

**Jazz WebQuest**

# **Spotlight on Jazz**

**Starring...**

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## Introduction

You and your fellow classmates will be starring in a Jazz Concert (date announced in class.) Although you won't be performing, you will be sharing what you have learned from this WebQuest. Throughout the course of this WebQuest you will dive into the world of Jazz, one of the few authentic and truly American Art forms. More specifically you and your classmates will focus on Jazz songs or tunes. At the end of this WebQuest you present what you have learned at our "Jazz Concert." To learn what you have to do to complete this Quest just follow along...let's get swingin'!

## Task

For this WebQuest you will select your favorite Jazz song or tune (if you don't have one already you can pick a song or tune that you really dig) and prepare to share what you have learned with your fellow Jazz Cats.

As you complete this Quest the following questions should be answered. (If you would like to go beyond these questions feel free to do so!) If possible you should find a sound clip as well if you don't already have a recording of the song.

You will present your information in the form of a poster. These posters will then be displayed in our classroom. Keep this in mind as you create your poster.

## Questions to answer:

1. What is the name of your song or tune?
2. Who wrote it and when?
  - a. If possible include a short bio of the composer and a picture.
3. Is this piece vocal or instrumental jazz?
  - a. In other words, how is it usually performed?
4. Who was the original performing artist?
  - a. Include a short bio and picture
5. What is the background of the song or tune?
  - a. If it is a song, what are the lyrics?
6. What Resources did you use? (at least 3)

Example: (you may not use this song...sorry☺)

Sound clip: <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/strangefruit/film.html>

### 1. “Strange Fruit”

2. Abel Meeropol under the pseudonym Lewis Allan, about 1940
  - a. He was a Jewish school teacher who later went on to win an Oscar for his short film “The House I Live In” performed by Frank Sinatra.



### 3. It is a vocal jazz song—not typically done instrumentally.

### 4. Billie Holiday

- a. Also known as Lady Day. She started out singing in Harlem night clubs. Later she toured with Count Basie and Artie Shaw, but it wasn't until Benny Goodman dragged her into the studio that she made her first studio recording. Her trademark became wearing a white Gardenia in her hair and she died at the age of 44.



5. “Strange Fruit” is about the lynching of a black man in the south. This song caused quite a stir when it first debuted because this was before the Civil Rights Movement. Meeropol, the composer, wrote this poem after he saw a disturbing picture of a lynching.

- a. Lyrics: Southern trees bear a strange fruit  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root  
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees  
Pastoral scene of the gallant South  
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth  
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh  
And the sudden smell of burning flesh!  
Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck  
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck  
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop  
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

### 6. Resources used:

- a. <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/strangefruit/film.html>
- b. <http://www.cmgww.com/music/holiday/bio.html>
- c. <http://www.vervemusicgroup.com/history.aspx?hid=8>

# Process

1. You will need to select a song or tune.
  - a. There are a couple of ways that you can do this: 1) you can go to any of the websites I have listed for you (on the Resources page) and listen to sound clips or 2) you can scroll through these same websites and select a song or tune based on the title.
2. You will need to answer the questions posed in the task.
  - a. Once again, the websites will help you with this. You may also use other websites that you have found.
3. After finding the answers to the questions you will need to prepare to present what you have found at our “Jazz Concert.”
  - a. For your presentation you will need to create a poster that we will hang in the classroom after you have finished your presentation.
  - b. The poster can be done as creatively as you would like. The only requirement is that you have put your question answers on it somewhere. See the example under “Learning Advice.”
    - i. Don’t forget to put the resources that you used somewhere on your poster too!
  - c. You will also need to play your sound clip for the class at this time. You can decide whether you want to play the recording at the beginning, middle or end of your presentation.
    - i. If you have your own recording of the song or tune please don’t play the entire recording. Try to keep it to 30-60 seconds.
    - ii. It would also be a good idea to have someone ready to play your recording when you are ready.
4. Present your song or tune at the Jazz Concert!
5. Hang your poster in the Classroom for the whole world to see!

# Resources

1. The Verve Music Group  
<http://www.vervemusicgroup.com/history.aspx?hid=8>
2. The Jazz Page  
<http://www.thejazzpage.de/index1.html>
3. A History of Jazz  
<http://www.historyjazz.com/>
4. Jazz Roots  
[www.jass.com/](http://www.jass.com/)
5. All About Jazz  
<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/timeline.htm>



# Learning Advice

After answering the questions presented to you in class you will need to create a poster that presents the information you have found. You will need to make sure that information you have found is presented somewhere on the poster. This includes the question answers, pictures, and resources. Remember that these will be hung around the classroom so you will need to make sure that they look neat.



The example below will give you an idea of what I want. (Can you see that it looks like a tree?)

## Strange Fruit

Abel Meeropol under the pseudonym Lewis Allan wrote the music and lyrics for the song "Strange Fruit" around the year of 1940. He was a Jewish school teacher who later went on to win an Oscar for his short film "The House I Live In" performed by Frank Sinatra. Meeropol was inspired to write this poem and then set it to music after he saw a disturbing picture of a lynching. It is a vocal jazz song and is not typically done instrumentally.

Billie Holiday, also known as Lady Day, was the original artist on this song. She started out singing in Harlem night clubs. Later she toured with Count Basie and Artie Shaw, but it wasn't until Benny Goodman dragged her into the studio that she made her first studio recording. Her trademark became wearing a white Gardenia in her hair and she died at the age of 44.


"Strange Fruit" is about the lynching of a black man in the South. This song caused quite a stir when it first debuted because this was before the Civil Rights Movement. The lyrics to the song are as follows.



Billie Holiday

Southern trees bear a strange fruit  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root  
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees  
Pastoral scene of the gallant South  
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth  
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh  
And the sudden smell of burning flesh!  
Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck  
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck  
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop  
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

**By Hillary Severe**



Abel Meeropol

The resources I used to complete this WebQuest are:  
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/strangefruit/film.html> <http://www.cmgww.com/music/holiday/bio.html> <http://www.vervemusicgroup.com/history.aspx?hid=8>

# Conclusion

Completing this WebQuest should have helped you learn or appreciate four things.

1. The world of Jazz is versatile!
2. Not all Jazz sounds the same. Even if the instruments are all the same, the overall sound can be very different.
3. Every song or tune has a story to tell, or has made some sort of contribution to this genre of music. Many times these pieces of music are tied to our own American Heritage.
4. Jazz musicians, then and now, should be appreciated as much as other performers. Even if you don't *like* it, you can respect it and what these performers are able to do.



**See you at the  
Concert!**