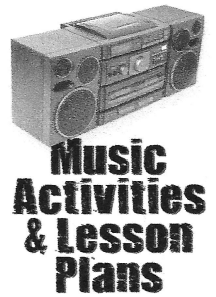


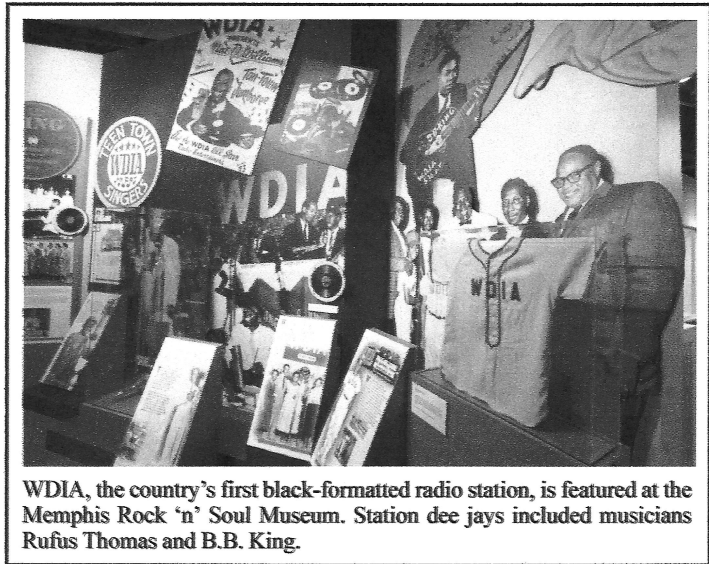
On The Air: Developing Your Own Radio Station

Audience: Grades 7 - 12



Overview - After completing the “Listening Challenge” activities on blues, country, gospel, rock and roll, and soul, students will explore the history of radio with a focus on the Grand Ole Opry, and consider its impact on music, culture, and entertainment throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This culminating group activity puts students behind the microphone as hosts of their own educational and entertaining radio programs in which they act as producers, hosts, and famous guests (such as Robert Johnson, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, or Otis Redding) while demonstrating their knowledge of the various musical genres.

Curriculum Connections - This lesson may be used to address the following academic standards: *Sings, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; Performs on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; Knows and applies appropriate criteria to music and music performances; Understands the relationship between music and history and culture; Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process; Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions; Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process; Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes; Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns; Understands the relationships among science, technology, society, and the individual; Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity, and behavior.*



WDIA, the country's first black-formatted radio station, is featured at the Memphis Rock 'n' Soul Museum. Station dee jays included musicians Rufus Thomas and B.B. King.

Materials - For this lesson you will need:

- Various recording of Listening Challenge selections
- 1 copy of “A Radio Timeline” handout per student (Appendix pg. 67)
- 1 copy of “The Grand Ole Opry & WSM” handout per student (Appendix pg. 69)
- Audio recorder (tape or digital)

Activity - Conduct a class survey. Ask students what radio stations they listen to. Have them describe the station's format and provide examples of the music heard on that station. Ask how often students listen to the radio. Ask students if they are familiar with satellite radio – if so, have them describe the difference between “terrestrial” radio (local AM and FM stations) and satellite radio. Collect and disaggregate the survey data. Students or teachers can create a display showing what various classroom “groups” are listening to and when they are listening.

Explore the history of radio using “A Radio Timeline” as a reference, and discuss the impact radio programs like the Grand Ole Opry have had on our country's musical landscape. Discuss the various types of radio station formats that exist in addition to music programming. Examples might include NPR (National Public Radio) with its eclectic blend of news, educational and entertaining programming, Memphis-based WDIA





Music Activities & Lesson Plans

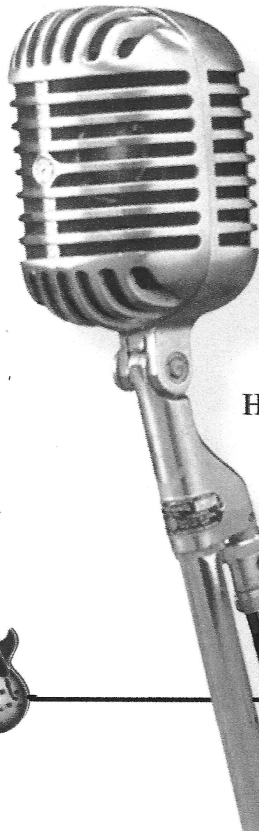
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(America's first all-black format) with its history of community spirit and music, and WXPB (University of Pennsylvania) syndicated program "World Café" which features in-studio performances and interviews from a wide variety of musicians.

Divide students into groups and begin working on developing their radio programs. Schedule "show times" (specific day of the week and order in which groups will present their programs). Each group should include the following material in their projects:

1. Written scripts of their program "discussions", including station call letters (e.g. WSM) type of format, and student credits (who is doing what) – specific requirements to be determined by teacher. Each group member must contribute, whether its script writing, interviewing, or acting as an in-studio guest
2. A station "jingle" – Sing a melody of your station name and/or program. Add harmony if possible. Listen to current radio stations for examples.
3. Listening samples – recorded (CD) or performed by students (sung or performed on instruments)
4. Adequate preparation! Students should be prepared to deliver a well-rehearsed, professional quality show when they step up to the mic.
5. A list of all works cited in project – CDs, information from web sites, books, magazines, etc.

If a group decides to develop an interview program featuring blues musicians, one student may choose to be Robert Johnson while another student (or students) interviews him. The interview would probably cover Johnson's life and career, his influences, songs, and the legend that he sold his soul to the devil. During the interview, Robert Johnson could sing one of his famous songs such as "Cross Road Blues" and the hosts could ask when he wrote and recorded it, as well as the meaning behind the lyrics.



Extension Activity – For additional fun, and to complete the radio station environment, have students make their own microphones for use as props during their presentations. Search the Internet for images of old microphones found in radio stations. Don't forget "On The Air" signs, tables and chairs for hosts and guests. Record the performances (tape or digital audio) and listen to them in class or share them with others in your school. If the technology is available, transfer the recordings onto CDs for the students and to keep for your archives. Consider video taping the presentations and including behind-the-scenes footage. If video equipment is not available, you may want to take pictures of the project in its various stages. Print the pictures and make a display of the activity that includes all the groups that were involved. Have fun with it!

