

Musicians and their Music

*Learn English with stories musicians and
their music*



(A) Four men were walking across a field. They were carrying a body wrapped up in white cloth. Their strong, black hands and arms supported the body as they walked on. Other men, women, and children walked behind.

And the tall green trees listened. They listened to the cries of the people in the wind.

The men stopped by a hole in the ground. Their feet stood softly on the green grass. After a moment of silence, they lowered the body into the ground. A man gave a speech. And the people prayed.

Then a woman began to sing. Her voice was big and rough. It was a full voice, full of dreams and pain. And she sang these words:

Roll Jordan, roll. Roll Jordan, roll.

I want to get to heaven when I die

To hear Roll Jordan roll

One man stood alone. He looked down for the body. But it was gone, deep under the ground. "My love..." he said to himself, as he started to cry. "Why did they kill you?"

His brain filled up with the blood of anger. He imagined the killers. He saw their cold, white faces, and he hit and kicked at them. But they disappeared from his imagination. He took a breath. A tear fell from his eye, and then the music took hold. Its power was unstoppable.

(B) And he began to sing. He sang it over and over, "Roll Jordan, roll." What did it mean? Jordan is a river mentioned in the Bible. But for this man, Jordan was a river that rolled and took him away to freedom. And heaven was a place far away from slavery and the slave owners.

He didn't know the future. He didn't know the present. But there was music. It was like water in the desert. It was like sweet honey in his mouth. It was like fresh air in an old, dark room. It was like the golden sun after a storm.

The pain was a power pushing down on him. But the music lifted him up. And so he sang. He sang that song like a fight for his life. He sang that song so that he could breathe. He sang that song so that he could live on.

In this way, African Americans sang their spiritual songs. They took the music from the church. They took African rhythms and mixed them with "blue" melodies, and over time they created a new kind of music.

Today we call this music the blues. Nowadays blues music is a treasure of American culture. What's more, it stands as... (Read more at ReadOasis.com.)



PAIRED READING FOR FLUENCY

When we practice fluency, we use language that we already know.

1. In pairs, Partner A read aloud for 60 seconds. Start from (A). Use a timer + alarm. Partner B listen.
2. After 60 seconds, Partner A stops reading. Mark the place where you stopped reading.
3. Partner A, repeat steps 1-2. How many MORE words did you read the second time? Answer: _____.
4. Partner B do steps 1-3, from (B).

WORD FOCUS: LIST NEW OR HARD WORDS

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(A) Long black fingers were dancing. They were dancing on the white and black keys of the piano. From the comfort of their homes, people watched on their televisions. And they listened to the blue sounds of the piano.



The piano player looked into the camera and spoke. He said, "Thank you, ladies and gentlemen... We are happy because you let us in your homes tonight. And I shall do for you a number I call my breadwinner, 'Every Day I have the Blues.'"

Every day, every day I have the blues. Every day, (and every night) every day I have the blues. When you see me worrying, baby, You know it's you I hate to lose.

Nobody loves me, and nobody seems to care. Nobody loves me; nobody seems to care. Speaking of bad luck and trouble, Well, you know I've had my share.

I'm gonna pack my suitcase. I'll get moving on down the line. I'm gonna pack my suitcase. Yes, I'm moving on down the line. I know that nobody worries. Well, there ain't nobody crying. Every day I have the blues.

(B) The singer was Memphis Slim. He started singing this song in 1949. And it became a big hit. Slim called it his breadwinner because it earned him money to support his family.

But Memphis Slim was not the first person to sing this song. It was first released in 1935 by the artists Pinetop Sparks and his brother Marion. And you can listen to that old version online.

Pinetop Sparks made the song, but Memphis Slim made it famous. And today the song is a blues standard. Blues great B.B. King performed many versions of the song. Jazz singer Tony Bennett recorded a version with Stevie Wonder on harmonica. And guitarist John Mayer recorded a live rock version of the song using a fresh and modern style. Many other artists have covered the song, and it has received two special Grammy awards.

"Every Day I Have the Blues" shows us the power and influence of blues music. Blues music is often simple, but it's honest. It reaches into our deepest feelings and fears. But it also gives us hope.

Blues music is also the foundation of all modern music, including jazz, rock, and hip-hop. In that sense, every day we do have the blues. Why is that? Because without the blues, other modern musics would not exist!

