

Resources

IMPORTANT TEACHER'S NOTE: sitesALIVE! has been selective in providing the following resources. However, it is important to review any and all resource materials before giving them to your students, as both the lyrics and titles of older traditional songs can refer to subject matter requiring careful handling. Some of these subjects include religion, race and death. When drawing on these resources, please anticipate potential issues in advance so that you can have a plan for dealing with them.

Activity 1: Introduction to Bluegrass

Artis, Bob. *Bluegrass*. Hawthorne Books, 1977.

Ewing, Tom (editor). *The Bill Monroe Reader*. University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Kochman, Marilyn (editor). *The Big Book of Bluegrass*. William Morrow & Co., 1984.

Rosenberg, Neil V. *Bluegrass: A History*. University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Smith, Richard D. *Bluegrass: An Informal Guide*. A Cappella Books, 1995.

Smith, Richard D. *Can't You Hear Me Callin': The Life of Bill Monroe, Father of Bluegrass*. Little, Brown and Company, 2000.

The Special Consensus. *The Traditional American Music Program: An Educational Overview of Bluegrass Music*. [video] Northern Indiana Bluegrass Association, 1997.

A 34-minute recording of a live elementary school presentation, available from IBMA, on the subjects of bluegrass history, harmony structure, instruments and songs.

Down from the Mountain: Live Concert Performances by the Artists & Musicians of O Brother, Where Art Thou? [audio cd] Universal, 2001.

<http://www.ibma.org>

The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) is one of the primary trade organizations for the bluegrass music industry, and an excellent source in seeking out bluegrass periodicals, discographies, books, videos, recordings and website resources. In addition, if you are interested in networking with bluegrass musicians in your local community for live shows or “artist in the school” programs, IBMA is an excellent clearinghouse for such contact information.

<http://www.billmonroe.com>

The official website of brothers Bill and James Monroe.

<http://www.eyeneer.com/America/Genre/Folk.bluegrass/Profiles/monroe.html>

An excellent biography of Bill Monroe with a sample of one of his first bluegrass songs (Muleskinner Blues) available for downloading.

<http://www.hob.com/dftm/>

The House of Blues has downloadable music from Down From the Mountain on its website.

Activity 2: The Roots of Bluegrass

Cantwell, Robert. *Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound*. Da Capo Press, 1992.

Fleischhauer, Carl and Neil V. Rosenberg. *Bluegrass Odyssey*. University of Illinois Press, 2001.

Hill, Fred. *Grass Roots: An Illustrated History of Bluegrass and Mountain Music*. Academy Books, 1981.

Malone, Bill C. *Country Music USA: A Fifty Year History*. University of Texas Press, 1985.

Oermann, Robert K. *America's Music: The Roots of Country*. Turner Publishing, 1996.

Price, Steven D. *Old As The Hills: The Story of Bluegrass Music*. Viking Press.

<http://www.oldtimemusic.com/index.html>

This website has old-time fiddling photos, audio clips, etc.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/hrhtml/hrhome.html>

Library of Congress online collection of traditional fiddle tunes performed by Henry Reed of Glen Lyn, Virginia, and representing the music, history and spirit of Virginia's Appalachian frontier.

<http://www.rounder.com/rounder/nat/>

Homepage of the North American Traditions series of recordings put out by Rounder Records. On this site is a page detailing the history of the tune "Turkey in the Straw."

Activity 3: B-A-N-J-O: A Bluegrass Version of Bingo

Bollman, James F. and Philip F. Gura. *America's Instrument: The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century*. University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

Trischka, Tony and Pete Wernick. *Masters of the Five-String Banjo*. Mel Bay Publications, 2000.

O'Connor, Mark and Charles K. Wolfe. *The Devil's Box: Masters of Southern Fiddling*. Vanderbilt University Press, 1998.

Wolfe, Charles K. *Tennessee Strings*. University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

<http://www.shreveaudio.com/bluegrass.html>

Photos and descriptions of bluegrass instruments.

<http://www.mandolincafe.com/archives/briefhistory.html>

A page dedicated to telling the history of the mandolin.

Activity 4: Musical Impressions

Rooney, Jim. *Bossmen: Bill Monroe and Muddy Waters*. Da Capo Press, 1985.

von Schmidt, Eric and Jim Rooney (contributor). *Baby, Let Me Follow You Down*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.

Wolfe, Charles K. *A Good Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry*. Vanderbilt University Press, 1999.

