



Created in collaboration with Los Angeles United School District teacher Brian Fritch, “An American History of Rock and Roll” is a High School course drawing entirely upon the materials freely available at Teachrock.org.

The course integrates the history of the United States from the 1950s on with the history of American popular music. In taking the course, students consider how genres such as Rock and Roll, Pop, Folk, Latin, and Hip Hop have both reflected and informed the cultural, social, and political developments that have occurred in the past 7 decades of U.S. History.

The course is divided into four chronological units, with each unit containing approximately 20 media-rich lessons from TeachRock.org. The course culminates in a project-based capstone activity in which students teams create their own short documentary film.

The course will span 1-2 semesters, depending on how many lessons the teacher seeks to use in each unit. Teachers can also supplement the curriculum with additional collections TeachRock offers. For instance, lessons from [CNN Soundtracks Collection](#) can be drawn upon to teach more recent moments in U.S. History, from [Hurricane Katrina](#) to [9/11](#) to the [Stonewall Rebellion](#) to the [#BlackLivesMatter](#) movement. [The Music that Shaped America Curriculum](#) focuses on U.S. History before the 20th Century, with particular focus on issues of [slavery](#) and [abolition](#), the [Civil War](#), and [Reconstruction](#). TeachRock’s [Rumble: The Indians who Rocked the World](#) collection examines U.S. History from the Native American point of view, with lessons on [Wounded Knee](#), the [Red Power Movement](#), and [the history of cultural appropriation](#).

The course fulfills the “G” requirement in the University of California admissions standards, and aligns with Common Core, National Council for the Social Studies, and California History/Social Studies Standards, and is available for free use by teachers everywhere.

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## Los Angeles Unified School District

**Course Title: An American History of Rock and Roll**

**(Semester Course- Grades 9-12)**

**Prerequisite: None**

**Course Description:** An American History of Rock and Roll seeks to integrate the history of America with the history and progression of Rock and Roll. Students taking this class will be able to trace the history of Rock and Roll and understand the influences it had on major historical events within the United States. The class will cover issues of race, gender, age, and sex and how Rock and Roll helped to spur rebellion in those areas in an attempt to create equality. The course covers the United States History from the mid 1950's through a study of the Blues progression from its origins to its growth to Rock and Roll and related genres. The course is inclusive of African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanas/os and Latinas/os, Native Americans and their experiences and contributions through music to the history of Rock and Roll.

The purpose of the course is to take a topic the students are genuinely interested in, music, and use that to show the impact of music on the history of the United States. After the course students will be much more aware of how music can be and is impactful of the world around them.

### **Course Syllabus (Topics to be covered)**

#### **Birth of Rock and Roll Unit**

In the mid-1950s, Rock and Roll slammed into the consciousness of the American people. Whether you liked it or not, there was no denying that Rock and Roll had arrived. It was the first American musical tradition constructed from the many musical traditions that animated life in the 20th century, including Gospel, Blues, Country, Jazz and R&B. In bringing together these musical bloodlines, Rock and Roll also brought people together, from across regions, across race and class lines, and, finally, across oceans. It was the beginning of a historical turn that would change daily life in the modern world. This first section, The Birth of Rock and Roll, explores the roots of Rock and Roll, its emergence and its entrance into the cultural mainstream of America.

#### **Teenage Rebellion Unit**

From its raucous beginnings to the time of its mainstream acceptance, Rock and Roll was youth music. More exactly, it was the music of the teenager. Born of postwar affluence and the increased leisure time such affluence afforded young Americans, the teenager was a thing new to the American landscape. If for some they were an object of anxiety, this had everything to do with the fact that teenagers defined themselves in opposition to the parent generation. Rebellion was a part of being a teenager. And Rock and Roll was an expression of that rebellion and of the growing gap between generations. From the teen surf culture celebrated in the music of the Beach Boys to the mini-melodramas of the Shangri-Las' Girl Group sound and teen dances including the Twist, the Stroll, the Mashed Potato, and the Watusi, the world of the teenager was made larger and more powerful through the music itself. As 60s Soul and the British Invasion demonstrated, it would be the teenagers, inspired by their music, who would define American life moving forward.

### **Transformation Unit**

The teenage culture of the fifties and early sixties was the seedbed for the youth-driven counterculture of the late sixties and early seventies. This shift toward a countercultural sensibility among young people was reflected in the music itself. If in the fifties Rock and Roll had been viewed primarily as a popular entertainment, in the period of “transformation” it would come to be viewed as—in its most elevated forms—an Art. In the hands of Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, and others, music became a “serious” thing. As young people faced the troubling facts of a war that included them and a country that refused them the right to vote, music now offered, among other things, a megaphone through which their disillusionment could be voiced. As the nation saw the rise of the Civil Rights movement and the Black Power movement that followed, artists like Marvin Gaye, James Brown, and Stevie Wonder used music to express feelings of frustration about the racial divide and excitement around the possibility of change. And as the music addressed the world of which it was a part, the music grew more complex, more varied—but, importantly, that music was also changing the world in ways it hadn’t previously.