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WORD FOCUS: LIST NEW OR HARD WORDS

breadwinner
Ain't nobody crying
Memphis Slim
Pinetop Sparks

Southern trees bear strange fruit / Blood on the leaves and blood at the root / Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze / Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees



These sad words open the song “Strange Fruit.” The song was written by Abel Meeropol, and it was (1) _____ and made famous by Billie Holiday. The words expose racial hatred in America, especially in the killing of African Americans by hanging. In 1999, Time Magazine named “Strange Fruit” the “Song of the (2) _____.” It carries a powerful message against hatred. And when Billie Holiday sang it, the song often moved people to tears.

Holiday would regularly end her shows with the song. When she was ready, the waiters stopped (3) _____ drinks and food. The lights in the club were turned off. A single light shone on Holiday standing on a dark stage in a white dress. During the musical introduction, Holiday stood with her eyes closed as in (4) _____. Often she was afraid to sing the song. She thought people might (5) _____ her for doing it. But she continued to sing it because it reminded her of her father.

Holiday’s emotional connection with this song fits with the story of her life. She was a musical success, but she often sang about (6) _____ and trouble. The film about her life is called Lady Sings the Blues, and it tells the story of her (7) _____ life and career. In the opening scene, we see Holiday locked up in prison. She is poor. She has almost no friends, and she is (8) _____ for drugs.

Trouble for Billie Holiday started when she was young. When she was ten, a man

sexually (9) _____ her. When she was thirteen, Billie and her mother became prostitutes. (A prostitute is a person who does sexual activity for money.) Because of this, both Billie and her mother spent time in (10) _____.

Two years later, at the age of fifteen, Billie was given a job singing at a club. She eventually became one of the most famous nightclub singers in New York City. Then one night, Billie got a lucky (11) _____. Music producer John Hammond heard Billie sing. Hammond was one of the most important producers in New York City. He helped start the musical (12) _____ of many stars, including Benny Goodman, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, and Bruce Springsteen.

When Hammond heard Holiday, he thought she was one of the greatest singers he had ever heard. He told many famous people about her, and he introduced her to other musicians. Hammond (13) _____ for Holiday to make her first recording. At age 18, in 1933, Billie (14) _____ two songs with Benny Goodman. Goodman was one of the most popular musicians in America at the time. And after working with him, Billie had her first hit song.

LIST NEW WORDS.	MAKE NEW PHRASES WITH NEW WORDS.
THINK ABOUT IT!	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who wrote the song “Strange Fruit”? (A) Billie Holiday, (B) Abel Meeropol, (C) John Hammond. What is the song “Strange Fruit” about? (A) A love story, (B) Racial hatred, (C) Billie Holiday. Who arranged for Billie to make her 1st recording? (A) Goodman, (B) Franklin, (C) Hammond. The film about Holiday’s life is: (A) Lady Sings the Blues, (B) The Color Purple, (C) Purple Rain.. How do great singers make an emotional connection with listeners? 	

(A) Hank would never make it to the concert. There were too many problems. It was icy cold outside. He sat under a cover in the back of his light blue Cadillac car. He was heading to the city of Canton, Ohio, to give a big concert on New Year's Day.



The night before, from his home in Montgomery, Alabama, Hank heard the weather report. To the north, in Tennessee, the weather was going bad. Unfriendly weather covered the state in ice and cold. Hank could not fly. He had to drive.

He cancelled his December 31st show in Charleston, West Virginia. Then he hired a driver so he could make it to the show in Canton, Ohio, for New Year's Day. Sadly, his fans in Canton would not hear him sing.

Hank and his driver left Montgomery around 1:00 p.m. They drove for about six hours and arrived in Knoxville, Tennessee, at 7:08 p.m. They ordered dinner from the restaurant and had it delivered to the room. But Hank was feeling sick.

(B) He had been drinking during the trip. He called for a doctor, and the doctor gave him two shots of vitamins and some pain killer. At 10:45 p.m., Hank and his driver checked out of the hotel. But Hank couldn't walk, so the driver carried him to the car. Hank was coughing painfully as they took to the road.

Time on the road like this was often hard, but for Hank Williams life was

often hard. He was born into hard times. When he was just six, in 1929, the American economy went bad. This was the beginning of America's Great Economic Depression. One year later, during these hard times, Hank's father became sick, and he had to stay in the hospital for eight years.

To survive, Hank's mother worked. She also played music at church, and Hank sang in the church choir. At age 14, he won a singing contest at a famous theater in Montgomery, Alabama. Hank also sang and played on the street in front of the local radio station.

