

# Teacher's Guide to FACES: *Elvis Presley*

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## INTRODUCTION

Ask students to name some of the best-known singers of today. Make a chart showing the names of the artists, along with the styles they are known for (such as country, rap, or pop) and one or two of their best-known hits. Then explain that the subject of this month's FACES is Elvis Presley, a well-known singer of the past. Have students tell what they know (or think they know) about Elvis. For each fact or characteristic, go down the list of names on the chart and ask students to identify people on the list who are like Elvis in that way.

## MAP IT!

Display a map of the United States. Have students locate Memphis, TN, and Tupelo, MS.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

As a teenager, Elvis wore different clothing and hairstyles from most other boys of the time. How were his styles different? Would Elvis's styles stand out at your school today? Why or why not?

What job did Elvis have when he made his first recording? What job did he have while in the army?

Why did Elvis initially begin gyrating his hips and legs? Why did he continue to do so?

How did Elvis's music help advance the cause of integration?

Think about the ways in which segregation limited and harmed African Americans in the South during the 1950s. What do you think Southern blacks hated the most about segregation? Explain your reasons.

Why do you think Elvis chose to stay in Memphis instead of moving to New York City, Hollywood, or another city full of celebrities? Would you have made the same choice? Why or why not?

In the 1950s, many people disapproved of the music Elvis played. Why did they oppose it so strongly? What kinds of music provoke similar reactions today? Why?

What do you suppose Elvis himself would think about all the Elvis tribute artists making appearances today? Why?

Elvis did not like to wear blue jeans. Why was that?

Who was Sam Phillips? How was he important in Elvis's life and career?

Would you like to visit Graceland on the anniversary of Elvis's death? Explain.

What would be the best thing about being an Elvis impersonator? What would be the worst part? Why?

What Elvis-related product would most appeal to you?

Suppose that Elvis was just beginning his career today. How successful a musician would he be? Give reasons to support your answer.

### **WRITE ABOUT IT**

Suppose you are Sam Phillips, the studio owner who gave Elvis the opportunity to record his first songs. Write a diary entry that might express Phillips's feelings on hearing Elvis sing for the first time.

Page 17 lists some titles of songs that have been written about Elvis. Write your own song about Elvis, using lyrics you make up yourself. Sing it to a familiar melody or compose a tune of your own.

Imagine that you are a young singer performing on the road. Write a letter to a friend or family member describing your experiences.

Watch one of Elvis's movies. Then write a review of it.

### **ALL ABOUT ART**

Elvis often performed in a white jumpsuit. If you were a famous singer, what kind of costume would you wear on stage? Draw or design it. Use color, if possible, and label the most interesting or unusual features.

Design your own mansion. Draw and label a diagram to show how the rooms are connected and how each will be used.

Read the "Art Connection" feature on page 46. Then find an unusual way to create your own Elvis portrait.

Create a poster advertising an Elvis concert.

### **GETTING DRAMATIC**

Choose an incident from Elvis's life. Act it out with a partner or a small group.

Have an Elvis Tribute Artist contest. Use simple costume materials. Play an Elvis song and move or dance to the music as if you were Elvis. Lip-synch or sing along if you know the words.

With a partner, write and perform an interview with Elvis. One of you should take the part of Elvis, the other of an interviewer.

### **THEN AND NOW**

In what ways has American society changed since Elvis began his career in the 1950s? In what ways has it remained the same?

Elvis was an early example of a singer who also appeared in films. What present-day entertainers are also known for their work in both music and movies? Are there other ways in which they are like Elvis?

### **JUST FOR KICKS**

Complete the "Tricky Titles" puzzle in the front of the magazine. Then make a similar drawing that describes a different song associated with Elvis. Trade drawings with classmates and try to solve their puzzles.

Solve the Elvis word search on page 39 and the Elvis crossword on page 45.

Design a board game about Elvis's life. Decide how players will move and what the object of the game will be. Then write down the rules and draw the board on card stock or butcher paper. Try playing the game with a friend.

### **BY THE NUMBERS**

Survey ten classmates or friends. Ask each to name their favorite musical style. Make a tally table or bar graph to show the results. Then survey ten adults and ask them the same question. Show these results as a table or graph, too. How are the two graphs alike? How are they different? Why?

Elvis was born January 8, 1935. If he were still alive, how old would he be today? Then see if you can calculate how many days have passed since Elvis's birth. Don't forget about leap years!

Elvis's estate is currently worth about \$50 million. If you spent \$5,000 a day, how long would it take you to spend \$50 million? What if you spent \$200,000 a day? If you split the \$50 million evenly among all the students in your class, about how much money do you think you would each get? Estimate first; then calculate to find the answer.

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

Work with a partner. Write a list of questions you still have about Elvis. Use web resources or the school library to help you answer as many of these questions as you can.

Listen to a few of Elvis's best-known songs. Then listen to the works of some of the other musicians mentioned in the text, such as Chuck Berry or B. B. King. In what ways are the songs alike? In what ways are they different?

Use books or the internet to find out more about life in Mississippi during the 1930s, when Elvis was born. Remember that life in the South at that time was often quite different for blacks than it was for whites. Summarize your findings and present them to the class.

## **WRAP UP**

Remind students that Elvis attained remarkable popularity during his lifetime, and that this popularity has lasted long after his death. Lead a discussion about why Elvis was so popular, both then and now. Have students use information from this issue of FACES to support their ideas. Then review the chart you made with students before they read this issue of FACES. Ask students which singers on the list are most likely to achieve a level of popularity equal to Elvis's, and why. If they think none of these performers are likely to be as popular as Elvis, have them explain why not, and tell whether they think any singer will ever again be so popular.