

# Louis Armstrong Unit Study



**Subjects:**  
Reading, History, Geography,  
Math, Music, Science



# Teacher Instructions

Thank you for downloading our Louis Armstrong Unit Study! It was created to be used with the books: *Magic Tree House A Good Night for Ghosts* and/or *Who Was Louis Armstrong?* When information on the notetaking sheets is found in only one book, that book is noted in the answer key with the abbreviations MTH or WW?. You may incorporate other books about Louis Armstrong and jazz music, as well. Here is what is included in the study:

<b>Pages 3-8:</b>	<b>Biography of Louis Armstrong:</b> Notetaking sheets with answer key. (The Magic Tree House book, contains only about half of the information on these sheets.)
<b>Pages 9-12:</b>	<b>Facts about Jazz:</b> Notetaking sheets with answer key.
<b>Pages 13-14:</b>	<b>Facts about New Orleans:</b> Notetaking sheets with answer key. (Only the MTH book contains this information.)
<b>Pages 15-19:</b>	<b>Timeline:</b> Students may write on the timeline or cut and glue events provided. Events are provided with and without the year to provided options for a variety of ages.
<b>Pages 20-21:</b>	<b>Louis Armstrong's Travels:</b> A following direction activity to become more familiar with a map of the United States.
<b>Page 22:</b>	<b>Compare and Contrast:</b> Jazz with another type of music.
<b>Pages 23-26:</b>	<b>Math Story Problems</b> with answer keys.
<b>Page 27:</b>	<b>Writing Prompt:</b> Sharing Your Gifts

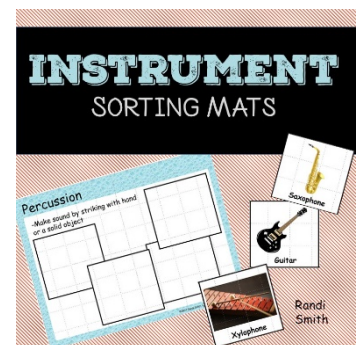
Also refer to our post: [Louis Armstrong FREE Unit Study](#) for:

1. Videos of Louis Armstrong performing.
2. A video about how a trumpet works.
3. A set of directions to make your own trumpet with household objects.
4. More music resources.
5. A link to a unit study of New Orleans.

Credits  
Frames by:



You May  
Also Like:



# A Biography of Louis Armstrong

Birth (date and place): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Known For: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Nicknames: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Family: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Places he performed as a child/teenager:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Jobs as a child/teenager:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# A Biography of Louis Armstrong (cont.)

Why did he stay at the Waif's Home?

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What did he learn there?

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How much school did he attend?

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What were some of Louis Armstrong's "big breaks"?

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Why did Louis Armstrong switch to the trumpet?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# A Biography of Louis Armstrong (cont.)

What other 'jobs' besides music did Armstrong have?

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What are some problems Armstrong had along the way? \_\_\_\_\_

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How did he help people?

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What was the name of Louis's band after World War II? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the names of some of his songs?

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Death (date and place): \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Louis Armstrong Answer Key

Birth (date and place): **New Orleans, 1901**

Known For: **Being one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time.**

Nicknames: **MTH: Dipper, King of Jazz**

**WW?: Little Louie, Gatemouth, or Satchelmouth, Satchmo**

Family: **WW?: Raised by his mother and grandmother. Rarely saw his father, but he lived with him, his stepmother and stepbrothers for a short time. Married and divorced his first wife, Daisy. Married Lil Hardin, a piano player who he later divorced. Then married Lucille Wilson in 1942.**

Places he performed as a child/teenager:

- 1. On street corners with other children.**
- 2. In dance halls with older musicians.**
- 3. On Mississippi riverboats.**

Jobs as a child/teenager:

**MTH: delivering coal, unloading bananas from ships, washing dishes**

**WW?: selling pieces of brass and tinfoil, selling newspapers, running errands, selling junk from a wagon, delivering milk, construction worker.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# Louis Armstrong Answer Key (cont.)