Because of the contest and street performances, radio producers noticed Hank Williams. They invited him to sing on the radio from time to time. He was so popular that many listeners contacted the radio station. They said, "We want to hear more of the Singing Kid!"

The radio producers then gave Hank... (Continue reading at ReadOasis.com).

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WORD FOCUS: LIST NEW OR HARD WORDS

Hank Williams
Drifting
Icy
See cities

Johnny started singing, but he looked uncomfortable. The audition was not going well. Sam Phillips, the producer, listened (1) _____. But he didn't smile. Johnny kept singing, but with no confidence. Then Mr. Phillips said, "Hold up!"



Johnny and his friends stopped playing. Phillips said, "I hate to (2) _____, but do you have anything else? I don't record material that doesn't sell."

Johnny said, "What's wrong? What's wrong with the music? What's wrong with the singing?" "I don't believe you," said Phillips. Johnny replied, "But you didn't let us bring it (3) _____."

"Bring it home?" said Phillips. "Okay, let's bring it home. If you were hit by a truck, and if you were (4) _____ in the street, and if you had time to sing one song, one song for people to remember you before you die, what song would you sing? Would you sing something real, something different, something you really (5) _____? That is the kind of song people want to hear.

Johnny said nothing. He looked down at the floor. The room fell (6) _____. Then he started playing again, at first softly and slowly, but the sound got bigger, faster, and more (7) _____, like a train. His friends started playing, too. And then Johnny started to sing.

I hear the train a coming. It's rolling around the bend.

And I ain't seen the (8) _____ since, I don't know when

I am stuck in Folsom Prison, and time keeps dragging on.

Sam Phillips smiled. The music felt powerful, emotional, and real. Phillips recorded that song, and it became famous, #1 on the country (9) _____ in 1968. Today people

remember Johnny Cash because of that song. It's called the Folsom Prison Blues, and Rolling Stone Magazine ranks it #51 on the list of the 100 greatest country songs of all time.

Johnny Cash was a man of great (10) _____, as if born from an ancient legend that reveals the beauty and danger of human life. He died in 2003, but he gave us a vast collection of over 50 years of music. He also created his own (11) _____, between rock and country, but his style appealed to almost everyone.

Cash was deeply (12) _____, recording gospel albums as well. But he was also deeply aware of his sins, addictions that brought him through times of sickness and recovery. Bob Dylan's song "The Man in the Long Black Coat" shows the (13) _____ and complexity of Cash. People called him the "The Man in Black." He said, "I wear black for the poor and the beaten down, living in the (14) _____, hungry side of town..."

In 1954, Sam Phillips signed Johnny... (Read more at ReadOasis.com.)

LIST NEW WORDS.	MAKE NEW PHRASES WITH NEW WORDS.
THINK ABOUT IT!	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What producer listened to Johnny's audition? (A) Sam Phillips, (B) Rolling Stone, (C) Bob Dylan. 2. When was Folsom Prison Blues released? (A) 1968, (B) 1954, (C) 2003. 3. What rank is Folsom Prison Blues in the 100 greatest country songs? (A) #51, (B) #100, (C) #10. 4. What does "bring it home" here? (A) Make it real. (B) Sing it live. (C) Record it well. 5. Cash has a rough voice, like a working man. What do you think about singers with rough voices? 	

Little Willie was born into hard times. On October 29, 1929, the American 1 _____ crashed. It was called Black Tuesday. Many people lost all their money. By Willie's day of birth in 1933, around 25% of Americans had lost their jobs. People were 2 _____, hungry, and poor.



In the middle of all this trouble, Willie's parents left their little boy, and Willie lived with his grandparents. Grandma and Grandpa took good 3 _____ of Willie. They raised him in their family 4 _____ and took him to church. At church, little Willie Nelson learned to sing. By the age of six, he got his first guitar, and by the age of seven, he wrote his first song.

In spite of all his success, Willie Nelson has also had his 9 _____ of hard times. In 1990, he started having big money problems. The U.S. government said that Nelson 10 _____ 16.7 million dollars in taxes. The government wanted the money, so it 11 _____ Willie Nelson's home in Texas.



At the time, Willie was playing golf in Hawaii. But before the 12 _____ took his home and everything he 13 _____, his daughter sent him his famous guitar, which he had named "Trigger." After Willie got his guitar, he said, "As long as I got my guitar, I'll be fine."

But Willie got back more than his guitar. When the government tried to sell his home, a group of farmers came to his 14 _____. Over the years, Willie Nelson had given "Farm Aid" concerts and helped to 15 _____ millions of dollars to support poor farmers. Now farmers were returning the favor. (Read more at ReadOasis.com.)