### **Fragmentation Unit**

For a brief time, Rock and Roll seemed almost to be building its own utopia. In late sixties Rock and Roll culture in particular, the walls erected in the wider world – between the races, between men and women, between nations – seemed to collapse. The record collections of the young Rock and Roll audience often included R&B, Hard Rock, Blues, Pop, Jazz, Country, and more. Free Form FM radio mirrored this eclectic but inclusive approach to music by creating inventive playlists unbound by genre. And, then, as the “Fragmentation” crept in, the old walls seemed to reassert themselves. Fan communities, radio formats, and, indeed, even personal record collections came to be defined by genre. Hard lines were drawn. Punks defined themselves in opposition to the fans of arena rock groups like Led Zeppelin. Grunge borrowed from Heavy Metal but, more adamantly still, refused the theater of Heavy Metal. Radio was again split down racial lines. If Rock and Roll culture, in the broad sense, had been connected with youth culture as a whole, and this brought different genres and traditions into dialogue with one another, now Rock and Roll culture grew increasingly fragmented. It wouldn’t mean the end of the music. But some of the promise of late sixties Rock and Roll was, for the moment, compromised.

### **Recommended Focus Standards**

#### **Historical Analysis (From Framework)**

Chronological and Spatial Thinking 1, 2, and 3.  
Research Evidence and Point of View 1,2, and 3.  
Historical Interpretation 1, 2, 3, and 4

#### **Common Core Reading in History/Social Science Standards**

RH 1-10

#### **Common Core Writing in History/Social Science Standards**

WH 1-10

### **California History/Social Science Content Standards**

11.8.8: Discuss forms of popular culture, with emphasis on their origins and geographic diffusion (e.g., jazz and other forms of popular music, professional sports, architectural and artistic styles).

11.10.5: Discuss the diffusion of the civil rights movement of African Americans from the churches of the rural South and the urban North, including the resistance to racial desegregation in Little Rock and Birmingham, and how the advances influenced the agendas, strategies, and effectiveness of the quests of American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans for civil rights and equal opportunities.

### **Representative Performance Outcomes and Skills**

**In this course students will learn and understand:**

#### **Unit 1: Birth of Rock**

- How different perspectives on love can be expressed through lyrics
- How songwriters use music to enhance or change the meaning of the lyrics
- That songs reflect their cultural and historical context
- How Country Blues music reflected the socioeconomic experiences of southern African Americans in pre-World War II America
- The basic workings and challenges of the sharecropping system
- The effects of sharecropping on the daily lives of African-American and white tenant farmers
- The effects of natural disasters such as river floods on poor southerners in pre-World War II America
- How the paintings of Jacob Lawrence represented African American life in the South before World War II
- Factors that prompted African Americans to migrate from the South to northern cities during the Great Migration, including the burdens of the sharecropping economy and racial discrimination
- How the editors of the *Chicago Defender* newspaper encouraged African Americans in the South to seek relocation
- Songs by Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf that reflected and symbolically managed an African-American experience of displacement
- The role of Chicago's Chess record label in popularizing an Urban Blues sound

predicated on electrified instruments and ensemble playing

- Key developments in the invention and development of the electric guitar in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s
- The impact of the electric guitar on the Blues in the 1940s and after
- The importance of R&B as a musical gateway to the Rock and Roll of the mid-1950s
- The role of labels like Atlantic Records in circulating R&B to both a black and a white audience
- Some key differences between R&B and early Rock and Roll
- The dominance of Big Bands in the late 1930s and 1940s, including bandleaders such as Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman
- How World War II and rationing affected civilian life in the U.S., including the ability of Big Bands to tour and retain musicians
- Effects of the 1942 musicians strike on the American recording industry, including the emergence of solo entertainers and small combo-based musical genres
- How authors Horatio Alger, Jr. and John Steinbeck interpreted the American Dream through their fiction
- How Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash exemplified elements of the American Dream throughout their successful musical careers
- How Graceland became a geographical and allegorical symbol for Elvis Presley's rags-to-riches story
- The provisions of the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*
- The impact of segregation and Jim Crow laws on African Americans in the southern United States
- The complexities of race relations in 1950s America
- The importance of both African-American and white musical forms to the development of early Rock and Roll
- The characteristics of Doo Wop music as it emerged in the 1950s
- The history of group harmony singing as a form of entertainment in the United States during the twentieth century