Why did he stay at the Waif's Home?

When he was 12, he shot a gun into the air on New Year's Eve to make noise and was caught by a policeman.

What did he learn there?

How to play the cornet (similar to the trumpet) and to do chores.

How much school did he attend?

Just elementary school through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

What were some of Louis Armstrong's "big breaks"?

Taking Joe Oliver's spot in Kid Ory's band.

Selling some songs he wrote.

Fate Marable giving him a job playing on riverboats.

Playing on the Dixie Belle, which took longer trips.

Playing with the Tuxedo Brass Band.

Joe Oliver invited him to join him in Chicago.

New York City bandleader asked him to play at the famous Roseland Ballroom.

Why did Louis Armstrong switch to the trumpet?

He joined an orchestra that played the background music for silent movies and they needed another trumpet player. He never went back to the cornet.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Louis Armstrong Answer Key (cont.)

What other 'jobs' besides music did Armstrong have? He had roles in movies, wrote autobiographies and articles, and hosted a national radio program.

What are some problems Armstrong had along the way? Bad managers, difficulty with race relations, marriage problems.

How did he help people? He gave out coal in Baltimore. He tried to include blacks in concerts where they were not allowed and he spoke out in the paper about racism. Many thought he could have been more outspoken.

What was the name of Louis's band after World War II? The All Stars

What are the names of some of his songs?

(Tip: Each chapter title in Magic Tree House is a song name.)

Way Down Yonder in New Orleans

Ain't Misbehavin'

Money Blues

Hello Dolly

Coal Cart Blues

What a Wonderful World

Potato Head Blues

Jeepers Creepers

Go 'Long Mule

When the Saints Go Marching In

Find Me at the Greasy Spoon

When You're Smiling

Skid-Dat-De-Dat

Swing That Music

Heebie Jeebies

Thanks a Million

Working Man Blues

Death (date and place): He died July 6, 1971 in New York. He had been planning to start another tour at the time. He laid in state at an Armory in NYC.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# Facts about Jazz

Where, when and by whom was jazz "invented"?

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What were other popular cities for playing jazz?

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Jazz is a mixture of these styles of music:

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What instruments are used in jazz?:

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What makes jazz unique?

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Who are some famous jazz musicians?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Facts about Jazz (cont.)

What do the following jazz terms mean?

Ballad: \_\_\_\_\_

Bebop: \_\_\_\_\_

Blues: \_\_\_\_\_

Cat: \_\_\_\_\_

Cool Jazz: \_\_\_\_\_

Frets: \_\_\_\_\_

Ragtime: \_\_\_\_\_

Gig: \_\_\_\_\_

Riffs: \_\_\_\_\_

Scatting: \_\_\_\_\_

Soul Jazz: \_\_\_\_\_

Swing: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Facts about Jazz Answer Key

Where, when and by whom was jazz "invented"?

New Orleans in the 1890s and early 1900s by African-Americans.

What were other popular cities for playing jazz?

WW?: Chicago and New York City.

Jazz is a mixture of these styles of music:

WW?: Music that slaves sung, brass bands, gospel music, and Spanish music.

What instruments are used in jazz?:

WW?: Cornet, trumpet, violin, alto saxophone, slide trombone, double bass, grand piano, clarinet, guitar and/or banjo.

What makes jazz unique?

MTH: Melodies were improvised or made up on the spot. There were not written notes.

MTH: It has a strong beat that comes from different instruments rather than a drum.

WW?: Contains musical notes that are "bent" or "slurred".

WW?: Rhythms shift and change so the music sounds surprising. This is called syncopation.

WW?: Usually, it just has instruments and is not sung.

Who are some famous jazz musicians?

WW?: Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Fletcher Henderson, Don Redman, Charlie Parker

Jazz influenced singers: Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Facts about Jazz (cont.)

