



Group 5: American Rock and Roll

Imagine your group is helping one of the Beatles write his autobiography. You will work in small groups and use your knowledge of history to help your Beatle enrich his book. Here are the guidelines:

- Below you will see your assigned historical term. Each group has a different term from a different period in their subject's life.
- You also have received sources related to that term.
- Use this information to write a paragraph of 3-5 sentences for your Beatle's autobiography.
- Your sentences should connect his life to the term and use the first person. For example, "I remember watching the ships come in to the Liverpool docks."
- Write your paragraph on the board or on a piece of paper large enough for the whole class to read.
- Share it with the class.
- As the other groups share their paragraphs, copy the story in your "Autobiography of a Beatle" handout.

Term: Cunard Yanks

The "Cunard Yanks" were merchant seamen who traveled between New York City and Liverpool, bringing American fashion and music to Liverpool. (Cunard is a British-American shipping company that still operates today.) Some claim the Beatles got their American Rock and Roll records from these merchants before this music was discovered by the rest of Great Britain. The Beatles were heavily influenced by new sounds from American musicians such as Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, and Little Richard. The Cunard Yanks are a symbol of cultural diffusion.

Source 1: The Cunard Ship the Carinthia in Liverpool Harbor



Source: Liverpoolships.org

Source 2: “Cunard Yanks,” Postwar Merchant Seamen



Source: Cunardyanks.org

Source 3: Video excerpt from *The Cunard Yanks*

Source 4: Video of Liverpool-born Gerry Marsden of the band Gerry and the Pacemakers discussing American music in Liverpool