If you have a musical instrument (or imagine you have one), what would you name it?

musical success. In just a few years he got his first 5 _____ work as a musician. As time went on, he wrote many songs and performed in hundreds and hundreds of places. By 1962, Willie recorded his first record. Finally, he was a 6 _____! Today Willie Nelson is a country music 7 _____. He has recorded over 2,500 songs and released nearly 300 albums. He has won many awards, including 11 Grammy Awards. His music is popular in many countries, and he has sold over 8 _____ million albums in the United States alone.

LIST NEW WORDS.	MAKE NEW PHRASES WITH NEW WORDS.
THINK ABOUT IT!	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When was Little Willie born? (A) 1933 (B) 1929 (C) 1962 Willie's *** raised him. (A) grandparents (B) friends (C) aunt and uncle Willie learned to *** at church. (A) sing (B) play guitar (C) write songs What was the name of Willie's famous guitar? (A) Trigger (B) Black Tuesday (C) Farm Aid Who seized Willie Nelson's home? (A) The government (B) The farmers (C) His grandparents 	

(A) After her mother died, Ella had a lot of trouble. Her grades dropped at school. She couldn't find a good place to live. She became an orphan, a child whose parents are dead and gone. Eventually, she was sent to the New York Training School for Girls, but she escaped. And for a time, she was homeless.



But Ella Fitzgerald loved to dance and sing. And when she was just 17, she debuted at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, New York.

(Many other artists debuted at the Apollo Theater as well, including James Brown, the Jackson 5, Stevie Wonder, and Mariah Carey.) After Ella's debut, she began singing with a big band led by the drummer Chick Webb.

With Chick Webb and his band, Ella recorded a number of hit songs. But in 1938, she recorded her first big hit. The song was an old nursery rhyme called "A-Tisket, A-Tasket."

(B) Ella transformed it with jazz style. Today, the song is a jazz standard, and it even won a special Grammy Award for its historical significance. The song's opening lines go like this:

A-ticket a-tasket

A brown and yellow basket

I sent a letter to my mommy

And on the way I dropped it

**I dropped it, I dropped it
Yes, on the way I dropped it
A little girl picked it up
And put it in her pocket**

Ella's recording career lasted 59 years. She won thirteen Grammy Awards, sold over forty million albums, and received honors from two presidents. Critics praised her great vocal range and



pure tone. Even in her old age, Ella's voice sounded young. She continues to appeal to all kinds of people, and she is known as one of the greatest jazz singers of all time. That is why music lovers everywhere call Ella Fitzgerald the "First Lady of Song."

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WORD FOCUS: LIST NEW OR HARD WORDS

orphan debuted significance Apollo Theater	
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You don't know soul music if you don't know the Motown (1) _____. Motown is a record company from Detroit Michigan. And one of the greatest Motown artists of all time is Stevie Wonder. Wonder has sold over 100,000,000 records and won (2) _____ Grammy Awards. But he started at Motown when he was just 11-years-old.

You can see the fresh energy of Motown in an early video of Stevie Wonder. The announcer stands on the (3) _____. He holds the microphone and speaks to the noisy crowd. "Let's welcome the 12-year-old (4) _____, Little Stevie Wonder!"

A man helps Little Stevie walk to the stage. Stevie is wearing dark glasses, and he is carrying a small (5) _____ of drums, called bongos. Stevie sits on a chair, and he starts to play.

"Yeah!" he says in a high, (6) _____ voice! "Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to do for you one of my recordings, taken from my live album. The name of the song is 'Fingertips.' Yeah! I want you to (7) _____ your hands! Come on! Everybody, Yeah!!!"

Then Stevie gives his drums to the announcer. He stands up and begins to play the harmonica. And then the (8) _____ starts. The music is raw, natural, and full of life. Stevie is just a boy, but he makes music like a (9) _____. You can hear "Fingertips" on Stevie's first record: "The Jazz Soul of Little Stevie."

Stevie Wonder released almost all his 38 records – and 30 top 10 hits – with Motown Records. But it all started when he (10) _____ a contract with Motown, and Motown made Wonder one of the world's most successful singers of soul music.

Soul music mixes rhythm, blues, and (11) _____. Like the blues, soul came out of the black experience in America. Soul musicians took these styles out of the black church and into the world and the streets. They confidently and (12) _____ sang about black American experience and culture.