- How earlier styles of vocal harmony (Barbershop, Pop, and Gospel) contributed to the development of Doo Wop
- Chuck Berry's role in solidifying the electric guitar as a central instrument in early Rock and Roll
- How Berry built an audience by writing and performing songs that spoke directly to the emerging audience of white, teenage music listeners
- Berry's role as a "crossover" artist with appeal to both black and white audiences
- How Berry combined Country and Western and Rhythm and Blues influences
- Berry's role as a showman who helped create a Rock and Roll performance style.
- How the piano was arguably the central instrument in early Rock and Roll, before the dominance of electric guitar
- The growth of the purchasing power of teenagers in postwar America
- How the electric guitar became a symbol of modernity, tapping into a cultural fascination with technology in the 1950s
- Various cultural and historical factors that led to a spike in electric guitar sales in the U.S., as compared to piano sales, in the 1950s and 1960s
- How Bo Diddley's unconventional sound contrasted with popular music styles in the 1950s
- Hoodoo culture, as described by folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, and its connection with Bo Diddley's recording of "Who Do You Love"
- Elements of Hip Hop that may be reflected in Bo Diddley's recordings, including his self-referential lyrics set to a repeated rhythmic beat
- How to identify the sound of distorted guitar in a recording
- Key figures, events, and recordings in the evolution of distorted guitar as a defining sound in Rock and Roll
- How a distorted electronic signal looks in comparison to a non-distorted signal
- Basic elements of Gospel music, including "call-and-response," complex rhythms, group singing, and the employment of rhythmic instrumentation
- Ways in which other musical genres "borrowed" musical elements from Gospel Music

to create new sounds

- The changing nature and influence of radio on American life in successive eras, from the 1920s through the early 1950s
- How radio helped create a “mass culture” in American society
- How commercial radio transformed itself after the rise of television from a medium that emphasized dramatic and comedy series to one that increasingly centered around music-based programming
- The cultural impact on 20th century American life of the Great Migration of African Americans to northern cities
- The growing desire of radio stations to market programming to the new urban African-American population
- The pioneering role of disc jockeys Dewey Phillips (Memphis) and Hunter Hancock (Los Angeles) in playing Rhythm and Blues on the radio
- The growth of teen purchasing power in the 1950s
- The growing financial independence of teenagers, who could now spend their money as individuals without familial obligation
- The ways American business marketed goods to the new teenage demographic
- The effects of growing teen independence on the American family in the postwar era
- The growing influence of teenagers on popular taste and culture
- The influence of Chuck Berry and others on the representation of teenage life
- The term “juvenile delinquency” and its prominence in 1950s American culture
- U.S. government efforts to curb juvenile delinquency in the 1950s and the resulting Senate subcommittee hearings
- Growing concerns among adults in the 1950s that Rock and Roll was challenging the existing social order
- The influence of the popular 1955 film *Blackboard Jungle*
- How the teen idols of the late 1950s provided a bridge from the raw sounds and flamboyant styles of the early Rock and Roll pioneers to the more “reserved” Pop tastes of mainstream America



- Media that adult authority figures employed to dissuade rebelliousness and help guide teenage behavior, including educational films and teen magazines
- How Dion initially embraced the “teen idol” marketing strategy but departed from it with recordings like “The Wanderer”
- The various subgenres of Rock and Roll movies that appeared in the mid-to-late 1950s
- Anxieties surrounding the release and popularity of the film *Blackboard Jungle* due to its depictions of race and juvenile delinquency
- How the Production Code was used to monitor film content prior to the 1968 adoption of a ratings system
- The specialized roles of various professional organizations in producing, marketing, and exhibiting American movies

## **Unit 2: Teenage Rebellion**

- The general history of Italian immigration to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- The contributions of important Italian-American male vocalists to American music in the first half of the 20th century, including Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Tony Bennett, and Dean Martin
- How the careers of these artists reflected attitudes toward Italian Americans in the wider culture
- The rising popularity of television and its growing power as a cultural force in 1950s America
- The popularity and influence of televised dance shows aimed at teenage audiences
- The influence of the “Twist” dance craze on popular American culture.
- The musical contributions of important “Girl Groups,” including the Shirelles, the Crystals, the Chiffons, the Angels, and the Dixie Cups
- The significance of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*
- The growing economic power of teenage girls in the late 1950s and early 1960s
- Key events of the Women’s Rights movement of the 1960s and 70s

- The contributions of such artists as the Beach Boys, Dick Dale, and the Surfariis
- The influence of technical innovation on musical expression, specifically the impact of reverb effects on recording artists using the Fender amplifiers produced in the early 1960s
- The musical roots of the Surf sound of the early 1960s, including Rhythm and Blues guitar styles, vocal-group harmonies, and the “Wall of Sound” production technique
- The impact of suburbanization on American identity and popular culture
- The important musical contributions of the Beach Boys
- The role of the Ford Motor Company in establishing private automobile ownership as an essential component of the American experience
- How the resurgence of automobile manufacturing after WWII coincided with the rise of teen culture
- The impact of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 on life in postwar America
- How Rock and Roll acts including Chuck Berry and the Beach Boys brought together teenage interests in cars and Rock and Roll
- The power of music to transcend race and challenge social norms in Memphis, and in cities across the United States, in the years before the Civil Rights Act
- The history of race relations in Tennessee and national systems of racial discrimination, including Jim Crow laws
- How high schools in Memphis remained segregated despite the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision, and how musicians questioned and challenged these racial barriers
- How Memphis music was shaped by the city’s diversity
- The way in which Aretha Franklin’s unique blends of Gospel, Soul, and R&B brought forth a new voice for women in the 1960s, examining songs such as “(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman),” “Respect,” and “Chain of Fools”
- Legislation and key events concerning women’s rights between 1961 and 1971
- A brief history of Gospel music and how it plays a role in American popular music
- The contributions of such pioneering figures as Curtis Mayfield, Andrew Young, the