What do the following jazz terms mean?

Ballad: *slow song.*

Bebop: *jazz with a jagged beat.*

Blues: *style of music that developed along with jazz. Typically, about hard times and bad luck.*

Cat: *a musician*

Cool Jazz: *relaxed, light jazz that became popular in the 1940s and early 1950s.*

Frets: *ridges on the neck of a stringed instrument such as a guitar or banjo.*

Ragtime: *music with a jumpy rhythm.*

Gig: *a job playing music.*

Riffs: *rhythmic phrases repeated over and over again in jazz and blues music.*

Scatting: *making up nonsense sounds instead of singing words in a song.*

Soul Jazz: *a style of jazz influenced by gospel or church music.*

Swing: *a style of jazz with an easy, flowing rhythm.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Facts about New Orleans

What state is New Orleans in?

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It was the birthplace of: \_\_\_\_\_

It is also known as the most \_\_\_\_\_ city in America!

What are some areas of New Orleans mentioned in the book? \_\_\_\_\_

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How did people travel around New Orleans in the early 1900s? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are some foods they sold in New Orleans at the time? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is a popular way of celebrating special days in New Orleans? \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Facts about New Orleans

What state is New Orleans in? **Louisiana**

It was the birthplace of: **jazz.**

It is also known as the most **haunted** city in America!

What are some areas of New Orleans mentioned in the book? **The French Quarter, Jackson Square within the French Quarter and Canal Street.**

How did people travel around New Orleans in the early 1900s? **Mule carts, horse-drawn buggies, and streetcars. A few cars were starting to be used.**

What are some foods they sold in New Orleans at the time? **Crawfish pies, buttermilk, gumbo, blackberries, waffles, donuts, ham biscuits, oysters, crab legs.**

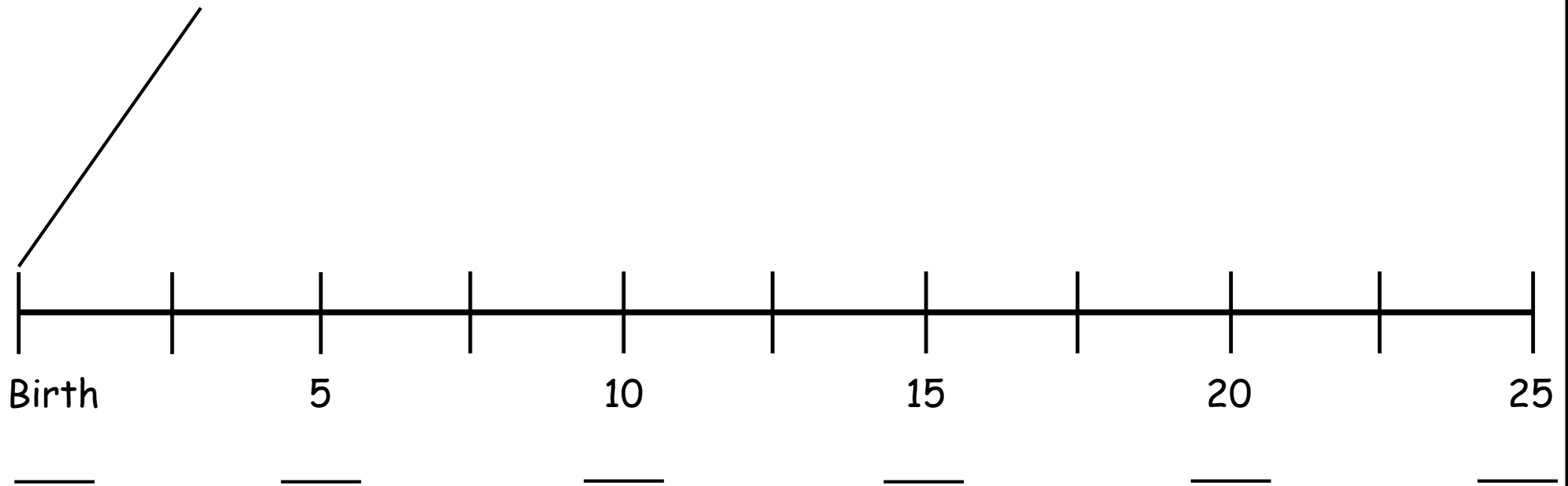
What is a popular way of celebrating special days in New Orleans? **Parades!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