Many kinds of soul music (13) _____, but the most famous is the Motown sound. The name "Motown" comes from its hometown, Detroit Michigan, which is also called Motor City. It's the center of America's motor vehicle (14) _____.

Motown Records (15) _____ great international success. It has released over 180 international #1 hit songs. And Stevie Wonder isn't the only great Motown artist. In fact, Motown has produced over 200 artists, including (16) _____ like Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, The Jackson 5, Diana Ross, and Michael Jackson.

But Motown didn't just make big music history. It has also made big (17) _____ history. Motown was the first black-owned record company to have (18) _____ success, and it was the largest business in the US owned by African Americans.



LIST NEW WORDS.	MAKE NEW PHRASES WITH NEW WORDS.

THINK ABOUT IT!
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The story says Stevie Wonder won __ Grammy Awards. (A) 25, (B) 10, (C) 5. Soul music combines rhythm, blues, and __. (A) gospel, (B) rock, (C) pop. Motown has produced over __ artists. (A) 200, (B) 50, (C) 100. Motown was the first __-owned record company to have mass success. (A) black, (B) white, (C) Latino. Soul music came out of the __ experience in America. (A) black, (B) white, (C) Asian.

In March 1983, Motown Records celebrated its 25th anniversary with a major television event. Many Motown artists gave (1)_____ performances, but Michael Jackson upstaged them all when he sang Billie Jean and (2)_____ his signature dance move, the moonwalk. His performance caused many to (3)_____ him as one of the greatest dancers of all time, and it contributed to the (4)_____ popularity of Thriller as the world's best selling album. And because of his extraordinary success, Jackson is known as the "King of Pop."



Jackson began performing as a boy with his brothers in The Jackson 5. In his solo (5)_____, he released 10 studio and 9 compilation albums, the top four each selling over (6)_____ copies: Off the Wall (20,000,000), Bad (32,000,000), Dangerous (32,000,000), and Thriller (108,000,000). In 2006, the World Music Awards announced that Jackson had sold an incredible 750,000,000 (7)_____ world-wide.

As a performer, Jackson introduced (8)_____ dance techniques (the robot and moonwalk), and he inspired and influenced a whole generation of artists. He helped create, (9)_____, and transform the music video genre on MTV, and

Guinness World Records (10)_____ him the "Most Successful Entertainer of All Time."

Despite his success, Jackson was surrounded by (11)_____ and controversy, concerning his cosmetic surgeries, finances, skin disease, and unusual and (12)_____ relationships with children. Perhaps because of these problems, his popularity began to decline. Jackson was scheduled to return to the stage in July 2009. But on June (13)_____, he died of heart failure in his Los Angeles home. He was 50 years-old. Jackson's (14)_____ shocked the world. And he left us with this sad and painful hope, (15)_____ by one of his fans. "Michael, we want to see you again. But we never can. You left us way too soon."



LIST NEW WORDS.	MAKE NEW PHRASES WITH NEW WORDS.
THINK ABOUT IT!	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Where did Jackson debut the moonwalk? How many studio albums has Jackson recorded? What controversies does the story talk about? What is Jackson's nickname? What record company did Jackson start with? 	

February 9, 1964. "Hurry up!" shouted Mary as she turned on the TV. "It started already!" Just in time, Mary watched Ed Sullivan say, "Ladies and gentlemen, the Beatles!" The audience roared as the Beatles launched into their song "All My Loving." It was their first time on American TV. And a record 73 million people watched this historic moment.



The Beatles transformed the music industry with innovative styles and historic concerts. Besides their hit songs, they also made revolutionary music, like "Rain," "Tomorrow Never Knows," and "A Day in the Life." These songs used novel and creative recording techniques that surprised and shocked listeners.

The band also made news for radical and controversial statements. In 1966, John Lennon casually said, "We're more popular than Jesus now." The statement sparked a negative reaction, especially in America. Some people even burned Beatles records in protest. Even so, the Beatles always shared a simple message of "Peace and Love."

Before they broke up, the Beatles made history again with their last concert. They played on a rooftop in London. We can see the famous rooftop concert in "Get Back," a documentary released in 2021. The film shows the band's raw performances and their wild and free creativity.

Soon after the rooftop concert, in April of 1970, the Beatles broke up. Fans longed for the Beatles to reunite, but that dream never came true. Tragically, in 1980... (Read more at ReadOasis.com.)

