

Name _____

Date _____

The History of Jazz

Directions: Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Did you know that jazz music has been around since the late 1800s? It began in African American communities in the South. Since then, jazz has taken the world by storm.

After the abolishment of slavery, many freed slaves tried to find work. With strict segregation laws in the South, former slaves had trouble finding jobs. Most laws did not apply to working in entertainment, though. African Americans got jobs performing music in vaudeville and variety shows. In these shows, an upbeat music called ragtime was popular.

The specific birthplace of jazz is New Orleans, Louisiana. It is in this city that ragtime music transformed into jazz music. People from all over the world came by boat every day to the port city of New Orleans. They brought musical traditions from their home countries to New Orleans. The nightclubs and entertainment venues blended the different styles of music. Spanish music, blues, gospel music, and African music were mixed. It then became the lively style known as jazz.

The sounds of jazz spread like wildfire in the 1920s. The United States was changing. Women gained the right to vote. Prohibition came to an end. Wild jazz music became the perfect background music to the turbulent times. Young people of all backgrounds began to take an interest in jazz. This period of time became known as "The Jazz Age".

Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington are two famous African American musicians. These talented songwriters and performers added excitement to the genre. The Jazz Age included some famous women jazz artists, too. Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday are two beloved performers. These musicians brought their unique talents to the genre. Their influences continue to impact the music world today.

Jazz grew and changed through the years. Many new forms of music were created. Jazz's influence reaches almost every form of popular music today.

1. How is jazz related to other types of music?

2. When did jazz become popular?

3. What is significant about "The Jazz Age"?

4. Why did musical styles from other countries influence jazz?

