



Train Songs: Running through the classroom

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Mini Lesson

Overview

This hands-on lesson is designed to effectively show how the train by way of classic American train songs can be used in the classroom to teach Geography, Social Studies, and song writing. For this lesson we will use two songs. The first, *Mystery Train*, sometimes known as *Train I Ride*, written by Little Junior Parker and Sam Phillips

- The first song recorded by Phillips at his Memphis Recording Service / Sun Records, 1953.
- This song has been recorded by Rock & Roll Hall of Famers Buddy Guy (with Junior Wells), Bruce Springsteen, Elvis Presley, and the Doors to name a few.

The second selection: Mr. Hobo written in 2007 by Fernando Jones. This song was written to encourage pre-k through 4th graders to dream and explore the world of travel through song.

Expectations

These songs will serve as templates for Learners to write their own lyrics for songs that can be used in the classroom.

Learning Objectives

After this seminar Learners will be able to:

- Use the 12-bar Blues structure in fast, medium or slow tempos to write songs
- Teach their students how to write songs
- Make a song up using a train line (metropolitan and national)
- Recognize the significance and importance of the train as a primary mode of transportation from the South to the North

Mr. Hobo

By Fernando Jones

Bluefunkjazzroll Music, BMI

July 1, 2007

The first car was filled with corn
The second car was filled with coal
The third car was filled with copper
the fourth car was filled with gold.

I ain't just a hobo ridin' rails.
I'm Mr. Hobo blazin' trails.

He ain't just a hobo ridin' rails
He's Mr. Hobo blazin' trails.

The fifth car rocks to the left
The sixth car rolls to the right
The seventh and eighth car play the Blues all night.

I ain't just a hobo ridin' rails.
I'm Mr. Hobo blazin' trails.

He ain't just a hobo ridin' rails
He's Mr. Hobo blazin' trails.

When we pulled into the station
The steel wheels go to sleep
We're non-stop from Illinois, Chicago
To Mississippi, Aberdeen.

I ain't just a hobo ridin' rails.
I'm Mr. Hobo blazin' trails.

He ain't just a hobo ridin' rails
He's Mr. Hobo blazin' trails.

Activity

Use the address of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame + Museum and get the train route from Amtrak.com to the destination below of your choice. Let the route dictate the song. For example, you can write lyrics expressing the stops along the way of the trip. Here are other popular music museums you can travel to by train from *the Hall*.

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum
One Key Plaza, Cleveland, Ohio 44114
(East Ninth Street at Lake Erie)
<http://www.rockhall.com>

The Delta Blues Museum
#1 Blues Alley, Clarksdale, MS 38614
<http://www.deltabluesmuseum.org>

Chess Records / The Willie Dixon Blues Heaven Foundation
2120 S. Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL
<http://www.bluesheaven.com/>

Sun Records (Memphis, TN)
706 Union Avenue, Memphis, TN
<http://www.sunstudio.com/>

STAX Museum of American Soul Music
926 E. McLemore Ave.
Memphis, TN 38106
<https://www.soulsvilleusa.com/>

Motown Historical Museum
www.motownmuseum.com
2648 W Grand Blvd, Detroit, MI 48208

Graceland
3734 Elvis Presley Boulevard, Memphis, TN 38186-0508
<http://www.elvis.com/>

FernandoJones.com

Material Needed

Mystery Train and Mr. Hobo songs on CD and lyrics
Mr. Hobo Activity Book
CD player and Lyrics
Mapquest.com and Amtrak.com