legacy of those who have come before us?
- Why is it important to do so?

When students are ready, ask several groups to share what their group discussed with the whole class. Conclude the discussion noting that the Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark now stands where the original all Black school, Douglass School (shown in panel 2) was located in Oklahoma City and Bricktown sits on the edge of Deep Deuce. These murals honor the community where the ballpark is located by telling the story of Oklahoma's jazz musicians as well as other significant parts of the area's history. Monuments like these murals seek to preserve our community's collective memory by informing generations to come about our past. This helps people understand the contributions of those who have come before and how this has shaped the community we live in and experience today.

Additionally, the Painting a Picture Chart and the Six-Word Memoirs serve as an evaluation for this lesson.

Resources

- Arnold, A. (2010). *Oklahoma City music: Deep Deuce and beyond*. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing.
- Arnold, A. (n.d.). *Second Street.* The encyclopedia of Oklahoma history and culture. https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=SE004
- Brewer, S. (2021). The history of Bricktown mural 1. Artist: Susan Morrison. [Photograph].
- Brewer, S. (2021). The history of Bricktown mural 2. Artist: Susan Morrison. [Photograph].
- Chambers, A. (2020, Dec. 04). *Jazz icon Charlie Christian's legacy extends beyond OKC*. Oklahoma Gazette. https://www.okgazette.com/oklahoma/jazz-icon-charlie-Christians-legacy-extends-beyond-okc/Content?oid=2966120
- Count Basie Center for the Arts. (n.d.). William J. *"Count" Basie (1904-1984).* https://thebasie.org/countbasiebio
- Gottlieb, W.P. (1946). *Portrait of Jimmy Rushing, Aquarium, New York, NY.* Library of Congress. [Photograph]. https://www.loc.gov/item/gottlieb.07551/
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Fiction and the Facts. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/60
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Painting a Picture. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1331
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Six Word Memoir. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/75
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-Lighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128
- LaCroix, R. (2018, Nov. 11). *Rewind 006: Blues, jazz, and R&B*. National Public Radio. https://www.kosu.org/show/oklahoma-rock-show-rewind/2018-11-11/rewind-006-blues-jazz-and-r-b
- Lang, G. (2012, Jan. 29). *Remembering Jimmy Rushing, the 'Five by Five' man with enormous voice*. The Oklahoman. https://oklahoman.com/article/3644561/remembering-jimmy-Rushing-the-five-by-five-man-with-the-enormous-voice
- National Public Radio. (2002, Nov. 7). *Revisiting the sound of guitar pioneer Christian*. [Radio show]. https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=834507
- Oklahoma Historical Society. (1941). *Benny Goodman Sextet*. [Photograph]. https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1593803/
- Oklahoma Historical Society. (n.d.). *Sam Hughes, Charlie Christian, Leslie Sheffield, and Dick Wilson*. [Photograph]. https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1595579/
- Oklahoma Historical Society. (n.d.). *OKPOP Collection. The Aldridge Theatre*. [Photograph]. https://www.travelok.com/music-trail/venues/deep-deuce
- Oklahoma Historical Society. (n.d.). *OKPOP Collection. The Blue Devils.* [Photograph]. https://www.travelok.com/music-trail/venues/deep-deuce
- Oklahoma Historical Society. (1940). *OKPOP Collection. The Black Dispatch Headline.* [Photograph]. https://www.travelok.com/music-trail/artists/charlie-christian
- Oklahoma Music Trail: Deep Deuce. (n.d.) https://www.travelok.com/music-trail/venues/deep-deuce
- Page, W. (2012, Dec. 23). *Walter Page's Blue Devils: Blue Devil Blues*. [Radio Show]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K51s5KBDZ9Y
- Placid Press. (2018, Jan. 15). *When a Baptist church in Oklahoma City turned down Martin Luther King Jr. and helped alter the course of history*. https://placidpress.com/2018/01/15/martin-luther-king-jr-calvary-baptist-church-oklahoma-city/
- Ratliff, B. (2002, Oct. 20). *He changed the way jazz guitar is played.* The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/20/arts/music-he-changed-the-way-jazz-guitar-is-played.html
- Savage, W. W., Jr. (1983). *Singing Cowboys and all that jazz: A short history of popular music in Oklahoma*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Vitale, T. (2018, Jan 16). *How Benny Goodman orchestrated 'The most important concert In jazz history'*. National Public Radio. https://www.npr.org/2018/01/16/578312844/how-benny-goodman-orchestrated-the-most-important-concert-in-jazz-history