

Jazz

"Jazz is about being in the moment."

—Herbie Hancock

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is your favourite kind of music?
2. Do you like jazz?
3. Do you know where jazz originated?
4. Have you ever heard of the Creole people?
5. Do you know when jazz started to become very popular throughout the United States?
6. Have you ever heard of Mardi Gras?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| ___ 1. slave | a) something is liked by many people |
| ___ 2. labour | b) a song, a tune |
| ___ 3. plantation | c) a custom |
| ___ 4. spiritual | d) to work |
| ___ 5. settler | e) a person who is owned by another person |
| ___ 6. funeral | f) something that is given or added |
| ___ 7. melody | g) a large area of land where crops are grown |
| ___ 8. improvise | h) a ceremony and burial of a dead person |
| ___ 9. fashionable | i) popular, trendy, in style |
| ___ 10. popularity | j) to compose or make up something on the spot |
| ___ 11. contribution | k) religious |
| ___ 12. tradition | l) a person who comes to live in a new country |

Reading

1. Jazz is a style of music that developed in Louisiana in the southern United States. It is based on the music of different cultural and racial groups who lived in Louisiana in the 1800s.
2. Creole people who settled there made up songs and played them on fiddles, accordions, and washboards. African **slaves** who **laboured** on southern **plantations** brought music and dance from their homelands. They sang work songs in the fields, which they also used to send secret messages to other slaves, and **spiritual** songs, which expressed their wish to be free. French, English, and Spanish **settlers** added their music and dance **traditions** to the mix. Jazz is based on all of these types of music.
3. Black musicians in New Orleans began playing jazz about 1900. They played at everything from **funerals**, to community parties and dances, to Mardi Gras celebrations.
4. Jazz starts with a simple **melody** and musicians add to it as they go along. This is known as “**improvising**.” Trumpets, trombones, and saxophones are the central instruments in many jazz bands.
5. At first, jazz was not accepted by white people. They didn’t like or understand the different rhythms of jazz and thought it was only for poor black people to listen and dance to. By the 1920s, though, jazz was **fashionable** for both blacks and whites.
6. Its **popularity** increased even more when big bands of the late 1930s began to play jazz. At the same time, jazz musicians from New Orleans were moving to other parts of the country and introducing many people to their music. Jazz was soon popular throughout the United States.
7. Many people believe that jazz is the most important **contribution** the United States has made to the world of music.

Comprehension

A. True or False?

Write T if the statement is true. If the statement is false, write F and correct the information in your notebook.

- _____ 1. Jazz developed in the northern United States.
- _____ 2. Jazz is a mixture of many different types of music.
- _____ 3. Black people used songs to communicate with each other when they worked in the fields.
- _____ 4. Jazz immediately became popular among white people.
- _____ 5. The big bands of the 1930s refused to play jazz.

B. Ask and Answer

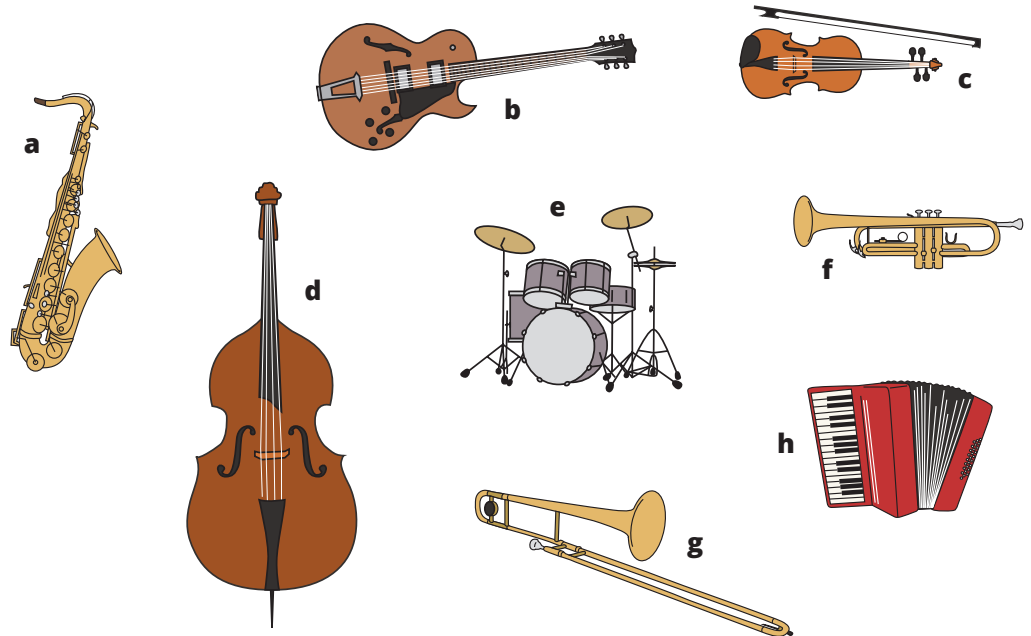
Practise asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write the answers in full sentences in your notebook.

- 1. List five cultural and racial groups whose music contributed to the development of jazz.
- 2. What instruments did the Creole people use to play their songs?
- 3. Why did the black slaves sing while they were working in the fields?
- 4. Where did black musicians play jazz in the early 1900s?
- 5. What is "improvising?"
- 6. Why didn't white people accept jazz right away?

Vocabulary Review

Match the instrument name to the correct image.

- ___ 1. fiddle
- ___ 2. accordion
- ___ 3. trumpet
- ___ 4. trombone
- ___ 5. saxophone
- ___ 6. electric guitar
- ___ 7. drums
- ___ 8. upright bass



Idioms & Improv

JAZZ IT UP!

When you *jazz something up*, you make it a little more interesting or exciting. It doesn't have to be about music.

Work in a small group. Think of some occasions when someone might say this to someone else:

Let's jazz it up a little.

Improv is short for improvisation. You can improvise in music and in acting. When you improvise, you don't make any plans ahead of time.

Go to the front of the class with your group members. Act out one of the situations you thought of. Make sure someone uses the line: *Let's jazz it up a little.*

Discussion

1. Do you agree that jazz is the most important contribution the United States has made to the world of music?
2. What other styles of music have originated in the United States?
3. What styles of music do you like, and who are some of your favourite musicians?
4. Do you think that jazz helped bring blacks and whites in America closer together? Explain your answer.