Feelin’ blue — composing

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| Year 9 | The Arts — Music |
| Students compose and publish a blues song for voice and accompaniment. | |
| **Time allocation** | 6–8 hours |
| **Student roles** | Students work individually to:   * complete a step-by-step guide to writing a blues song * compose a handwritten draft of a 12-bar blues song for voice and accompaniment * publish their 12-bar blues song for voice and accompaniment using electronic music notation. |
| Context for assessment  Blues is a vocal and instrumental form of music that is based on the 12-bar blues chord progression and the blues scale. It emerged in African-American communities of the United States from spirituals, work songs, field hollers, shouts and chants and rhymed simple narrative ballads. The use of blues notes and prominence of call and response patterns in the music and lyrics are indicative of African influence. The blues influenced later American and Western popular music, as it became the roots of jazz, bluegrass, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, heavy metal, hip hop and other popular music forms. | |

******This assessment gathers evidence of learning for the following **Essential Learnings**:

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| The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9 | |
| Ways of working Students are able to:   * make decisions about arts elements, languages and cultural protocols in relation to specific style, function, audience and purpose of arts works * create and shape arts works by manipulating arts elements to express meaning in different contexts * modify and refine genre-specific arts works, using interpretive and technical skills * present arts works to particular audiences for a specific purpose, style and function, using genre specific arts techniques, skills, processes and cultural protocols * reflect on learning, apply new understandings and justify future applications. | Knowledge and understanding *Music*  Music involves singing, playing instruments, listening, moving, improvising and composing by manipulating the music elements to express ideas, considering specific audiences and specific purposes, through sound.   * Duration, beat, time values and metre are used to create and vary rhythm. * Pitch, tonalities, scales and intervals are used to create and vary the horizontal arrangement of sound. * Tonalities and harmonies are used to organise music in different vertical arrangements. * Contemporary, traditional and genre-specific musical forms are used to structure music. * Interaction between the linear and the vertical arrangement of music is used to create the texture or density of sound. * Vocal, instrumental, electronic and computer-generated sound sources have characteristic sound qualities (tone colour) that can be altered through methods of production and manipulation. * Relative softness and loudness of sounds, and digital and electronic devices, are used to change dynamic levels and expression of music. |
| Assessable elements  * Knowledge and understanding * Creating | |
| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, The Arts Essential Learnings by the end of Year 9, QSA, Brisbane. | |

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| Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)  Cross-curriculum priority by the end of Year 9 |
| *Creating with ICTs*  Students experiment with, select and use ICTs to create a range of responses to suit the purpose and audience. They use ICTs to develop understanding, demonstrate creativity, thinking, learning, collaboration and communication across key learning areas. They:   * express and creatively represent ideas, information and thinking in innovative ways * develop innovative and creative responses, processes and simple systems * reflect on the use of ICTs as creative tools and apply established criteria to evaluate ICT responses.   *Communicating with ICTs*  Students experiment with, select and use ICTs across key learning areas to collaborate and enhance communication in local and global contexts for an identified purpose and audience. They:   * collaborate, exchange ideas, distribute information, present critical opinions, problem solve and interpret messages * apply suitable presentation and communication conventions and protocols * select and apply a variety of ICTs to exchange and interpret messages and meanings.   *Operating ICTs*  Students use a range of advanced ICT functions and applications across key learning areas to inquire, create, collaborate and communicate, and to efficiently manage information and data. They:   * apply efficient operational sequences for the operation of a variety of ICTs * apply formats and conventions when undertaking tasks * access appropriate support when updating or learning new operational skills. |
| Source: Queensland Studies Authority 2007, *ICTs* Cross-curriculum priority by the end of Year 9, QSA, Brisbane. |

Listed here are suggested learning experiences for students before attempting this assessment.

* Explore and listen to a variety of blues songs.
* Place blues songs in a social and historical context.
* Have a working knowledge of major scales and keys.
* Have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the primary chords of I, IV and V and practise writing and identifying them both aurally and visually.
* Learn about and practise using chords in “piano style”.
* Learn about instrumental fillers.
* Improvise instrumental fillers.
* Play and perform blues compositions.
* Learn about the blues genre.
* Analyse the elements that combine to create a blues song (e.g. syncopation, blues scale, blues progression, phrasing and form).
* Practise analysing blues songs.
* Develop aural awareness of hearing and understanding the 12-bar blues progression.
* Practise vocal and instrumental improvisation using the blues scale.
* Learn about and practise using written music notation.
* Learn about and practise using traditional score layout.
* Learn about and practise text setting.
* Learn about and practise writing and performing syncopated rhythms.
* Learn about and practise using genre specific language (see Appendix A: Glossary of music terms).
* Learn how to use the music software notation program that is available at your school.
* Practise reflecting on creative decisions and modifying choices to create a refined musical composition.