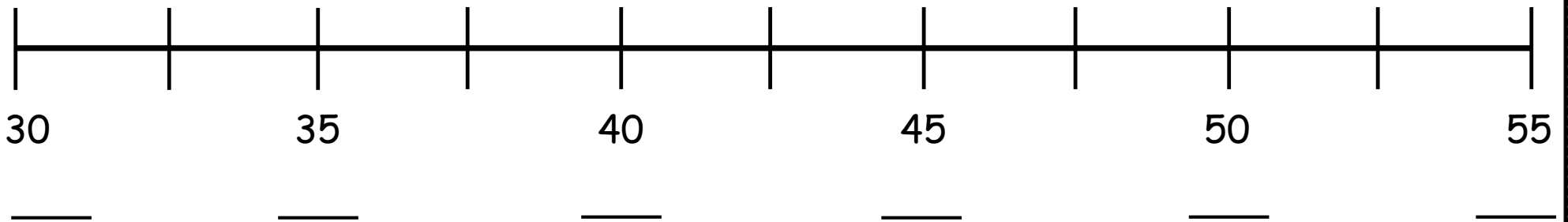


# Timeline of Louis Armstrong's Life

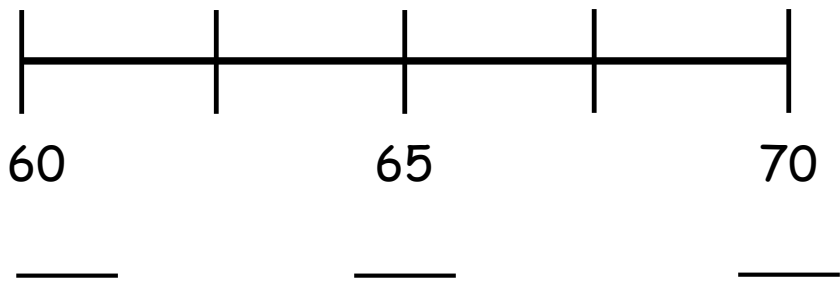
Fill-in the corresponding years below Louis Armstrong's ages on the timeline. Above the line, write in important or interesting events in his life. You can start by writing in the place he was born on the diagonal line provided. You may also cut out and glue on the events provided instead of writing in events.



