

MUSICAL TRUTH

A Musical History of Modern Black Britain in 28 Songs



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Additional resources
for teaching

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Key themes and discussion points (in no particular order)

	Discussion questions	Key songs
Stereotyping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why are black communities stereotyped? How are different groups within the black community stereotyped in different ways? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Black Boys' 'Black' 'It Takes More'
Urban poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some of the effects of poverty in urban areas? How does poverty contribute to wider social problems? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Ghost Town' '21 Seconds'
Generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What unites the global black community over history? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> '1980' 'Pass the Dutchie'
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do people choose to move to a new country? What makes moving to new country difficult? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Immigrant' 'London Is the Place for Me'
Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has united black British communities throughout time? What is special about the relationship between black Britain, America, Africa and the Caribbean? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Let's Have Another Song' 'Black' 'Bad Young Brother' 'Azonto' 'Shape of You'
Prejudice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you think the history of racism contributed to prejudice in modern Britain? What has been the role of the British Empire upon racial prejudice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Immigrant' 'Black Boys'
Racial inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has racial inequality improved over time? If so, how? What are the biggest barriers to racial equality? What role has the British Empire played in racial inequality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Ghost Town' 'Black' 'Back to Life'
Protest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What leads people to protest against the government? What are the kinds of conditions that can lead to protest? When is protest a good thing? Is protest dangerous? Why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'POW!' 'Vossi Bop' 'Sonny's Lettah' 'Electric Avenue' 'Black and Ready'
Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does discrimination affect different groups in different ways? What is the role of the government in discrimination against black communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Immigrant' 'Little Baby Swastikkka' 'Cockney Translation'
Celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has black culture become so popular in mainstream culture? What is powerful about the history of black Britain? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Sweets for my Sweet' 'Pass the Dutchie' 'Black and Ready' 'Black' 'Re-Rewind' 'No Carnival in Britain'
Black femininity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some of the pressures that have faced black women in particular? How does stereotyping affect black women, historically? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'It's a Shame' 'It Takes More'

High five

Take a song of your choice (or one from the Musical Truth playlist) and use the following system to think of ideas related to that song. These ideas can then be:

- Shared in discussion
- Written up into mini-essays
- Compiled and turned into a presentation, speech or video

Raise a hand:

- Thumb = the best thing
- Index = the point
- Biggest finger = the biggest thing
- Ring finger = call a friend/ ask a question
- 'Pinky' = the promise

This is one way of analysing songs. For example:

'World in Motion' – New Order (1990)

Thumb = best thing	The dance he's doing in the video. It's very joyful. It makes England seem broader and more accepting that it had been in the past.
Index = the point	To bring pop culture, and black music, in line with mainstream football culture, as well as uniting the whole country. A celebration for England at a time when the country was suffering social problems. (Riots in the 80s, high unemployment)
Biggest finger = biggest thing	It was a world cup anthem that focussed on one of the country's most famous black players, at a time when racism was still commonplace in football. It was a heroic moment for John Barnes.
Ring finger = call a friend/ ask a question	How did John Barnes end up on the song in the first place, let alone having a whole verse? Answer: He had a rap off with other players and he had been rapping since he was 17!
'Pinky' = the promise	I promise to always remember that England can be united through sport, music and culture in this way. Music can save us. Something to celebrate and uplift.

Word filter

- Listen to a chosen song from the Musical Truth playlist .
- Write down any words that jump out to you, for any reason. Try to write as many words as you can.
- When finished, look through your list and select the 5 most important words.

This can be the basis for further discussion and exploration.

EXPLAIN: What do these words mean, to you? Use synonyms to help develop your understanding.

COMPARE: Do any of your words go into natural groups? What do these groups reveal about the song? Are there any contrasting or very different words?

JUSTIFY: Which words are most important and why?

CREATE: Create a spider diagram from your chosen words. Think about the connotations of each word.

Easy question/Hard question

- Listen to a song from the Musical Truth playlist.
- Come up with three questions of your choice. Use a question matrix to deepen your questioning.
- They can be any combination of easy and hard to answer.

The Question Matrix

The diagram shows a 6x6 grid with question types on the left and modal verbs on top. A red arrow points from the top-left to the bottom-right, labeled 'Journey to deeper thinking'. A horizontal arrow at the top points from 'Lower' to 'Higher'. A vertical arrow on the left points from 'Lower' to 'Higher'.

	Is	Did/ does	Can	Would	Will	Might
What						
Where/ when						
Which						
Who						
Why						
How						

Share questions:

- With peers, swapping questions as you go.
- In role, answering the questions as if you are the recording artist

Historical research: scavenger hunt

Choose a song from the playlist. Find the following information:

- Who were leading politicians/ world leaders at the time?
- What was in the newspapers when the song was released?
- What was the most popular film of that month/ year?
- What were some of the bestselling products of the time?
- How old was the recording artist at the time of recording?
- Was anything invented in that year?
- What were three famous historical events from that year?
- Was anyone famous now born in that year?

