Zydeco Elementary

Historic Homes • Gardens • Artifacts • Costumed Crafts People
Boat Tours • Gift Shop • Restaurant
Standards

Standards as developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Available online at

Grade 2
Social Studies
Standard 1 – Historical Thinking Skills
  • GLE 2.1.4: Explain reasons for local, state, and national celebrations, cultural events, and traditions and their significance

Grade 3
Social Studies
Physical and Human Systems
  • GLE #16: Identify and compare customs, celebrations, and traditions of various cultural groups in Louisiana (G-1C-E4)

Louisiana and United States History
  • GLE #57: Identify cultural elements that have contributed to our state heritage (e.g. Mardi Gras, Cajun/Creole cooking) (H-1C-E4)

Objectives

1. The student will understand the history of how Creole & Zydeco music was formed in Louisiana.

2. The student will be able to distinguish types of instruments used in Creole & Zydeco music in Louisiana.

3. The student will be able to identify Creole & Zydeco music.
**Additional Information**

*L’École* is a reproduction typical of 1890s schoolhouse architecture. In *L’École*, you will see the lines “I will not speak French in the classroom or on the school ground”, on the blackboard recalling the time in the early 20th century when Louisiana law forbade the speaking of Southwest Louisiana’s principal language – even on the school playground! There is a musician in *L’École* every day.

**Pre-Visit Activity**

**Materials needed:** *Clovis Crawfish and his Friends* by Mary Alice Fontenot, Zydeco music of choice by teachers

Teachers. We have made two introduction documents available to you on our website – a word document as well as a PowerPoint with pictures depicting the cultures that we represent. Please take some time to review these two documents with your class prior to your visit here. You can access them [here](#), by clicking on

- Introduction to Vermilionville and
- Vermilionville PowerPoint

The teacher will read aloud *Clovis Crawfish and his Friends* by Mary Alice Fontenot. The book describes friendships and the activities Cajun friends participate in together.

The teacher will play Zydeco music for the students. This will get students excited to learn about the history of Zydeco music. If YouTube is accessible in the classroom, there is a clip of Mary Broussard and the Sweet Lala, singing La Robe Tassee.

**Anchor Lesson**

**Materials needed:** Zydeco Instrument Worksheet (document #1)

The teacher will inform students that, in the days of old, the Creole community would gather at harvest time and work together to complete their tasks. When a family would have a *boucherie* (butchering of a hog), everyone in the community would come over and share in the work and cooking of fresh meat. Are there any traditions within your families that include certain kinds of music and food when gathered with friends and family? (Allow student responses)

Zydeco is a musical genre that has evolved in southwest Louisiana by French Creole speakers since the late 1790s. It blends Creole music, with some Cajun music influences, as well as African-American traditions. The term Zydeco derives from the French phrase “*les haricots ne sont pas salés*” which sounds like “leh zy-dee-co nay sohn pah salay”, which literally means “the snap beans aren’t salted”. Z’haricots thus became Zydeco. There are other stories as to how the word Zydeco came about but this is the most commonly suggested one. Zydeco music is usually fast tempo and is dominated by the accordion and a *frattoir* (scrub board). Zydeco music was originally created at house dances, where families and friends gathered to socialize. Zydeco was often just called *lala* at one time.
Amédé Ardoin made the first recordings of Creole music in 1928. That music served as a foundation for what later became known as zydeco.

Clifton Chenier, “The King of Zydeco”, is the one that made zydeco popular on regional radio stations with his bluesy style and keyboard accordion.

**Lala** is Creole French for house dance. It is typically held in the living room on a Saturday night.

**Lala** also refers to 20th century music of the Black Creoles. Sometimes, it is simply called French music.

There are not many existing musicians who can differentiate and play examples of Creole, Zydeco, and Lala. In fact, most Zydeco musicians put Creole, Zydeco, and Lala in one category: Zydeco.

Zydeco is a musical genre that evolved in southwest Louisiana by French Creole speakers in the early 1900s. It blends Creole music, with some Cajun music influences, as well as African-American traditions. The term Zydeco derives from the French phrase “Les haricots ne sont pas salés” which sounds like “leh zy-dee co nay sohn pah solay”, which literally means “the snap beans aren’t salted”. Z’haricots thus became Zydeco. There are other stories as to how the word Zydeco came about but this is the most commonly suggested one. Zydeco music is usually fast tempo and is dominated by the accordion and a *frottoir* (scrub board). Zydeco music was originally created at house dances, where families and friends gathered to socialize. In the beginning, Zydeco was often just called *lala*.

**Amédé**

**Lala** is Creole French for house dance. It is typically held in the living room on a Saturday night.

**Lala** also refers to 20th century music of the Black Creoles. Sometimes, it is simply called French music. There are not many existing musicians who can differentiate and play examples of Creole, Zydeco, and Lala. In fact, most Zydeco musicians put Creole, Zydeco, and Lala in one category: Zydeco.

If youtube is accessible in the classroom, there is a clip of Mary Broussard and the Sweet Lala, singing *La Robe Tassee*.

Ask student what kinds of household items were used to create Creole & Zydeco music. Show pictures of each instrument and discuss what they are and how they are played.

1. Frottoir (scrub board)
2. Spoons
3. Fiddle
4. Ti-fer (triangle)
5. Accordion

Distribute the Zydeco instruments worksheet to students.

Discuss with students what a *lala* is and when they take place. The teacher will discuss with the students what type of environment is created when a *lala* takes place.

- Have any of you ever participated or witnessed Creole & Zydeco music and dancing?
- How does the Louisiana community keep this tradition going?
- How can we teach others who are not from this area about Louisiana traditions such as Creole & Zydeco.
Post-Visit Activity

Materials needed: Zydeco Word Search (document #2)

The teacher will review and discuss meaning of the words on the Zydeco work search with the students. The students will then complete the worksheet.

Evaluation

The student will match the name of Zydeco instruments to a picture of each instrument.

The teacher will monitor student learning by keeping students involved in the discussion and asking questions pertaining to Zydeco history and instruments.

The students will self-assess during group discussion and ask questions for clarification.

The teacher will ask students for a retelling of how Zydeco music originated in Louisiana.

Differentiation of Instruction

Diverse learners such as auditory learners will benefit from hearing the Zydeco music and the reading of the book.

Visual learners will benefit from seeing pictures on the handout of Zydeco instrument.
Document #1 - Zydeco Instrument Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accordion</th>
<th>Ti fer</th>
<th>Fiddle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>![Accordion Image]</td>
<td>![Ti fer Image]</td>
<td>![Fiddle Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>![Frottoir Image]</td>
<td>![Spoons Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>![Frotoir Image]</td>
<td>![Spoons Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>![Frotoir Image]</td>
<td>![Spoons Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>![Frotoir Image]</td>
<td>![Spoons Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elementary - Zydeco
Document #2 - Zydeco Word Search

Acadian  Accordion  Boucherie
Crawfish  Creole  Fiddle
Frottoir  Lala  Louisiana
Scrub board  Spoons  Ti fer
Triangle  Vermillionville  Zydeco