

The Blues Project 2018: Freedom Highway Assignment Sheet

Throughout February (Black History Month), we'll be doing a study of African-American culture and music, something I call "The Blues Project." Every year, we focus on a slightly different theme within the blues, and this year our theme is "Freedom Highway" and we'll be focusing on the songs of the Civil Rights movement. Though emancipated from slavery after the Civil War, it took African-Americans nearly a century to claim their full legal rights as American citizens. Although small gains were made over that time, it wasn't until the late 1950s and 1960s that the Civil Rights Movement really gained steam, thanks in large part to the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. During this time, black Americans marched, sat, and protested for their equal rights in a non-violent social revolution. Since they did not physically fight against the US legal system, the only weapon they had was their voices. In mass meetings, sit-ins, and marches, singing was always prominent. Music unified the activists, strengthened their resolve, and reminded them of the mission ahead. While enduring violent beatings, attack dogs, fire hoses, and more, these civil rights activists sang in the face of their oppressors the songs of their ancestors, reworked and re-purposed for the fight ahead. This year's Blues Project will highlight those songs, as well as other popular music of the time that reflected the struggle and fight for civil rights.

For 40 points, your job is to write a one-page report on a specific topic relating to the blues. Each student will be assigned a different topic with a specific due date. Check the blues project website (<https://thebluesproject.weebly.com/2018-freedom-highway.html>) to learn more about your topic and then listen to the song that goes along with it. Be sure to address the prompt for your topic and answer any questions asked. Refer to the classroom calendar to see when your topic is due. Remember, the report should be about the topic, not the song. On the day your report is due, you will read it aloud at the beginning of class before turning it in. You will be penalized 10 points for each day your report is late. These reports should be typed, double-spaced, using 1 inch margins, and 12 point, Arial font. A bibliography in MLA format must be included.

For up to an additional 20 points of extra credit, you may create some sort of ORIGINAL artwork (drawing/painting/sculpture) to serve as a visual aide to your report. Simply printing a picture off the internet will not get you extra credit. It is due on the day of your report.

I will pick the best of these reports to be displayed and/or read aloud at the Blues Project concert finale on March 16th, in front of several hundred people. If your report is chosen to be read or displayed at the concert finale, you will receive 20 bonus points. With that in mind, please keep them approximately one page in length and include any interesting facts that you feel an audience would enjoy hearing. Please use your own words, and if you want to quote an outside source, remember cite the source appropriately in your report.