# Timeline of Louis Armstrong's Life



# Timeline of Louis Armstrong's Life



# Events for the Timeline

<b>1901 Louis Armstrong is born.</b>	<b>Louis Armstrong is born.</b>
<b>1913 Gets caught shooting off a gun and is sent to the Colored Waif's Home.</b>	<b>Gets caught shooting off a gun and is sent to the Colored Waif's Home.</b>
<b>1914 Leaves the Colored Waif's Home.</b>	<b>Leaves the Colored Waif's Home.</b>
<b>1914 Started playing music at night in a variety of places.</b>	<b>Started playing music at night in a variety of places.</b>
<b>1918 Joins the Kid Ory's Band.</b>	<b>Joins the Kid Ory's Band.</b>
<b>1919 Works on riverboats on the Mississippi River.</b>	<b>Works on riverboats on the Mississippi River.</b>
<b>1922 Moves to Chicago to play with Joe Oliver.</b>	<b>Moves to Chicago to play with Joe Oliver.</b>
<b>1923 Makes first records.</b>	<b>Makes first records.</b>
<b>1924 Moves to New York City and plays at the Roseland Ballroom and in Harlem clubs.</b>	<b>Moves to New York City and plays at the Roseland Ballroom and in Harlem clubs.</b>
<b>1925 Moves back to Chicago and plays at Dreamland Café.</b>	<b>Moves back to Chicago and plays at Dreamland Café.</b>
<b>1925 Joins an orchestra playing for silent movies and switches from the cornet to the trumpet.</b>	<b>Joins an orchestra playing for silent movies and switches from the cornet to the trumpet.</b>
<b>1926 Starts singing on his recordings.</b>	<b>Starts singing on his recordings.</b>
<b>1929 Goes back to New York City and stars in the show <i>Hot Chocolates</i>.</b>	<b>Goes back to New York City and stars in the show <i>Hot Chocolates</i>.</b>
<b>1931 Returns to New Orleans to play.</b>	<b>Returns to New Orleans to play.</b>
<b>1932 Makes first trip to England</b>	<b>Makes first trip to England</b>
<b>1936 Publishes his first autobiography, <i>Swing That Music</i>.</b>	<b>Publishes his first autobiography, <i>Swing That Music</i>.</b>
<b>1937 Hosts a national radio program.</b>	<b>Hosted a national radio program.</b>

# Events for the Timeline

<b>1942 Marries Lucille Watson.</b>	<b>Marries Lucille Watson.</b>
<b>1947 At the end of the big band era, he starts a small jazz band, the All Stars.</b>	<b>At the end of the big band era, he starts a small jazz band, the All Stars.</b>
<b>1949 Appears on the cover of Time Magazine.</b>	<b>Appears on the cover of Time Magazine.</b>
<b>1956 Plays a bandleader in the movie High Society.</b>	<b>Plays a bandleader in the movie High Society.</b>
<b>1956 Travels to Africa for the first time.</b>	<b>Travels to Africa for the first time.</b>
<b>1964 "Hello, Dolly!" becomes a number-one song.</b>	<b>"Hello, Dolly!" becomes a number-one song.</b>
<b>1968 "What a Wonderful World" becomes a worldwide hit.</b>	<b>"What a Wonderful World" becomes a worldwide hit.</b>
<b>1971 Louis Armstrong dies on July 6<sup>th</sup>.</b>	<b>Louis Armstrong dies on July 6<sup>th</sup>.</b>

# Louis Armstrong's Travels: Directions

1. First, draw a star where you live. If you do not live in the United States, draw a plane flying into the United States from where you live.
2. Now circle New Orleans in yellow. This is where Louis Armstrong and jazz music were born.
3. If you read the Magic Tree House book, you know that Jack and Annie live in Pennsylvania. Color Pennsylvania green and draw a green line from Pennsylvania to New Orleans to show where the treehouse traveled.
4. Louis Armstrong played on riverboats that went up and down the Mississippi River. Draw a blue line from New Orleans up the eastern borders of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, and Iowa to show where the Mississippi River flows.
5. As a young man, Louis Armstrong left New Orleans for Chicago. Draw a yellow line from New Orleans to Chicago.
6. He then went to New York City for a year. Draw a yellow line from Chicago to New York City.
7. He went back and forth between Chicago and New York City a few times. Once he stopped at Niagara Falls. Draw a yellow line from Chicago to Niagara Falls to New York City.
8. He eventually went to Hollywood where he made some movies. Circle Hollywood in orange.
9. He also traveled and played throughout the south. Color Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana red as these states are generally considered the "south".
10. Once when Louis Armstrong played in Baltimore, he gave coal away at the concert hall so people could heat their homes. Circle Baltimore in black.
11. Eventually, he traveled to England and Africa. These places lie to the east. Draw an airplane heading east over the Atlantic ocean.
12. When Louis Armstrong died, he was buried in New York City. Draw a gravestone next to the words "New York City".

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# Louis Armstrong's Travels

Follow the directions to learn the different places Louis traveled to during his life.