Strategies for active reading

Question:

- What questions come to mind during reading?
- What questions are you left with at the end of reading?
- Why do the characters do what they do?
- What has caused these events to happen?
- What don't you understand?
- What don't you believe? Why?

Visualise:

- Write a simile for something you have read...
- Write a metaphor for something you have read...
- Personify something you have read...
- Draw a picture to represent what you have read...
- Describe what you have read to a partner...

Predict:

- Read, Stop, Predict: What happens next? How can you justify your prediction?
- What are the important facts? What will happen to these facts as the book progresses?

Connect:

- Can you make any connections and links between facts in the text?
- Can you make links to your own life? Any anecdotes/ experiences that link to what you have read?
- Can you make links to other texts? (literature/ films/ stories/ events/ reports)

Respond:

- Mood tracking: list each new mood as the text progresses...
- What does the text say to you?
- What is the tone of the text?
- Conflicts: are there any conflicts in what you are reading? (between characters/ situations/ ideas/ events)
- Symbolism search: are there any symbols in what you are reading?
- What is the theme or topic of the text? (there should be more than one)

Active reading: mini projects and tasks

	Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Understand	Find fifteen new words in your book and record their meaning.	Write a rap/song based on the text.	Create a two minute piece of drama related to the story.	Explain the story to one of your teachers and show them your favourite pages, explaining why they are so effective.	Interview someone who has a link to a character or idea in the text. Use the information to get a better understanding of the ideas in the book.	Think of three people that you know well and explain how they would interpret this book differently to you.
Question	Set ten questions about the text that someone else could answer if they had read the book.	For each chapter, come up with a question that will be answered by the chapter – try to think of open questions that could form the title of the chapter.	Make up five interview questions for a main character and answer them as the character.	Take a passage or page and list any literary devices you can find.	Research five things from this book – places mentioned, historical events, pieces of music, etc. and write a report on what you have found out.	Are there any questions that you have for the author having read this book? Has this book made you question the world around you?
Empathise	Write a diary entry of a day in the life of a character of your choice.	Write a postcard from one character to another. Explain what they are doing and how they are feeling at this point of the story.	Choose a different character to be the narrator and tell part of the story from their point of view.	Create a seating plan for a dinner party with all the characters in the book. This can be a disastrous dinner party or a dream dinner party. You must explain why you have decided to put certain characters next to each other.	Take a news story from today's news and write the response that two of the characters in your book would have if they read the story.	Supply the lyrics of a character's three favourite songs and examine these songs. Eg: the character would like this song because . . . Line three would appeal to them because . . .
Summarise	List the most important events that happen in your text in order of importance.	Draw a flow chart outlining the most important events that happen in your text.	Create a trailer for the film of your book, including adding the music.	Create a table that graphs the events in the intro, development, climax and resolution.	Assemble a model that represents your text. Be as creative as you can.	Create a new book cover (front and back) and explain why it is more effective/representative of the book than the original.
Predict what will happen next	After reading part of the book, write down what you think will happen in the next chapter and explain why (what clues have you found?).	After reading three chapters, predict who is going to be the hero in this book and explain why.	After reading some of the book imagine your book was made into a series. Storyboard the bit at the end of an episode that gives the audience a taste of what will happen in the next episode.	After reading the whole book, go back and find the clues that the writer has placed in the story about how it would end (foreshadowing).	Write the first chapter to the sequel of this book.	Did the story end in the way you have expected? Why/why not? How would you have preferred it to end? Identify the key turning point in the story and write an alternative ending to the book.
Recognise themes and make connections	Record and discuss the three most important ideas (themes, issues) that are raised in your text.	Find ten other books that explore the same themes as your story and explain why you have chosen them.	If you read this book before New Year, what ten New Year's resolutions might you make and how would they affect your life.	Compare/contrast this text with another by the same author or with a similar theme.	Create an art gallery of paintings that represent some element of the text you have read and explain why you have chosen them.	How did this book change your way of thinking? (Themes, ideas, attitudes, relevance to today etc.)
Visualise	Draw a portrait of your favourite character and explain something about it.	Draw a map of the setting of your text.	Create a model of the set of this book if it was turned into a film.	Explain why the setting of the text is so important.	Make a collage from magazines based on your text.	Explain how you would direct this text for the stage. Include actors, props etc.
Judge	Write a hundred words explaining whether you enjoyed the book or not and give a star rating.	Write a poem about the most important thing that you have learned from your text.	This book should be read by everyone who hates reading because . . .	Create a success criteria for the perfect book and then judge this book against the criteria.	Create a shortlist for the Booker Prize out of all the books you have read and explain where you would put this book and why.	Give some feedback to the author including things you enjoyed about the book and things that you think they could have done better.