



# MUSIC Y9 – THE BLUES

A GENERAL		
1	Origins	African slaves brought their musical traditions with them when they were transported to work in the North American colonies. These Work songs were sung rhythmically in time with the task being done. Their songs were passed on orally (word of mouth) and were never usually written down.
2	Call & Response	A performer plays/sings a 'call' and the other performers will 'respond'.
3	Lyrics	often about depression, lack of money/employability, loneliness and them missing their family
4	Chords	Usually use chords I, IV and V in each key. In C, these would be C, F and G
5	Chord sequence (12 bar structure)	I   I   I   I IV   IV   I   I V   IV   I   I or V

C FEATURES		
1	Structure	In traditional blues, the '12 bar blues' structure is used. This is where there are three lines each made up of 4 bars. Lines 1 and 2 generally use the same lyrics, whilst line 3 rhymes at the end. In later blues the more modern 'verse/chorus' structure is more often employed.
2	Blue notes	The blues scale consists of certain notes of the scale being flattened. For instance a C blues scale consists of: C, E flat, F, G flat, B and B flat
3	Walking bass	The bass line plays on each beat of the bar (normally in a rising and falling pattern)
4	Improvisation	Music that is created on the spot, using musical knowledge to perform something from scratch. It usually uses notes from the Blues scale (see above)

B INSTRUMENTS & PERFORMERS		
1	Instruments (traditional blues)	Guitar Piano Harmonica
2	Instruments (modern blues)	Electric Guitar Piano Bass Guitar Drums
3	Performers	Robert Johnson Muddy Waters Besse Smith Eric Clapton