Freedom Riders, and Martin Luther King Jr. to the Civil Rights movement and the emergence of Sixties Soul music

- The central importance of music to the progress of the Civil Rights movement
- The historical connection between religious and political themes both in the Civil Rights movement and in Sixties Soul
- W.E.B. Du Bois' "A Negro Nation within a Nation"
- Charles Wesley's "The Negro Has Always Wanted the Four Freedoms"
- Sam Cooke's song "A Change is Gonna Come"
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington Address
- James Brown's "Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud"
- Bayard Rustin's "From Protest to Politics"
- The Kerner Commission Report
- Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On?"
- The Beatles' involvement in the Civil Rights Movement
- Segregation in the South
- The importance of American Blues to the musicians who were a part of the British Blues explosion
- The differences between British popular music of the early 1960s and the American Blues that was coming over to the U.K.
- The British musical scene from which groups like the Rolling Stones emerged
- The influence of geography on history, particularly the geographical reasons Liverpool, as an important center of trade, was a focal point of cultural diffusion between the United States and Britain
- The differences between the postwar experiences of the United States and those of Great Britain
- The impact on both Liverpool and the Beatles of the Blitz, postwar rationing, the Marshall Plan, and the Cunard Yanks, a group of merchant seamen who traveled between Britain and the United States
- The concept of cultural diffusion, the spread and intermingling of cultures from different

places

- The importance of Beatlemania as an unprecedented cultural phenomenon
- The historical events leading up to the Beatles' arrival in America
- The role of manager Brian Epstein in crafting the Beatles' image
- The influence of the Blues on the British club scene in the early 1960s
- How the Blues influenced the early recordings and performances of the Rolling Stones
- How the Rolling Stones re-interpreted the Blues for British and American audiences
- The early musical development of the Rolling Stones, including forays into other styles of music beyond the Blues
- The importance of the Who as a leader of the "British Invasion" of the mid-1960s
- The role of the song "My Generation" in giving voice to disaffected young people in the 1960s
- The influence of the Who's signature live act, which introduced the destruction of instruments into the lexicon of Rock and Roll performance
- Economic and living conditions that encouraged Puerto Ricans to relocate to the U.S. during the 1940s and 50s
- The importance of New York's *El Barrio* ("the neighborhood") and other Spanish-speaking neighborhoods in forging a sense of community for immigrants and their families, and how those neighborhoods affect New York City culture
- The role of the Palladium Ballroom in showcasing Latin music and dance for an ethnically-diverse audience
- How artists including Leonard Bernstein, the Drifters, and Doc Pomus and Mort Shuman, incorporated Latin dance rhythms into other music styles of the era, including Broadway and Pop
- Ritchie Valens' role as a Rock and Roll pioneer
- The origins of Valens' "La Bamba" as a traditional Mexican folk-dance song or *huapango*
- Highlights of the brief career of Valens, who died at age 17 in the same plane crash that killed Buddy Holly, in 1959

### Unit 3: Transformation

- A basic definition of Folk music
- Dylan's early experiences as a Folk musician and his emulation of Woody Guthrie
- Dylan's early experiences with Rock and Roll as a musician in high school
- The literary definitions of tone, diction, rhyme, repetition, and rhythm
- A basic approach to literary analysis
- A brief history of Bob Dylan's early musical influences
- The history and motivation behind the Nobel Prize for Literature
- The written work of Bob Dylan
- The work of poets Allen Ginsberg and Arthur Rimbaud
- How poetry, the Bible, and American Blues influenced Dylan's writing
- The debate surrounding Dylan's award of the Nobel Prize in Literature
- The complex issue of artistic inspiration versus plagiarism
- Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger's contributions to and conceptions of the Folk genre
- The influence of the song "If I Had A Hammer," written by Pete Seeger and Lee Hays
- The influence of Peter, Paul, and Mary in navigating the transition from Folk to Folk Rock
- The influence of the Byrds as an early exemplar of Folk Rock
- The importance of Jimi Hendrix as an innovator in the emerging Hard Rock scene of the mid-1960s
- The guitarist's past as a sideman for Little Richard, the Isley Brothers, and King Curtis, and the influence of that past on his Hard Rock recording
- The importance of Detroit and the auto industry to the postwar American economy
- The efforts of working-class musicians, including the members of MC5 and the Stooges, to challenge prevailing views about life amidst the auto industry and give voice to the frustrations of working-class youth
- The model that defined production at Motown Records, and how it was influenced by factory assembly lines
- The cultural and economic conditions in Detroit, Michigan, and surrounding areas in