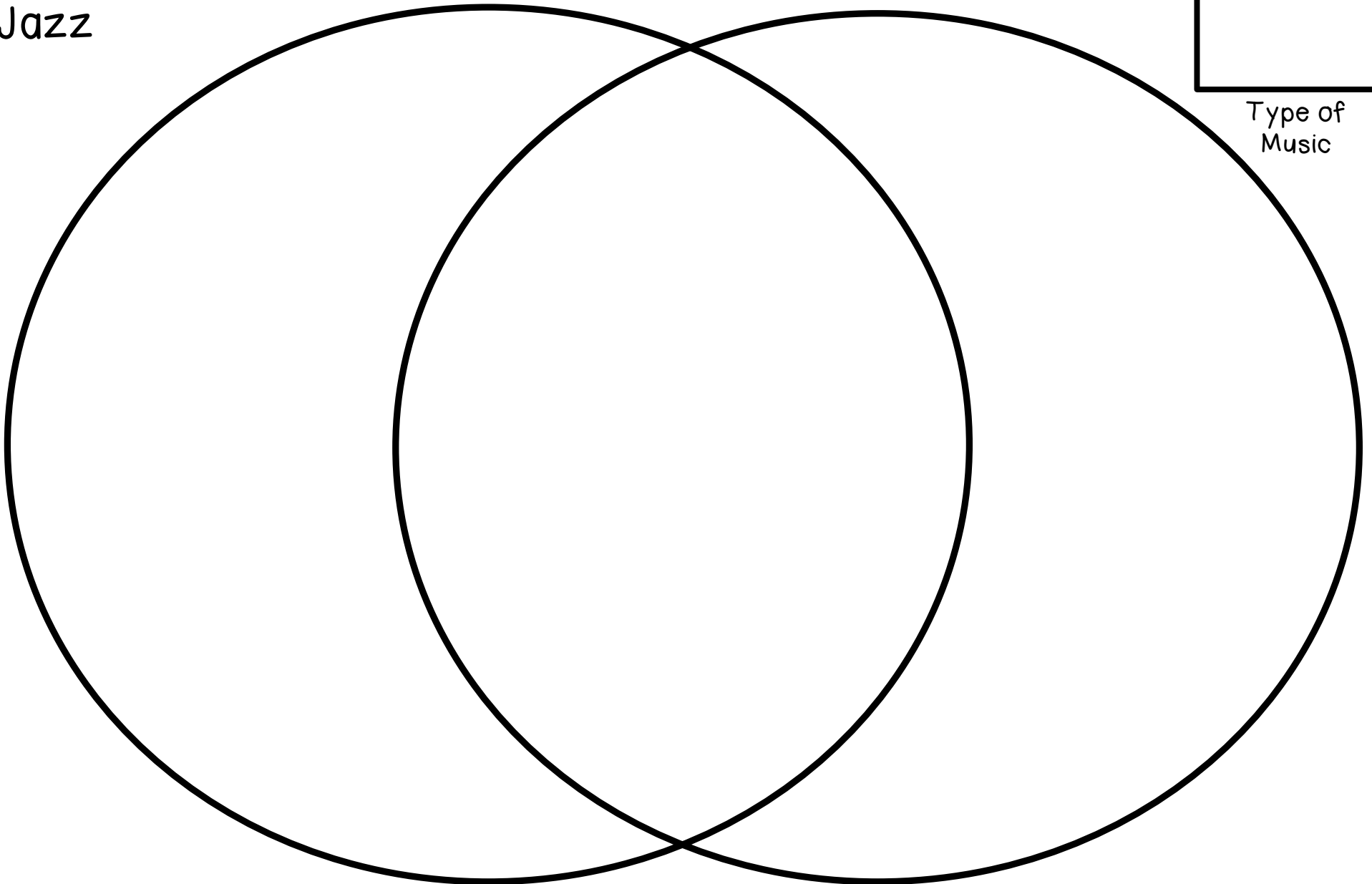


Compare jazz music to another type of music you are familiar with. Think about the instruments used to perform each style, the history of the style, what makes it unique, and some famous composers and/or performers in each style. Write similarities between the two styles in the section where the circles overlap and characteristics unique to each style in the corresponding circle outside of the overlapping area.