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| Icon_Resource | Teacher resources |

The following resources may be useful:

Background information about Bessie Smith and many recordings of Bessie’s songs which typify the blues genre can be found at: <www.redhotjazz.com/bessie.html>.

Background information about the blues genre and useful worksheets can be found at: <www.musicatschool.co.uk/year\_9/blues\_worksheets.htm>.

An excellent resource of the blues genre, including a “Blues classroom” with resources for teachers: <www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom.html>.

*Jazz*, a film by Ken Burns could be useful in showing students a blues performance. Available on DVD from the ABC shop at: <www.abcshop.com.au>.

## redesign headings_developPreparing

Consider these points before implementing the assessment.

* It may be useful for students to complete the Feelin’ blue — analysing assessment located on the Assessment Bank website, before undertaking this assessment.
* Ensure students know how to format their score prior to commencing this assessment (e.g. voice at the top of each system, bar lines that join the instruments, time signature, key signature note alignment etc).
* Throughout this assessment students are encouraged to continually reflect on and refine their choices. Appendix B: The Arts – a creative process outlines the creative and iterative process students will need to engage in.

## Implementation

Consider these points when implementing the assessment.

* Depending on your student cohort and available resources you may wish students to compose their song aurally and record the song onto CD for assessment.
* Depending upon class size and computer recourses available, you may need to rotate students through the draft inputting process in Section 3. Publishing. You may wish students to try playing their drafts while this rotation takes place.

### Possible extension activities

* Students compose their own lyrics in a blues style.
* Students compose two or more verses and demonstrate contrast in the piano accompaniment and instrumental fillers.
* Feelin’ blue — performing, located on the Assessment Bank website, is a useful follow-on assessment where students perform their blues songs in small groups. If you choose to do this, encourage students to compose for instruments played by class members or classroom tuned percussion.

## Sample implementation plan

This table shows one way that this assessment can be implemented. It is a guide only — you may choose to use all, part, or none of the table. You may customise the table to suit your students and their school environment.

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| **Suggested time** | **Student activity** | **Teacher role** |
| **Section 1. Write a blues song** | | |
| 1 hour | Complete steps 1–5 of Write a blues song in their *Student booklet.* | Assist students by providing verbal (or written) feedback on their responses. |
| 30–60 minutes | Improvise and experiment with different combinations of sounds that would be suitable for a blues melody, instrumental fillers and bass line. | Supervise student use of instruments and encourage experimentation. |
| **Section 2. Handwritten draft** | | |
| 2 hours | Complete a draft of their composition. | Remind students how to format their score.  Encourage students to refer to their checklist.  Provide feedback to students about their draft. |
| **Section 3. Publish your composition** | | |
| 1–2 hours | Input their draft into a software notation program (e.g. Sibelius).  Listen to their songs played through the computer and determine how they can improve upon their song by referring to the checklist provided in the *Student booklet.*  Make changes and print out a final copy of their song. | Assist students in using music notation software.  Listen to student drafts and help them to articulate how they can improve their song. |

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| Icon_Resource | Resources for the assessment |

Appendix A Glossary of music terms

Appendix B The Arts — A creative process

Instruments — Students may need access to school tuned percussion instruments or keyboards.

Music notation software — If your school does not have music notation software such as Sibelius, Finale NotePad is a free program that works in a simple but effective way. Available online at: <www.finalemusic.com/notepad>.

During the learning process, you and your students should have developed a shared understanding of the curriculum expectations identified as part of the planning process.

After students have completed the assessment, identify, gather and interpret the information provided in student responses. Use only the evidence in student responses to make your judgment about the quality of the student learning. Refer to the following documents to assist you in making standards-referenced judgments:

* *Guide to making judgments*
* *Indicative A response*
* *Sample responses* (where available).

### Making judgments about this assessment

If you choose to have your students present their composition as a recording rather than a written score, be careful to assess their crafting of the composition and the manipulation of musical elements (e.g. structure, instrumentation, dynamics, tempo, texture, tonality, metre, mood, articulation, melody, pitch, rhythm and harmony). It is the creation of the composition that is being assessed, not the performance.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to the resource *Using a Guide to making judgments*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

Evaluate the information gathered from the assessment to inform teaching and learning strategies.