the 1960s

- The contributions of Motown to the popular music of the 1960s
- How San Francisco became a center of “hippie” counterculture, culminating in a mass gathering in 1967 known as the “Summer of Love”
- How groups such as the Diggers and the Family Dog organized artistic, cultural, and political events that attracted young people from all over the country to San Francisco
- That the Summer of Love attracted a range of people whose interests included politics, music, sex, drugs, and social reform
- How the Cold War increased American anxieties over Soviet power and the spread of communism in the U.S.
- Senator Joseph McCarthy and the implications of his mission to expose communists in 1950s America
- Ways that the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and publications like *Red Channels* targeted entertainers suspected of having communist sympathies
- How folksingers Pete Seeger and Lee Hays refused to cooperate with HUAC, invoking the First and Fifth amendments of the U.S. Bill of Rights in their testimonies before the committee
- Pete Seeger’s legacy as an inspiration for popular music artists to speak out on issues of social and political injustice
- The role of music as a motivating force in the Civil Rights movement
- The history of “We Shall Overcome” and its central importance to the Civil Rights movement
- The ways in which popular songs of different musical genres reflected the values and beliefs of the Civil Rights movement
- The effectiveness of music in spreading the message of the Civil Rights movement
- The changing media representation of war during the Vietnam era
- The growing opposition of many citizens, particularly young Americans, to the Vietnam conflict in the 1960s
- The influence of the baby boom, popular media, and popular music on the antiwar

movement

- The role of protest music in giving Americans who could not vote in the mid-1960s a public voice on political issues
- The passage of the 26th Amendment in 1971, lowering the voting age from 21 to 18
- How a climate of political engagement in the 1960s helped influence a generation of artists to become promoters and activists
- How music festivals such as Woodstock showed how music could be a powerful tool to organize massive numbers of people
- The historical circumstances and issues at the root of the Concert for Bangladesh and Live Aid
- Sgt. Barry Sadler's "Ballad of the Green Beret"
- President Lyndon Johnson
- The Gulf of Tonkin incident
- Joe McDonald's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag"
- Activist Paul Potter
- Weatherman Underground
- Photographer Bernie Boston
- The Inauguration of Richard Nixon
- Pentagon Papers
- Journalist James Reston
- Merle Haggard's "Okie from Muskogee"
- The manner in which Country music influenced Rock and Roll from the beginning
- The way Chuck Berry borrowed from a Country song to write the early Rock and Roll hit "Maybellene"
- The influence of Country music on both white and black performers of the Rock and Roll era
- The development of the "Black Pride" movement in the late 1960s
- The musical contributions of James Brown
- The impact of historical events in the late 1960s, including the Vietnam War protests,

race riots, and the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy

- The contributions of musical artists Marvin Gaye and Curtis Mayfield and how their music spoke to social issues of the time
- The findings of the Kerner Report issued by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1968
- The conditions that led to the interaction of black and white musicians, songwriters, and producers in the 1960s Soul era
- The songs of Dan Penn, including “Do Right Woman,” recorded by Aretha Franklin
- The unique status of popular music culture as a meeting ground of the races
- The main ideas and historical importance of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), which detailed threats to the environment from pollution and the use of pesticides
- The events surrounding the celebration of the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970
- The growing attention of Singer-Songwriters in the late 1960s and early 1970s to themes relating to nature and the environment
- The musical contributions of such Singer-Songwriters as Joni Mitchell, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Marvin Gaye, James Taylor, Neil Young, and Jackson Browne
- The important musical contributions of female Singer-Songwriters of the early 1970s, including Joni Mitchell, Carole King, and Janis Ian
- The historical context from which this music emerged, focusing on the burgeoning women’s movement that challenged traditional roles of women in American society

#### **Unit 4: Fragmentation**

- The musical roots of Heavy Metal, including Hard Rock and the Blues
- The specific influence on Heavy Metal by Hard Rock bands and artists such as the Kinks, Led Zeppelin and Jimi Hendrix
- The historical and social context of Birmingham, England, during the late 1960s and early 1970s
- Musical vocabulary associated with Heavy Metal music
- The contributions of early Heavy Metal bands including Black Sabbath, Deep Purple,



and Blue Cheer

- The involvement of Heavy Metal in the music regulation controversy of the 1980s
- The involvement of the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) in the creation of a system of parental advisory labels for “explicit” or “offensive” music.
- The importance of David Bowie, Sweet, Slade, and Roxy Music as exemplars of the Glam Rock tradition
- The role of theater and the theatrical in Glam Rock performance
- The differences between the character of Singer-Songwriter performance style and that of Glam Rock
- How Glam Rock countered the “seriousness” of late 1960s and early 1970s music with short, highly-melodic Pop songs without an overt political message
- Cultural and socio-economic events of the early 1970s, including the release of *American Graffiti*, the Watergate scandal, and the end of the U.S. military draft
- How David Bowie, Alice Cooper, and Sweet combined Rock and Roll with elements of live theater to increase their appeal to teenage audiences
- The fashions of Glam Rock, including make-up and androgynous clothing, and how these styles provided adolescents with unique opportunities to experiment with identity and gender roles
- The historical origins of Progressive Rock
- The basic elements of Progressive Rock, including the incorporation of musical forms derived from Western Classical music, an emphasis on instrumental virtuosity, and incorporation of countercultural themes that challenged conventional notions of time and space
- The technological changes that gave rise to Progressive Rock, including the possibilities of the 33 1/3 “Long Playing” (LP) album, the invention of the Moog synthesizer, and the rising popularity of FM radio
- The specific contributions of such Progressive Rock artists as Yes and Genesis
- How the music and art communities intersected in the case of the Velvet Underground and their work with Andy Warhol

