

Year 8 Reggae Knowledge Organiser

Reggae is a style of music. It came out of Jamaica. Jamaica was a British colony which gained its independence in 1962.

Cultural & Spiritual Influences:

Around the time of independence and beyond there were a lot of political struggles and protest. Reggae music was used to express these struggles.

Rastafarian spiritual beliefs also influenced reggae.

Musical Influences	
Mento	Jamaican folk music popular in the 1950s Featured lots of verses (Strophic Form) Light-hearted lyrics of every day life
Ska	Fast dance music that emerged in the late 1950s Fuses American rhythm & blues with mento rhythms Uses electric guitars and jazzy horn sections (trumpets, saxophones & trombone) Uses off-beat jumpy rhythms
Rock Steady	Dance music that emerged in the mid-1960s Rhythms more relaxed than Ska Loud bass guitar playing steady 4/4 beat

Reggae Drum Patterns		
Pattern Name	Characteristics	Listening Examples
Robably One Drop	You don't play the kick drum on beat 1 (the beat is 'dropped'). Instead, it's played on beat 3.	One Drop – Bob Marley
Stepper	The kick drum is played on all 4 beats, which gives a strong driving rhythm	Exodus – Bob Marley
Rocker	Beats 1 and 3 are emphasised	Night Nurse – Gregory Isaacs

Characteristics of Reggae	
Off-Beat	Guitar & Piano emphasise chords on beats 2 & 4 or on the second weaker quaver e.g. 1+ 2+. This is called 'chop' or 'skank'.
Organ 'bubble'	Left hand plays offbeat quavers whilst the right hand plays the offbeat 'chop'.
Staccato	When notes are played short and detached.
Riff	Repeated music pattern. Often the bass-line will be based around a riff.
Chord pattern	Often quite simple, repeated chord patterns used throughout a song.
Rim shot	Where the drum stick hits the rim and the skin of the snare drum simultaneously
Political lyrics	Songs often critical of politics and raise awareness of social issues such as racism and poverty
Horn stabs	Short interjecting melodies played by the 'horn section'
Side stick	Hitting the rim of the snare drum instead of the centre. Usually played with the drum stick laying flat.

Bob Marley

Bob Marley is probably the most famous reggae musician of all time.

Get Up, Stand Up
Three Little Birds
One Love
No Woman, No Cry
I Shot The Sheriff
Stir It Up