Involve students in the feedback process. Give students opportunities to ask follow-up questions and share their learning observations or experiences.

Focus feedback on the student’s personal progress. Emphasise continuous progress relative to their previous achievement and to the learning expectations — avoid comparing a student with their classmates.

### Giving feedback about this assessment

Have students listen to each others’ compositions and give each other feedback.

Give students feedback about how they can enhance their creative process.

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| Icon_ForFurtherHelp | For further information, refer to the resource *Using feedback*, available in the Resources section of the Assessment Bank website. |

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| Glossary of music terms  Music, like any subject, has its own terminology. The following are key terms that need to be understood to complete this assessment.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Accompaniment** | Vocal or instrumental parts that accompany a melody. |  | | **Articulation** | The manner in which notes are performed, such as staccato (short) or legato (smoothly). | | **Beat** | Unit of measure of rhythmic time. A steady pulse. | | **Blues scale** | The arrangement of notes in the following order — 1; b3; 4; b5; 5; b7; 1 — in reference to equivalent major scale. | | **Balance** | When playing in an ensemble, instruments listen to each other to ensure that there is a good balance. That is, all parts can be heard and the melody is clear. | | **Chord** | Three or more tones sounded simultaneously. | | **Clef  (bass or treble)** | A symbol written at the beginning of a musical staff indicating which notes are represented by which lines and spaces. | | **Composition** | Creation of original music by organising sound. Usually written for others to perform. | | **Diatonic scale** | The notes found within a major or minor scale. | | **Dynamics** | Varying degrees of volume in the performance of music. |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Dynamic markings** | The symbols indicating the varying degrees of volume — *pp* pianissimo, very soft; *p* piano, soft; *mp* mezzo piano, medium soft; *mf* mezzo forte, medium loud; *f* forte, loud; and *ff* fortissimo, very loud. | | **Elements of music** | Melody, harmony, rhythm and form, and the expressive elements of dynamics, tempo, and timbre (tone colour). | | **Embellishments** | Notes added to ornament a melody or rhythmic pattern. | | **Form** | The organisation and structure of a composition and the interrelationships of musical events within the overall structure. | | **Genre** | Type or kind of musical work (e.g. opera, jazz, mariachi). | | **Harmonic  progression** | A succession of individual chords or harmonies that form larger units of phrases, sections or compositions. | | **Harmony** | The simultaneous sounding of two or more tones. | | **Instrumental filler** | An improvised melodic and rhythmic pattern. In blues music, an instrumental filler follows as a response to each phrase that the singer sings. | | **Improvisation** | Spontaneous creation of music. | | |
| Glossary of music terms (continued)   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Interval** | The distance in pitch between two tones. | | **Lyrics** | The words of a song. | | **Major key** | Tonally, a key based on a major scale; a scale that contains the following step pattern: whole, whole, half, whole, whole, whole, half; or uses the solfa tones of *do*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *so*, *la*, *ti*, *do*. | | **Melody** | An organised sequence of single notes. | | **Metre** | The grouping of beats by which a piece of music is measured. | | **Notation** | Written music indicating pitch and rhythm for performance. | | **Ostinato** | A rhythmic or melodic accompaniment figure repeated continuously. | | **Phrase** | A musical idea comparable to a sentence or a clause in language. | | **Pitch** | The location of a note related to its highness or lowness. | | **Rhythm** | The combinations of long and short, even or uneven sounds that convey a sense of movement in time. | | **Scale** | The arrangement of notes in a specific order of whole and half steps. |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Score** | The organised notation of all of the instrumental and/or vocal parts of a composition. |  | | **Sliding** | A technique used in the blues genre that involves sliding between two notes. | | **Staff (staves)** | The horizontal lines on and between which notes are written. | | **Syncopation** | The placement of rhythmic accents on weak beats or weak portions of beats. | | **Tempo** | The pace at which music moves according to the speed of the underlying beat. | | **Texture** | The character of the different layers of horizontal and vertical sounds. | | **Timbre** | Tone colour or quality of sound heard. | | **Tonality (key)** | The tonal centre of a composition. | | **Triad** | A three-note chord consisting of root, third and fifth. | | **12-bar blues** | A chord pattern often used in blues music based on the I, IV and V chords and the blues scale in specific order within 12 bars. | |

Adapted from glossary available at <www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/muglossary.asp>.

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| The Arts — a creative process  * **Creating** is an important aspect of The Arts. * It is essential that students are taught **how to create**,  rather than just being asked **to** create. * The creative process is **iterative**. * Students' creative skills develop **over time**.   CreativeProcess_Diagram_240108 |