- The example of Patti Smith as a poet-bandleader
- The examples of the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan as musicians who have actively collaborated with New York's wider art world
- How the promises of the Civil Rights movement, including integration, improved economic opportunities, and the eradication of poverty, had not materialized for many African Americans by the early 1970s
- The phenomenon of "White Flight" and how it contributed to the increased isolation of African-American populations in many American inner cities
- How artists including James Brown, George Clinton, and Curtis Mayfield responded to the realities of black life in America by creating music that addressed specifically African-American concerns and, by extension, specifically African-American audiences
- The elements of the Funk sound, including a prominent bassline, deeply percussive instrumentation, and polyrhythms from guitars, horns, keyboards, and drums
- Blaxploitation's role in increasing African-American representation in the film industry
- The general feeling of economic and social malaise in the 1970s, as crime rates soared and unemployment and inflation hit record highs
- The influence of the Gay Rights and Women's Rights movements on popular American culture
- The prominence of Disco music as a social and cultural force in the late 1970s
- The historical events surrounding the birth of the Punk Rock movement in Britain
- The political and social nature of the British Punk Rock movement
- The participatory nature of the British Punk Rock movement
- The importance of Punk Rock as a movement that dramatically changed the culture of popular music, clearing the way for New Wave
- The role of groups such as the Ramones and the Patti Smith Group in carrying Punk's energy and ideas to the artists of the New Wave
- The wide range of artists associated with New Wave and some defining characteristics that nonetheless give shape to the category
- Ronald Reagan's "Evil Empire" speech

- Sting's "Russians"
- Steve Greenberg's "One Giant Step Backwards for Mankind"
- Ronald Reagan's "Tear Down this Wall" speech
- Wasted Youth's "Reagan's In"
- Subhuman's "Human Error"
- Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?"
- Prince's "Ronnie, Talk to Russia"
- The influence of earlier musical forms, particularly Heavy Metal and Punk, on Grunge
- The social, cultural, economic, and geographic influences that led to the rise of Grunge
- The musical contributions of such Grunge artists as Nirvana, Mudhoney, and Pearl Jam
- How early Hip Hop reflected the social and economic conditions of America's inner cities, particularly the Bronx in New York City
- Important events in the history of New York City in the 1960s and 1970s, including the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway, high crime rates, and a major transit strike
- The contributions of early Hip Hop artists including DJ Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash
- Key vocabulary relating to the rise of Hip Hop, including such terms as "scratching," "rapping," "MC" and "DJ"
- The definitions of the two Hip Hop subgenres known as "Gangsta Rap" and "Conscious Hip Hop"
- The ways in which both subgenres reflected social and political conditions in the 1990s, particularly escalating tensions in race relations and the prevalence of crime in inner city neighborhoods
- The importance of Rock and Roll as a particularly democratic art form

**In accordance with their individual capacity, students will grow in the ability to:**

**Unit 1: Birth of Rock**

- Use a Listening Template to understand a song
- Use a Timeline to understand the historical context in which a song was created
- Understand Rock and Roll as a visual culture
- Understand Rock and Roll as performance
- Understand Rock and Roll as a literary form
- Understand the industry and technology of Rock and Roll
- Develop interpretive skills by analyzing song lyrics
- Compare and contrast musical performances
- Identify connections between artistic expression and the broader social and political context in which that expression occurs
  
- Closely read song lyrics for information, point of view, and argument
- Extrapolate arguments about music by assessing sound, mood, tone, and instrumentation
  
- Use maps to find locations and construct a logical travel sequence
- Discuss figurative and connotative meanings of Blues lyrics portraying the imagery and emotions associated with the experience of the Great Migration
- Analyze various accounts of the Great Migration era in different mediums, including photographs, paintings, letters, and census data, determining which details are emphasized in each account
  
- Evaluate the effects of technology on history and culture
- Extrapolate arguments about music by assessing sound, mood, tone, instrumentation
- Draw connections among various print, audio and visual texts
- Write creatively for personal and/or small group expression
- Compare and contrast texts, arguments and ideas
- Interpret and discuss the meaning of primary source materials, including World War II-era rationing posters, archival photographs, and *Billboard* chart lists
- Draw thematic comparisons between the works of Horatio Alger, Jr. and John Steinbeck