LIST NEW WORDS.	MAKE NEW PHRASES WITH NEW WORDS.
Q/A	
1. How did the police feel at the concert? (A) Nervous (B) Excited (C) Enthusiastic 2. The Shea Stadium crowd listened thoughtfully, carefully, and deeply to the music. (A) True (B) False 3. New and original: (A) Novel (B) Familiar (C) Traditional 4. To have a strong desire or craving for something: (A) Long for (B) Shorten (C) Detest 5. Unhappily or sorrowfully; involving a sad event: (A) Tragically (B) Happily (C) Comically	

The Beatles had arrived in America. And nothing would be the same again.

August 15, 1965 -- another historic moment. The night air hung thick and hot at Shea Stadium in New York City. 55,000 fans stood waiting. Two thousand police watched with worried eyes. It was the first stadium concert in the history of rock and roll. The band stepped onto the field and ran to the stage. As they waved and smiled, the crowd went wild.

Ed Sullivan raised his hands, trying to calm the excited crowd. But the noise just grew louder and louder. "Now, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "honored by their country, decorated by their Queen, and loved here in America, here are, The Beatles!" Suddenly, the whole stadium exploded with cheers and screams.

The Beatles danced and bounced around on the stage, and the noise became deafening. A policeman covered his ears because of the screams. Girls shouted at the top of their lungs. Everyone stood up, trying to catch a sight of the band. It was wild!

When the Beatles started playing, the noise was so loud you could hardly hear the music. But this historic night paints an image of the band's astonishing success. The Beatles soared up high as the biggest band of all time, selling nearly one billion records and changing music history forever.

(A) Eden felt the sunlight warm his face. He opened his eyes and took a deep breath of fresh air. He stood up, walked forward, and looked down the hill. He took another deep breath and enjoyed the sight -- green trees, grand homes, and the city of Los Angeles in the distance.

He turned around and looked up. Below the blue sky, he saw the sign in big white letters: HOLLYWOOD. Eden still felt sleepy. So, he decided to sleep some more under the big "L." But just then a man appeared, walking up the hill. He wore a dark suit and tie. And as he wiped sweat from his face, the man said, "Eden Ahbez?" "Yes," said Eden. "I'm Eden Ahbez."

Then the man said the words that changed Eden's life forever. "Eden, Mr. Cole wants to record your song."

Back in the 1940s, there lived a mysterious man named Eden Ahbez. He loved nature, and above all he believed in the power of love. He slept outdoors. He ate fruits, vegetables, and nuts. And yes, for a time, he even lived under the "L" of the Hollywood sign.

Ahbez wrote poetry and music. And he became famous for composing the song "Nature Boy." Ahbez wanted the great singer Nat King Cole to sing the song. So, he approached Cole's manager at the Lincoln Theater in LA. Ahbez handed the manager a wrinkled piece of paper. "Could you show this to Mr. Cole?" Eden said, But the manager just pushed Eden away. Eden felt disappointed, but he didn't give up. He gave the music to Cole's personal assistant.

(B) When Cole finally saw the song, he loved it. And he began playing it for live audiences. He wanted to record it. But first he needed to ask Ahbez for permission. Cole looked for Ahbez, but he couldn't find him! Finally, as the legend goes, Ahbez was found living under the Hollywood sign. And Cole got permission to record the song.

Back in the 1940s, the American music market was divided by race. And black artists found it hard to cross over to white audiences. But "Nature Boy" appealed to everyone. And

white audiences loved it, too. And so, "Nature Boy" helped Cole receive widespread recognition.

On April 16, 1948, the record hit the charts. And it stayed there for 15 weeks. It even reached number one! "Nature Boy" went on to sell over a million copies. And

today, thousands of artists have covered "Nature Boy," including Miles Davis, Frank Sinatra, John Coltrane, Ella Fitzgerald, James Brown, David Bowie, Kurt Elling, and Lady Gaga with Tony Bennett.

The words of "Nature Boy" paint a picture of the power of love. The song ends with this line: "The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return." Embrace love. Cherish the people in your life. Let them love you in return. Listen to "Nature Boy." Let its enchanting melody move you. And let the song sing its story on the strings of your heart.



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WORD FOCUS: LIST NEW OR HARD WORDS

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(A) It was January 1961. In the cold north of Minnesota, a young man of 19 years packed his bags. He was going to New York City. By car, the trip would take over 18 hours. And he was travelling by his thumb. In other words, he was going to get free rides from passing cars.

His dreams were clear. He wanted to perform music in New York City. He wanted to meet his hero, the folk singer Woody Guthrie. He wanted to make records. He wanted to become a singer. Ordinarily, dreams like this would fail. But maybe this young man was extraordinary.

