



Be the best that we can be.

EBJ Knowledge Organiser

Music

Year 5

Autumn 2

Blues



Learning Objectives

Pupils who are secure will be able to:

- Name three key features of blues music.
- Sing in tune, using vocal expression.
- Explain what a chord is and play the chord of C sixteen times.
- Play the 12-bar blues correctly.
- Play the notes of the blues scale in the correct order, ascending and descending.
- Play a selection of blues scale notes out of order in their own improvisation.

The Blues scale

The Blues scale to accompany our 12-bar Blues is made up of these notes:



Blues music



Vocabulary



Blues music is often sad and emotional, which is why we say we have 'the blues' when we feel sad. Its main features are the 12-bar blues and the blues scale, and it includes a lot of improvisation.

Blues music began in the southern United States over 100 years ago and was created by African American communities as a way to express emotions, tell stories, and share experiences. It is known for its soulful sound, expressive singing, and the use of repeating patterns such as the 12-bar blues. Blues musicians often improvise using the blues scale, creating melodies that feel emotional, powerful, or reflective. The blues has influenced many modern genres, including rock, pop, R&B, and hip-hop, which means pupils may hear its style in lots of today's music.

12-bar blues A series of chords played in a specific order.

1	CCCC	2	CCCC	3	CCCC	4	CCCC
5	FFFF	6	FFFF	7	CCCC	8	CCCC
9	GGGG	10	FFFF	11	CCCC	12	CCCC

chord Two or more notes that are played at the same time and work in harmony.

scale Any set of musical notes which are in order of their pitch.

ascending scale A scale in which the pitch of the notes goes up.

descending scale A scale in which the pitch of the notes goes down.

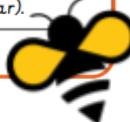
blues scale A set of notes used to play a melody over a 12-bar blues.

improvisation Making up music as it is played or performed.

bent notes A musical note that varies in pitch usually going up slightly at the end.

bar A section of music with a specific number of beats (in blues there are usually 4 beats in a bar).

quaver A note which lasts for half a beat.



Famous Blues Musicians

Etta James - A powerful blues and soul singer. Children may recognise her song **"At Last"**, which is still used in films, TV, and adverts today.

Ray Charles - Blended blues, jazz, gospel, and soul. Famous songs like **"Hit the Road Jack"** are still popular and often appear in movies and games.

Aretha Franklin (influenced by blues) - Although mainly known for soul, her music is strongly shaped by blues traditions. Songs like **"Respect"** are still widely recognised by children.

Musical Features You May Notice

The 12-Bar Blues - A repeating 12-bar chord pattern that forms the structure of many blues songs.

Call and Response - A musical conversation:

- One musical idea is played or sung (call)
- Another phrase answers it (response).

Swing Rhythm - Blues often uses **swing**, where notes are played in a long-short pattern rather than evenly.

This gives blues music its relaxed, "groovy" feel.

Expressive Vocals - Singers often use **slides, growls, bending notes and emotional delivery** to tell a story or express feelings.