- Discuss the connection between the American Dream and Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash's cultural impact
- Evaluate the historical context in which music was performed
- Interpret how public reaction to popular music reflects the social norms and values of a particular historical era
- Make connections among political, legal, and cultural developments
- Point out similarities and differences between different genres of music
- Describe how one style music can influence another
- Derive historical information from primary and secondary source materials, including musical recordings
- Evaluate Berry's role as a Rock and Roll pioneer
- Analyze live music performances, comparing and contrasting different instrumentation and performance styles
- Interpret and discuss the meaning of a variety of primary source materials, including a 1950s magazine advertisements and a 1967 *Billboard* article on the growth of electric guitar sales
- Interpret a range of media, including songs, images, and sheet music to develop an understanding of an artist and his style
- Students will be able to explain why distorted guitar is a defining characteristic in Rock and Roll and how it was achieved.
- Make thematic connections between genres of music
- Compare and contrast the style and influence of commercial radio in successive eras in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s.
- Use a variety of sources to write an original script for a radio broadcast
- Relate popular music to the social context in which it was produced
- Characterize social, economic, and cultural change over time
- Analyze and interpret primary source documents, including congressional testimony, newspaper articles, and 1950s comic book covers and movie trailers
- Make connections between society's attitude toward teenagers in the 1950s and today

- Analyze historical documents, periodicals, and film trailers
- Make connections between a selection of films concerning Rock and Roll culture and concerns over the perceived threat of juvenile delinquency in the mid-1950

### **Unit 2: Teenage Rebellion**

- Examine how the careers of particular artists reflect attitudes in the society from which they emerged
- Evaluate the extent to which the Italian roots of these singers influenced their style of performance
- Evaluate how television shows reflect and influence the values and norms of the society in which they are shown
- Analyze popular dance and how it reflects the historical period from which it emerged
- Analyze the lyrics of popular songs for meaning
- Link musical movements with the social and historical circumstances from which they emerged
- Evaluate what the music of the Girl Groups says about the roles of girls and women in the late 1950s and early 1960s
- Develop listening skills by analyzing musical performances to identify common motifs and themes
- Identify connections between artistic expression and the broader social context in which that expression occurs
- Interpret a variety of archival magazine advertisements produced by the Ford Motor Company and General Motors between 1903-1950
- Discuss figurative and connotative meanings of Rock and Roll song lyrics portraying the confluence of teen and auto culture in the United States
- Use a map of Memphis to integrate technical analysis with qualitative analysis in print materials.
- Analyze a musical performance
- Evaluate the connections between popular music and the society in which it is created, specifically with regards to Aretha Franklin and women's rights in the 1960s.

- Students will evaluate how Americans responded to the United States' engagement with Vietnam by analyzing a variety of historical documents.
- Extrapolate arguments about music by assessing sound, mood, tone, instrumentation
- Draw connections among various print, audio, and visual texts
- Write creatively for personal and/or small group expression
- Refine note-taking skills during class discussion
- Make connections between popular music and the social and political environment in which that music is created
- Trace artistic developments to the historical context in which that art was created
- Analyze and hypothesize on the attraction of Blues music for white, middle-class artists and audiences
- Analyze data to discern demographic changes in New York City, determining the effects of immigration on metropolitan life and culture
- Evaluate and discuss the extent to which Latin-American artists influenced work created by non-Latino Pop songwriters and composers
- Students will be able to explain Ritchie Valens' contribution to Rock and Roll by comparing the traditional Mexican song "La Bamba" to Valens' Rock and Roll version

### **Unit 3: Transformation**

- Compare and contrast traditional Folk and Rock and Roll music
- Complete a simple poetry analysis
- Make connections between beat poetry and folk music
- Connect the structure of beat poetry and folk music to the larger artistic climate of the time
- Use their analysis to write an extension of Dylan's song or Ginsberg's poem
- Students will be able to define the ways songwriting might and might not be considered literature through text analysis and a structured academic controversy
- Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts)
- Interpret a range of media, including songs, images, and text to develop and

demonstrate an understanding of a period of time.

- Describe the protections provided by the First and Fifth Amendments of the U.S. Bill of Rights
- Evaluate the role and effectiveness of music as a tool of political protest
- Understand music in relation to history and culture
- Evaluate the message and methodology of a protest event
- Make connections between musical performances and the historical contexts in which they occur
- Students will evaluate the extent to which the Civil Rights Movement acted as a turning point in United States history by analyzing a variety of historical documents
- Evaluate connections between style/fashion and the larger societal context in which it occurs
- Students will be able to understand how singer-songwriters from the 1960s to today have addressed environmental concerns in their music by analyzing lyrics, newspaper articles, and photographs
- Evaluate the degree to which key singer-songwriters gave voice to female empowerment in the early 1970s

#### **Unit 4: Fragmentation**

- Investigate the musical, social, and historical origins of Heavy Metal music
- Develop listening skills by comparing and contrasting different musical genres and artists
- Trace musical expression to the specific historical and social context from which it emerged
- Debate the relative merits of opposing arguments
- Evaluate different interpretations of songs and other forms of artistic expression
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the parental advisory system and whether or not it should be considered a form of censorship
- Interpret a range of media, including newsreels, album covers, and musical performances to develop and demonstrate an understanding of popular African-