That was a long time ago. The young man became old. He gave thousands of performances all over the world. He wrote over 600 original songs. He won many awards. He met presidents and popes. Two universities made him an honorary Doctor. Who is this man? What did he do? His original name was Robert Zimmerman. But today we know him as Bob Dylan.

In that winter of 61, Dylan did not know the success that waited for him. And this success came quickly. By February, he was singing in all the best folk clubs in New York. In September, Dylan performed at a top club. By chance, a writer from the New York Times was in the audience.

(B) The writer's name was Robert Shelton. Shelton wrote a positive story about Dylan. He praised Dylan's style as special and unique. He said that Dylan was full of talent. He said Dylan's voice showed the rough beauty of a working man. His songs burned with power.



The New York Times is the biggest newspaper in America. And when Shelton published his story about Dylan, it changed everything. Dylan's big success started with that story. Soon Dylan recorded his first record. And in December, he returned home to his family in Minnesota. But this time, he had a record contract in his hand.



As time passed, Dylan wrote many songs that became classics. In 2004, Rolling Stone Magazine made a list of the top 500 songs of all time. Blowing in the Wind was #14. But Dylan had 13 more songs on the list. (The Beatles had 23, and the Rolling Stones 14.) But Dylan had the #1 song, Like a Rolling Stone.

PAIRED READING FOR FLUENCY

When we practice fluency, we use language that we already know.

1. In pairs, Partner A read aloud for 60 seconds. Start from (A). Use a timer + alarm. Partner B listen.
2. After 60 seconds, Partner A stops reading. Mark the place where you stopped reading.
3. Partner A, repeat steps 1-2. How many MORE words did you read the second time? Answer: _____.
4. Partner B do steps 1-3, from (B).

WORD FOCUS: LIST NEW OR HARD WORDS

Minnesota	A state in the central north of the United States
Woody Guthrie	A famous folk singer
Zimmerman	Bob Dylan's original name
Honorary Doctor	A doctor's degree given for work, but not for going to school
Rolling Stone Magazine	A popular magazine about music, politics, and pop-culture

Freddy ran onto the stage pumping his fists. And the crowd of 72,000 fans roared. Bouncing over to the piano, he sat down. And for just a moment, everyone hushed. Then Freddy's fingers danced on the keys, playing those well-known chords. Cheers erupted over the audience. As he sang, 72,000 voices joined him. "Mama, just killed a man. Put a gun against his head. Pulled my trigger, now he's dead. Mamma, life had just begun. But now I've gone and thrown it all away."

This was the start of Queen's performance for Live Aid at Wembley Stadium. Queen's set of music lasted only 21 minutes. But fans and critics regard this as their greatest performance. As far as rock history goes, it stands as an epic moment, a triumph and joyous explosion of music. You can see the full performance on YouTube. And Rami Malek performs it with powerful emotion and accuracy for the film *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

"I thought up the name Queen. It's just a name, but it's very royal, and it sounds splendid. It's a strong name, very universal and immediate. It had a lot of visual potential and was open to all sorts of interpretations." -- Freddie Mercury

Queen formed in 1970 in London with Brian May (guitar), Freddie Mercury (vocals), and Roger Taylor (drums). John Deacon (bass) joined the following year. Queen rose to fame during the 1970s and became one of Britain's most successful bands. Fans and critics love their musical variety, complex arrangements, and vocal harmonies. In their live shows, Freddie Mercury embraced his audiences and made them an energetic part of the performance.

But Queen had only moderate success in the early 1970s, with the albums *Queen* and *Queen II*. But when they released *Sheer Heart Attack* in 1974, the band soared to international fame and success. After that, all Queen's studio albums reached number one on numerous charts around the world. The band has sold more than 300 million records worldwide, including more than 86 million albums in the United States. Business Insider

magazine ranks Queen as the 3rd best-selling rock band of all time, behind only Led Zeppelin and the Beatles.

As the most famous member, Freddie Mercury stood as the star and chief songwriter. He also shined as a pianist and vocalist, who

performed live shows with outstanding technique, artistry, and showmanship. Sadly, in the early 1980's Freddie became sick. And in November 1990, he shared this message with his fans. "I wish to confirm that I have been tested HIV positive and have AIDS... I hope that everyone will join with me, my doctors and all those worldwide in the fight against this terrible disease."

