

Study Guide for “History of Rock”

Rock-and-Roll – A form of popular music that evolved in the 1950’s from rhythm and blues, country music and gospel and is characterized by the use of electronically amplified instrumentation, a heavily accented beat (2 and 4), relatively simple song structure, and youth-oriented lyrics.

Alan Freed – a Cleveland, Ohio disc jockey that began playing R&B music to multi-racial audiences. Freed is credited with coining the phrase “Rock and Roll” to describe the new music he played. He was later convicted of “payola”.

Crossovers – A practice by which the music of black groups and solo artists would be played on white radio stations, thus “crossing over” into a white audience for greater exposure and acceptance. Black vocal groups became more successful in crossing over as the songs became more melodic with younger lyrics and universal themes that appealed to the younger audience.

Covers – A practice by which white groups or solo artists record a version of a song previously recorded by a black group or solo artist. Most times, the “cover” would retain the same melody, tempo, and chords. With more access to airplay, many times the “cover” version would outsell the original.

Payola – A practice by which radio stations, (disk jockeys), would accept cash and gifts from Record Labels or managers in exchange for airplay of the recording artists they have signed to their label.

Doo-Wop – Vocal music using 4 and 5 part harmonies, employing a rhythm section or a cappella. The music originated primarily in urban or inner-city settings.
(The Platters, Frankie Lymon and The Teenagers, The Coasters, The Drifters)

Rockabilly – A type of rock and roll played and recorded in the mid-50’s by white singers, and openly drew from both country and R&B roots. It was hard driving, guitar propelled music designed for dancing. The term “rockabilly” is a combination of “rock” and “hillbilly”, the latter a reference to the country music influence.
(Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis)

American Bandstand – A very popular television show during the late 50’s and early 60’s which showcased popular bands, music, the latest dances, and fashion of the times. The show was hosted by Dick Clark.

Les Paul – is an American jazz guitarist and inventor. He is one of the most important figures in the development of modern electric musical instruments and recording techniques. ***He is a pioneer in the development of the solid-body electric guitar (the Gibson Les Paul), and multi-track recording.***

Leo Fender – ***Developed and designed the most popular guitar of the “Rock” era*** known as the ***Fender “Stratocaster” or “Strat”***. His guitar, bass, and amplifier designs from the ‘50’s continue to dominate popular music more than half a century later. He is also known for his first guitar called the ***“Telecaster”***. Fender also developed the “tremolo” unit known as a ***“whammy bar”***, which allowed the guitarist to bend strings as they played.

Famous African-American Artists of the 50’s

Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Fats Domino, Bo Diddley

Famous White Artists of the 50’s

Elvis Presley (The “King”), Bill Haley and The Comets, Buddy Holly, The Big Bopper, Jerry Lee Lewis

Famous Artists of the Early 60’s in America

Dion and the Belmonts, Neil Sedaka, The Four Seasons, Connie Francis, Chubby Checker, James Brown, Wilson Pickett

Surf Music Artists

Jan and Dean
The Beachboys

Motown- an independent record label started by **Berry Gordy** in Detroit.

Early Motown Artists-

The Supremes, The Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Jackson 5, Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, Smokey Robinson and The Miracles

The British Invasion – ***This term was coined in 1964 to describe the wave of British rock-and-roll and beat artists(primarily groups) whose popularity spread rapidly to the rest of the English-speaking world, especially in the United States.***

The Beatles arrival in New York on 2/7/1964 and their subsequent success triggered the “invasion” of British groups to this country. From 1964 to 1966, Britain sent a stream of hits across the Atlantic with groups like:

Herman’s Hermits, Gerry and The Pacemakers, The Dave Clark Five, The Animals, The Who, and The Rolling Stones.

The Beatles 1964 – Arguably the most influential British group to come to America, the Beatles changed the way rock and roll would be accepted in this country forever. Their huge success in this country was unprecedented at the time and has not been surpassed since.

Paul McCartney – Bass,

George Harrison – lead guitar

John Lennon – rhythm guitar

Ringo Starr – Drums

Reasons for Success:

Very recognizable songs, simple background voices, distinctive lead vocals

Music Producer: *George Martin*

Manager: *Brian Epstein*

“The Counterculture of Rock”

Folk Rock: Bob Dylan; Joan Baez; Peter, Paul and Mary

“Protests songs” (Vietnam War, Politics, Anti-Establishment, Women’s Rights)

Hippie Movement – *people who were disenchanted with the “Establishment”*, or the established ways of society and focused on a more “natural way” of living. This was the **“Peace and Love” Era** for rock and a form of social dissention.

Drug Culture in Rock – The use of mind-altering drugs such as LSD, heroin, and marijuana, by segments of the Rock music scene and by their audiences. Much of this use was reflected in their music.

Woodstock Music Festival – an historic event held at Yasgur’s Farm in Bethel, NY on August 15 – 17, 1969 which brought together 500,000 people and 32 of the most popular bands of the day. To many, the festival exemplified the counterculture of the 60’s and hippie movement. It was a very peaceful event held outdoors with very little sanitation facilities and food supplies. It was a unique and legendary event and widely regarded as one of the greatest moments in music history. The sense of social harmony, the quality of music, and the overwhelming mass of people immortalized this event.

Major Rock Groups of the “Counterculture” era:

The Beatles, The Doors, Jimi Hendrix, Cream, Jefferson Airplane, Led Zeppelin, Janis Joplin, Crosby Stills Nash and Young, The Who, Grateful Dead

Major Historical Events of the 1960's:

The Assassination of John F. Kennedy

The Assassination of Martin Luther King

The Assassination of Robert Kennedy (John Kennedy's Brother)

Cuban Missile Crisis "Bay of Pigs" Missile Crisis

Signing of the "Civil Rights Act of 1964" by President Lyndon Johnson

The Vietnam War

The United States land men on the moon