American culture in the late 1960s and early 1970s

- Evaluate the representation of marginalized groups in mainstream media, specifically through film trailers made during and after the Civil Rights-era
- Assess the importance of a cultural form in a specific context
- Compare and contrast visual and musical elements of Punk Rock and the so-called Stadium Rock of the 1970s.
- Students will evaluate how Americans responded to the President Reagan's Cold War foreign policy agenda
- Connect song lyrics to contemporary events
- Identify musical sources from which early Hip Hop was created
- Evaluate the similarities and differences between Gangsta Rap and Conscious Hip Hop
- Analyze visual imagery in music videos

**Assessments will include:**

- Content Specific Formative and Summative Assessments
- Historical Analysis and Thinking Skills Formative and Summative Assessments
- Short Constructed Response Exams
- Document Based Questions
- Creation of a Video and DJ Podcast

**Texts/Materials:** History of Rock and Roll by Thomas E. Larson 6th Edition

**Unit Materials (Note-** To access these materials you may need to create a free account at teachrock.org):

**Birth of Rock Unit:**

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/how-to-study-rock-and-roll/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/thematic-lesson-love-songs/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-blues-the-sound-of-rural-poverty/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-blues-and-the-great-migration/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-birth-of-the-electric-guitar/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-influence-of-rhythm-and-blues/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/world-war-ii-and-the-shrinking-of-the-ensemble/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/rock-and-roll-and-the-american-dream/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/elvis-and-race-in-1950s-america/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-musical-roots-of-doo-wop/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/chuck-berry/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-rise-of-the-electric-guitar-as-rock-and-rolls-dominant-symbol/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/bo-diddleys-unconventional-1950s-sound-and-its-anticipation-of-hip-hop/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/distortion-the-sound-of-rock-and-rolls-menacing-spirit/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/gospel-music-and-the-birth-of-soul/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/radio-before-rock-and-roll/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/hunter-hancock-and-dewey-phillips-bring-rb-to-the-airwaves/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/birth-of-the-american-teenager/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/fear-of-the-american-teenager/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/dion-and-the-teen-idols/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/rock-and-roll-goes-to-the-movies/>

### **Teenage Rebellion Unit:**

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-groundbreakers-italian-american-vocalists-before-rock-and-roll/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/television-and-the-twist-rock-and-roll-dance-goes-mainstream/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-rise-of-the-girl-groups/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-musical-roots-of-the-surf-sound/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-beach-boys-and-the-sound-of-the-suburbs/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/car-culture-and-rock-and-roll-in-postwar-america/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-memphis-sound-a-case-study-of-music-and-integration-in-mid-century-america/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/aretha-franklin-soul-music-and-the-new-femininity-of-the-1960s/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/music-and-the-movement-giving-voice/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/civil-rights-movement-turning-point-document-based-question/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-american-blues-in-britain/>  
<https://teachrock.org/chapter/british-invasion-i-the-beatles/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/giving-america-back-the-blues/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-whos-generation/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-influence-of-latin-music-in-postwar-new-york-city/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/ritchie-valens/>

### **Transformation Unit:**

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-early-years-bringing-a-rock-and-roll-attitude-to-folk/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/dylan-as-poet/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/love-theft-debating-bob-dylans-nobel-prize/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/all-over-this-land-the-emergence-of-folk-rock/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/introducing-hard-rock/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-sound-of-blue-collar-detroit/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/assembling-hits-at-motown/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-san-francisco-scene-1967/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-roots-of-the-protest-era-mccarthyism-and-the-artists-voice-in-1950s-america/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-music-of-the-civil-rights-movement/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/youth-mass-culture-and-protest-the-rise-and-impact-of-1960s-antiwar-music/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/protest-as-event/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/americans-respond-vietnam-war-document-based-question-activity/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-roots-of-country-rock/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/say-it-loud-the-rise-of-black-pride/>

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/seventies-soul-the-soundtrack-of-turbulent-times/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/dan-penn/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/singer-songwriters-and-the-environmental-movement/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/a-song-of-their-own-female-singer-songwriters-of-the-early-1970s/>

**Fragmentation Unit:**

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-roots-of-heavy-metal/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/mainstream-metal-parental-advisories-and-censorship/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/introducing-glam-rock/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/glam-the-return-of-the-teenager/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-roots-of-progressive-rock/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-new-york-city-underground/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/funk-asserts-itself-black-art-for-black-audiences/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-rise-of-disco/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/punk-as-reaction/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/introducing-new-wave/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/reagan-cold-war-document-based-question-activity/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-emergence-of-grunge/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-historical-roots-of-hip-hop/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/divergent-paths-in-the-1990s-gangsta-rap-and-conscious-hip-hop/>  
<https://teachrock.org/lesson/considering-the-future-of-rock-and-roll/>

**Final:**

<https://teachrock.org/lesson/hometowndocs/>