Wright, John. *Traveling the High Way Home: Ralph Stanley and the World of Traditional Bluegrass Music*. University of Illinois Press, 1995.

<http://www.rounder.com>

Record company of many great bluegrass, old-time and traditional country musicians, plus several recording series which document American roots music.

<http://www.xmradio.com/programming/14.html>

Bluegrass Junction Radio is an online station that plays a mix of old and new bluegrass music and allows listeners to request songs.

<http://www.efolkmusic.com>

This website has numerous bluegrass musicians listed, with preview audio tracks and free mp3 downloads that you can use to demonstrate the old and new sounds of bluegrass.

<http://www.bluegrasscountry.org>

An online bluegrass radio station.

Activity 5: Musical Tapestry

Chase, Richard and Joshua Tolford (illustrator). *Singing Games and Play Party Games*. Southern Appalachian versions of English and American folk games and dances. Includes instructions, background, and music. Dover Publications, 1970.

<http://www.efolkmusic.com>

This website has numerous bluegrass musicians listed, with preview audio tracks and free mp3 downloads that you can use to demonstrate the old and new sounds of bluegrass.

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Activity 6: Planning a Bluegrass Festival

<http://www.festivalfinder.com/bluegrass/>

The Bluegrass Festival Finder links to festival information from around the country.

<http://eventplanner.com/>

This website allows students to gather real information about hotel accommodations, travel details and venue costs for planning their festival.

<http://www.alltimefavorites.com/>

All Time Favorites is a great resource for planners to get a sense of event costs.

<http://www.bbu.org/>

Boston Bluegrass Union is a New England bluegrass music organization, with listings of local events.

<http://www.sebbluegrass.org/>

The SouthEastern Bluegrass Association's mission is to be "a non-profit organization of fans, musicians, promoters, vendors, and friends of bluegrass music, joined together to preserve, promote, and publicize the music and bluegrass activities."

<http://www.britishbluegrass.com/>

Information about the bluegrass movement in Great Britain.

Activity 7: Writing a Bluegrass Song

Erbesen, Wayne. *Backpocket Bluegrass Song Book*. Native Ground Music, 1991.

Liebling, Rachel. *High Lonesome: The Story of Bluegrass Music*. [video, color, 95 min.] Northside Films, 1991. Distributed by Koch Vision/Shanachie Video, 1994.

<http://www.bluegrasslyrics.com/>

This website offers examples of bluegrass lyrics, listed by artist, title, lyrics, or theme! If you use this resource, we recommend that you select specific songs rather than allowing students to search the site, as some songs may not be appropriate for younger children.

<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/musicchild.htm>

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Sing Along Page includes a long list of children's songs (including Oh Susannah!) with lyrics and MIDI music files so that you can listen to the tune.

Students can use this resource to select other songs if they want to try to rewrite lyrics to create several original songs.

<http://www.banjo.com/BG-Midi.html>

The Cybergrass Midi Page lets you listen to sample bluegrass sounds by clicking on any of the tunes listed. The sounds are computer generated, so some may not sound like real bluegrass, and some of the instrument voices called may not be present. Nonetheless, this website gives you a sense of the bluegrass genre.

Activity 8: Writing a Music Review

Carter, Janette. *Living with Memories*. Carter Family Memorial Music Center.

Zwonitzer, Mark and Charles Hirshberg (contributor). *Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone?: The Carter Family and Their Legacy in American Music*. Simon & Schuster, 2002.

<http://www.bluegrassmusic.com>

Bluegrass Unlimited Magazine has been publishing monthly magazines on the bluegrass scene since 1966. Their website includes bluegrass music reviews, artist photos, local concert schedules, among other information.

<http://www.efolkmusic.com>

This website has numerous bluegrass musicians listed, with preview audio tracks and free mp3 downloads that you can use to demonstrate the old and new sounds of bluegrass.

<http://www.xmradio.com/programming/14.html>

Bluegrass Junction Radio is an online station that plays a mix of old and new bluegrass music and allows listeners to request songs.

<http://www.bluegrasscountry.org>

An online bluegrass radio station.

<http://www.compassrecords.com>

Record company owned by Alison Brown, award-winning female bluegrass banjoist, with photographs, audio clips and biographies of bluegrass musicians.

<http://www.sugarhillrecords.com>

Record company with information and musical clips of such bluegrass and country artists as Nickel Creek, Dolly Parton, Doc Watson and the Osborne Brothers, among others.

<http://www.rounder.com>

Record company of many great bluegrass, old-time and traditional country musicians, plus several recording series which document American roots music.