

# Bob Marley



## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What type of music is Bob Marley known for?
2. Do you like Bob Marley's style of music? Why or why not?
3. What does Bob Marley sing about? If you don't know, guess!

### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.  
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. reggae                  | a) an opportunity that helps one to become successful                                |
| ___ 2. Third World             | b) origins   |
| ___ 3. roots                   | c) a type of music that was born in Jamaica and inspired by the Rastafarian movement |
| ___ 4. split up                | d) the words in a song   |
| ___ 5. rough                   | e) violent and dangerous   |
| ___ 6. make a name for oneself | f) an underdeveloped nation  |
| ___ 7. tempo                   | g) a sect that believes in bringing African descendants back to the homeland         |
| ___ 8. lyrics                  | h) to stop playing music together  |
| ___ 9. Rastafarian movement    | i) to end a relationship, divorce  |
| ___ 10. disband                | j) to get back together  |
| ___ 11. reunite                | k) to become famous  |
| ___ 12. big break              | l) to fall suddenly due to illness or injury   |
| ___ 13. collapse               | m) the speed of the music  |

## Reading

1. Bob Marley was a Jamaican singer and songwriter who popularized **reggae** music around the world. He is sometimes called the **Third World's** first pop star.
2. Nesta Robert Marley was born in 1945 in Saint Ann, Jamaica. He had a white father and a black mother, but he was proudest of his African **roots**. Bob Marley's parents **split up** when he was just a young boy, and he never got to know his dad.
3. When he was a teen, Marley moved to Kingston and settled in the planned community of "Trench Town." The Trench Town streets were **rough** but also culturally rich. The community became known as the Hollywood of Jamaica because it was full of artists trying to **make a name for themselves**. Bob Marley fell in love with the sounds and beats of "ska" music. This was a form of dance music with an upbeat **tempo**. It combined Caribbean mento and calypso with American soul and R & B.
4. Marley and his friend "Bunny" began taking vocal classes with coach Joe Higgs. In music class, Bob and Bunny joined up with Peter Macintosh and formed a band called the Wailing Wailers. Their **lyrics** were about the struggles of Jamaica's poor. At this time, music in Jamaica slowed down a bit. It became known as "rocksteady" and, later, "reggae" music. Unlike the ghetto lyrics that came before, reggae music was more spiritual and connected to the **Rastafarian movement**.
5. In the mid-1960s, the Wailers **disbanded**. Bob Marley got married and moved to the US to work in a factory. He returned to Jamaica shortly after, and the Wailers **reunited**. The band got their **big break** in 1972 when they were signed to Island Records. Bob Marley and the Wailers began touring internationally. Before long, the world fell in love with reggae music, and a legend was born.
6. In 1980, Bob Marley **collapsed** while he was out for a jog in New York's Central Park. He died of cancer eight months later at the age of 36. His hits like "Buffalo Soldier" and "Get Up Stand Up" continue to fill nightclubs and living rooms around the world.

*"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds!"*

—Bob Marley

### Did you know...

#### THE RASTAFARIAN MOVEMENT

Bob Marley supported and popularized Jamaica's "Rastafarian movement." This is a sect that believes that Ethiopia's former emperor (Haile Selassie) was a living god who would bring all of the people of African **descent** back to their homeland. People like Bob Marley liked to remind black Jamaicans that they were **descendants** of African slaves who deserved to be freed. Rastafarians call Ethiopia "Zion," the *homeland*. Most of Bob Marley's hits are about the Rastafarian movement.

## Comprehension

### A. Quiz Your Partner

Student A asks questions 1–3. Student B asks questions 4–6.  
Don't look at the reading as you answer.

#### Student A

1. Describe Bob Marley's relationship with his father.
2. Why was Trench Town known as the Hollywood of Jamaica?
3. Who was "Bunny"?

#### Student B

4. What did Bob Marley do when the Wailers broke up in the 1960s?
5. What was the Wailers' big break?
6. Why does the reading mention a park in New York City?

### B. Timeline

Place the following in chronological order (1–8).  
One of the items is not mentioned in the reading.  
Place a star beside this item and try to fit it into the correct order.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Bob Marley and the Wailers signed with Island Records.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bob Marley had to cancel a tour after collapsing in New York.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bob Marley moved to Trench Town and fell in love with music.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nesta Robert Marley was born in St. Ann, Jamaica.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ska music evolved into rocksteady and, later, reggae music.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bunny and Bob began taking vocal lessons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ People around the world began to love reggae music.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Wailers were formed.

## Vocabulary Review

Match each sentence to the paraphrased version on the right.  
One letter will not be used.

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ___ 1. Destiny's Child broke up and Beyoncé pursued a solo career.       | a) The tempo changes.               |
| ___ 2. A director saw the child actress perform on a children's TV show. | b) She got her big break.           |
| ___ 3. The nation does not have clean water or proper sewage facilities. | c) They reunited.                   |
| ___ 4. A few members of the band got back together to do a concert.      | d) They disbanded.                  |
| ___ 5. The song starts off slow but gets faster in the middle.           | e) It's a Third World country.      |
|  | f) They made a name for themselves. |

## Discussion

1. How does music evolve over time?
2. What contributes to new music genres?
3. Do you think music has been getting better or worse in your lifetime?

# Answer Key

## LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read a brief bio about reggae superstar Bob Marley. This lesson includes comprehension questions, a vocabulary review, and discussion questions about the evolution of music.

**LEVEL:** Int

**TIME:** 1.5–2 hours

**TAGS:** famous people, intermediate, Jamaica, music, reggae, black history, Bob Marley

## Pre-Reading

### A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Individual responses.

### B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- |      |      |      |      |       |       |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. b | 5. e | 7. m | 9. g  | 11. j | 13. l |
| 2. f | 4. i | 6. k | 8. d | 10. h | 12. a |       |

## Comprehension

### A. QUIZ YOUR PARTNER

- Bob Marley did not really know his father. He identified more with his black roots.
- Trench Town was known as the Hollywood of Jamaica because it was culturally rich and many artists tried to make a name for themselves there.
- “Bunny” was Bob Marley’s friend and an original band member of the Wailing Wailers.
- Bob Marley got married and moved to the US to work in a factory after the Wailers broke up. He moved back to Jamaica shortly after.
- The Wailers’ big break came when they were signed to Island Records.
- The reading mentions Central Park because when Bob Marley collapsed there, doctors realized he had cancer. He died shortly after.

### B. TIMELINE

- Bob Marley and the Wailers signed with Island Records.
- Bob Marley moved to Trench Town and fell in love with music.
- Nesta Robert Marley was born in St. Ann, Jamaica.
- Ska music evolved into rocksteady and, later, reggae music.
- Bunny and Bob began taking vocal lessons.
- People around the world began to love reggae music.
- The Wailers were formed.
- Bob Marley had to cancel a tour after collapsing in New York.

## Vocabulary Review

- |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. d | 2. b | 3. e | 4. c | 5. a |
|------|------|------|------|------|

## Discussion

Have a class discussion about music and how it evolves over time. You could try doing a survey about music in the ‘50s, ‘60s, ‘70s, ‘80s, ‘90s, and now. Which decade had the best music?