Twenty-four hours later Freddie Mercury died. His death greatly raised worldwide consciousness about HIV and AIDs. After Mercury's passing, band members believed this was the end of Queen. But worldwide love for Queen did not die. And Queen came back big, first performing with the vocalist Paul Rodgers, and then later with Queen + Adam Lambert.



Q/A – COVERAGE EXAMPLE (A) 501 - (B) 10 = 491. $491 \div 501 = 98\%$

1. Story Word Count: A=501. Count (B) unknown words: _____. A - B = know words. $B \div A =$ Coverage.
2. Critic: (A) Fan, (B) Artist (C) Judge.
3. Moderate: (A) Extreme (B) Average (C) Insignificant
4. Embrace: (A) Hug (B) Reject (C) Criticize
5. Roared: (A) Sang softly (B) Made a loud sound (C) Spoke quietly
6. Fame: (A) Shyness (B) Wealth (C) Popularity.

(A) Tiny Tim walked onto the stage. His long black hair swung down to his shoulders. He made a shy face, and he rolled his eyes. Then he started to play the ukulele and sing. His voice was very high. The song was cute, but also strange. His little ukulele sounded empty and out of tune. But when he finished singing, the audience cheered. They loved Tiny Tim.

Tiny Tim charmed his audiences with his unusual style. He became famous as a performer in the 1960's and 1970's. His act was lovable and eccentric, like it belonged in the circus. Though Tiny Tim was a serious musician, many people did not take him seriously. When people saw him, they identified him with the ukulele, a silly little instrument that sounded like a toy.

Tiny Tim played simple songs on his ukulele. But before him, another man played more difficult songs. His name was Roy Smeck. Smeck also played a tiny ukulele that looked and sounded like a toy. He played back in the 1920's when the ukulele was the most popular instrument in America. And he played fast, like a crazy man. Smeck played ukulele like a wizard. In fact, he was so good that he earned the name: "the Wizard of the Strings."

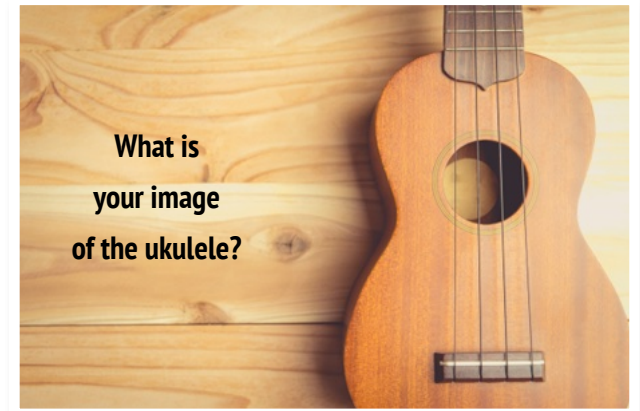
(B) Roy Smeck played difficult music with speed and skill. As he played, he looked relaxed, even pleased with himself. He also did tricks with the ukulele, making funny sounds and comical movements. He was indeed a great player and performer. But like Tiny Tim, he also played more like a circus act than a serious musician. And people associated his fantastic ukulele as fun -- but also frivolous.

Maybe because of Roy Smeck and Tiny Tim, people saw the ukulele as a fun "classroom instrument," not for serious musicians. But that image is changing. Amazing new players have come on the scene. Of course, great players existed before. But with the Internet and YouTube, the new players are rebranding the ukulele. Like Roy Smeck and Tiny Tim, the new players perform well, but they look and sound like serious musicians. They often play bigger

ukuleles that sound deep, pure, and powerful.

The new players surprise their audiences with inspiring music and performance. But one man stands above them all as perhaps the best and most famous. His name is Jake Shimabukuro. Jake plays a big, tenor ukulele. It rings with a rich tone, and it sounds nothing like a toy. Jake plays almost every style of music, classical, jazz, blues, rock, and Hawaiian. He can play beautifully slow, melodic songs. And he can play songs so fast that his hands disappear like the wings of a hummingbird.

When people see players like Jake Shimabukuro, they say... (Read more at ReadOasis.com.)



PAIRED READING FOR FLUENCY

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- 1. In pairs, Partner A reads out loud from "A" for 60 seconds. Partner B listens.**
- 2. When you hear the alarm, stop reading. Mark the place where you stop!**
- 3. Partner A, repeat steps 1-2. How many MORE words did you read the second time? Answer: ____.**
- 4. Partner B do steps 1-3.**

WORD FOCUS: LIST NEW OR HARD WORDS

charmed eccentric wizard frivolous	
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