Jazz



Type of  
Music



# Math Story Problems

The books we read shared some information about what certain jobs paid in the early 1900s as well as what some items cost. The following story problems are based upon that information. Do the problems that match your math skills.

1. For each load of coal Louis delivered, he got paid 15 cents. How many loads would he have to deliver to make at least \$1.00?
2. It took him all day to deliver 5 loads of coal. How much money did he make in a day?
3. If he worked 5 days a week, how much money could he make in one week delivering coal?
4. Louis got 10 cents an hour to unload bananas. If he worked 8 hours a day, how much money would he make in a day?
5. If he worked 5 days a week, how much money could he make in one week unloading bananas?
6. Which job paid more, delivering coal or unloading bananas?
7. A meal in a restaurant cost 25 cents. If Louis worked unloading bananas five days a week and ate at a restaurant once a week, how much money would he have left?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Math Story Problems (cont.)

8. If Louis Armstrong's band got paid \$40.00 per night for a gig and there are five people in the band and they split the money evenly, how much money would each person make?
9. If Mr. Armstrong gets paid 25% of the money, how much would he get paid each night?
10. How much would the other band members get paid if they split the rest of the money evenly?
11. If Mr. Armstrong makes \$75 a week and his rent cost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of that, then how much money does he have left to spend on other things?
12. If he makes 10 cents for every book he sells, how many books would he have to sell to make \$1000?
13. If he makes 3 cents for every record he sells and he sells 56,171 records, how much money does he make?
14. If he makes 10 cents per book, 3 cents per record, and \$10 per night to perform, how much money will he make in a month where he works 20 nights and sells 128 books and 434 records?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Math Story Problems

The books we read shared some information about what certain jobs paid in the early 1900s as well as what some items cost. The following story problems are based upon that information. Do the problems that match your math skills.

1. For each load of coal Louis delivered, he got paid 15 cents. How many loads would he have to deliver to make at least \$1.00?

7 loads delivered would give him \$1.05

2. It took him all day to deliver 5 loads of coal. How much money did he make in a day?

\$.75 or 75 cents

3. If he worked 5 days a week, how much money could he make in one week delivering coal?

\$3.75

4. Louis got 10 cents an hour to unload bananas. If he worked 8 hours a day, how much money would he make in a day?

\$.80 or 80 cents

5. If he worked 5 days a week, how much money could he make in one week unloading bananas?

\$4.00

6. Which job paid more, delivering coal or unloading bananas?

Unloading bananas

7. A meal in a restaurant cost 25 cents. If Louis worked unloading bananas five days a week and ate at a restaurant once a week, how much money would he have to spend on other things?

\$3.75

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Math Story Problems (cont.)

8. If Louis Armstrong's band got paid \$40.00 per night for a gig and there are five people in the band and they split the money evenly, how much money would each person make?

**\$8.00**

9. If Mr. Armstrong gets paid 25% of the money, how much would he get paid each night?

**\$10.00**

10. How much would the other band members get paid if they split the rest of the money evenly?

**\$7.50**

11. If Mr. Armstrong makes \$75 a week and his rent cost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of that, then how much money does he have left to spend on other things each week?

**\$50.00**

12. If he makes 10 cents for every book he sells, how many books would he have to sell to make \$1000?

**10,000 books**

13. If he makes 3 cents for every record he sells and he sells 56,171 records, how much money does he make?

**\$1658.13**

14. If he makes 10 cents per book, 3 cents per record, and \$10 per night to perform, how much money will make in a month where he works 20 nights and sells 128 books and 434 records?

**\$225.82**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_





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