

## The Roots of Rock and Roll

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**Grade Level:** 7-12

**Subject(s):**

- Arts/Music
- Information Literacy/Research Skills

**Library Media Skills Objectives:**

The student will use specialized music reference sources to locate information about the origins of rock and roll. The student will take notes on the origins of rock and roll and organize the notes into an outline.

**Curriculum (subject area) Objectives:** This activity may be used in connection with a social studies or music unit on the history of musical styles and forms.

**Resources:**

Books

- Bane, Michael. *Who's Who in Rock* . Facts on File, 1981.  
Bernard, Stephen. *Rock: An Illustrated History* . Schirmer Books, 1986.  
Carlin, Richard. *The World of Music: Rock and Roll*. Facts on File, 1988.  
Clifford, Mike. *The Harmony Illustrated Encyclopedia of Rock* . Harmony Books, 1986.  
Fornatale, Pete. *The Story of Rock 'N' Roll*. Morrow, 1987.  
Hendler, Herb. *Year by Year in the Rock Era: Events and Conditions Shaping the Rock Generations That Reshaped America* . Greenwood Press, 1983.  
Pollock, Ruth. *Popular Music: 1959-1987* . (12 vols.) Shapiro, 1988.  
Pareles, John. *The Rolling Stones Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll* . Summit Books, 1983.  
Stambler, Irwin. *The Encyclopedia of Pop Rock and Soul* . St. Martin's Press, 1989.  
Ward, Ed. *Rock of Ages: The Rolling Stone History of Rock and Roll* . Rolling Stone, 1986.  
York, William. *Who's Who in Rock Music* . Scribner's, 1982.

Nonprint

- Rock. Troll Associates, 1976. 1 cassette. (CR029).  
Rock: *The Beat Goes On* . Encyclopedia Britannica, 1978. 1 16mm film. 17 min.  
Rock and Roll; *Evolution or Revolution?* Laurie. (SLP2004).  
Rock 'n Roll. *National Public Radio* . 1 cassette. (VW-78-10-01).

**Instructional Roles:**

The library media specialist, the classroom teacher, and the music teacher may work on this unit cooperatively. The classroom teacher may introduce the students to the unit as part of music or social studies. The music teacher may concentrate on the musical forms. The library media specialist may work with the students as they research the

music and the musical groups. This unit may be taught over several weeks or, if concentrated, may be completed in two.

**Activity and Procedures for Completion:**

The classroom teacher may introduce this unit by using a film such as *Rock: The Beat Goes On*. The film provides background on the country music, jazz, and blues origins of rock and roll. If the film is unavailable, the classroom teacher may play selections of music performed by some of the musical groups involved in the evolution of rock and roll. Following the introduction, the classroom teacher may explain that students will produce a musical history of rock, performing in "lip sync" with the music of some of the groups who were a part of the evolution of rock and roll music.

In order to develop the program, the students must investigate:

- the chronology and development of rock;
- the musical groups involved in the development;
- the special elements of the sound of various musical group;
- the instruments used to produce rock and roll music;
- the historical events which affected the music.

The students may be asked to help develop an outline of the development of rock and roll music. Time may be allowed for small groups to visit the library media center to research this topic. The library media specialist may work with each small group to identify useful reference sources (which have been placed on reserve). If a sufficient number of appropriate reference sources are not available in the library media collection, the library media specialist may wish to borrow appropriate sources from the local public library.

After the student groups have used the references and collected notes, the classroom teacher may ask the students to prepare an outline on transparency film. The groups may share their outlines and explain their organizational rationales.

The class may discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each outline structure and choose a structure to use in assembling information for the program. The classroom teacher may reproduce the selected outline for the students. The names of historically important musical groups and individuals may be identified and listed. Likely candidates include Little Richard; The Crows; Elvis Presley; The Coasters; The Five Satins; Bill Haley and the Comets; Dion and the Belmonts; The Beatles; The Isley Brothers; Smokey Robinson; The Rolling Stones; Chuck Berry; and Bruce Springsteen. Others may be included as desired.

At this point, each group may take responsibility for a section of the outline. The groups may identify the major content, complete the research about groups and the music, and locate recordings which represent the period. Each group may schedule several sessions with the library media specialist, who may help them use the reference sources and assist in use of record indexes as well as interlibrary loan if appropriate sound recordings are not available. Each group must include historical information about the musical groups and contemporary history. The students may collect notes and write draft narratives for review by the class.

The class should meet again with the classroom teacher to discuss the general outline, fill in program details, and prepare a composite program. Each small group may discuss its progress and elicit comments and suggestions from the rest of the class. The class may choose a general narrator or announcer.

Each of the small groups may meet separately to work on details of their performances. They must check on equipment; obtain the correct recordings, write and edit a narrative to accompany their segment of the program, and make any necessary props or costumes. Students must also practice "lip sync" for the performance.

The class may meet for a practice before performing for another class or group, and may videotape the practice to identify needed improvements.

**Evaluation:**

The student will locate and use specialized reference sources to find information about the evolution of rock and roll music. The student will take notes and outline the notes for a composite program about the history of rock and roll.

**Follow-Up:**

The students may:

- Use biographical sources to research the musical groups in more depth.
- Analyze the lyrics of the songs of one or more musical groups.