

This is Beatlemania!

“Now, yesterday and today, our theater’s been jammed with newsmen and press from all over the world, and these veterans agree with me that the city’s never witnessed the excitement stirred by these youngsters from Liverpool...

Ladies and gentlemen – *The Beatles!*”

(Ed Sullivan, as quoted in Spitz, Bob. *The Beatles: The Biography*. Little, Brown and Company. NY, NY. 2005)

Rationale:

Although the term “Beatlemania” was first used in 1963 to describe the shrieking Beatles fans in England, it quickly spread throughout – and took over – America, its airwaves, its record stores, its movie houses and its teenagers. Although it’s difficult to fully appreciate the intensity of Beatlemania without having witnessed it directly, the phenomenon left a trail of interviews, iconic images, artifacts and recordings that allows us to piece together the excitement. Let’s explore the many aspects that made this three year span such an exciting time for music lovers in America.

Standards: Activities in this lesson can be used to address –

- Common Core Anchor Statements: Writing
 - o [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
 - o [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.8](#) Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
 - o [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.6](#) Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
 - o [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3](#) Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

- Common Core Anchor Standards: Reading
 - o [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7](#) Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
 - o [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9](#) Analyze how two or more texts address



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similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Focus Question:

- What was Beatlemania?
- How did Beatlemania impact American culture from 1964-66?

Materials:

- Handout 1: Beatlemania Research Topics
- Exhibit Readings
- Scrapbook Graphic Organizer (sample)
 - o http://www.teacherfiles.com/downloads/graphic_organizers/Photo_Scrapbook.pdf

Procedures:

Warm Up / Brainstorm

- a. What band/musician do you think is the most popular in your city/the United States right now? Where have you seen them? (Think about where you've heard their music, seen their picture, watched them perform, read about them in the news, etc)
- b. What impact do you think this band is having on American culture today?
- c. What impact do you think this band will have on America in 50 years?

NOTE: You can show students Billboard's Top Artists for 2014 to help students brainstorm current chart topping bands
<http://www.billboard.com/artists/top-100>

Overview / Framing: The Beatles hit the music charts in 1963, first came to America in 1964, and 50 years later the spirit of Beatlemania continues to impact music and culture.

Exhibit: *Ladies and Gentlemen...The Beatles!*

Text: The First Visit

The Beatles' first visit to America lasted only two weeks, but it was enough time to ignite Beatlemania in this country and to usher in new eras in pop culture and pop music.



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The Beatles arrived in New York on February 7; fifteen days later, they returned to England. During their brief stay in the States, The Beatles did dozens of interviews, visited three cities and played three concerts, and appeared three times on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Their single, "I Want to Hold Your Hand," was firmly entrenched in the number one slot on the pop charts, and nearly every teen who had seen The Beatles perform on television anxiously awaited their return.

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Show the following two clips. Use them as an introduction to how Americans first met The Beatles.

This interview was the first time American audiences saw The Beatles; a 1963 interview on CBS -- which aired only hours before news broke of JFK's assassination. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehNn4v9QxB0>

A clip of the Feb 9, 1964 Ed Sullivan show

i. <http://www.edsullivan.com/artists/the-beatles/#>

Based on the two clips:

ii. **What was Beatlemania?**

iii. **How did The Beatles describe it?**

Recreate Beatlemania

Have students work in groups, assigning each group a different feature of The Beatles' American tours. When appropriate, give the students the suggested text as a starting place to help direct their web exploration:

Assessment Suggestions:

Create a fan scrapbook highlighting the images, the music, the fads, the stories and the intensity of Beatlemania in America (1964-66.) For each image you use include corresponding text – this can be a caption, a story, samples of music, important information, part of an interview, etc. Choose images and texts that best capture the spirit, intensity, expanse, and manifestation of Beatlemania!

Or...

Work in "jig saw" groups (one person from each research group) and recreate an old



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newspaper to tell the story of Beatlemania. Make sure your newspaper has sections (International, Local, Music, etc) and write “articles” that summarize your research.

Extensions:

Create a fan journal, documenting your three-year “journey” with The Beatles, recording your reactions, reflections and other insights you gained from following them to each city on their tour.

Create a digital “Beatlemania! Scrapbook” using one of these two tech tools:

- www.glogster.com<http://www.glogster.com/>
- www.padlet.com

Set up student accounts so that students can share their digital projects and provide online feedback.



Handout 1: BEATLEMANIA RESEARCH TOPICS

1. 1964: The Beatles first arrive in America

- JFK arrival, press conference, and fan response
- Ed Sullivan performance, the fans, the broadcast, and the statistics
- The Beatles tour of NYC

Use the following exhibit text to help the group begin their exploration

Exhibit: *Ladies and Gentlemen...The Beatles!*

Text: The JFK Airport Press Conference

The Beatles arrived at the newly re-named John F. Kennedy Airport in New York on Friday, February 7, 1964. They were escorted to the pressroom in the Pan American Airlines International Arrivals Building for a press conference where more than two hundred mostly skeptical reporters and photographers awaited them.

During the press conference, The Beatles revealed their British humor and quick wits and weathered an assortment of questions, many of them downright silly or condescending. One reporter asked, "Are you for real?" Another queried, "How many of you are bald and have to wear those wigs?" The Beatles answered, "Oh, we're all bald," while John Lennon added, "And I'm deaf and dumb." A reporter asked Paul McCartney, "What do you think about the campaign in Detroit to stamp out the Beatles?" McCartney cleverly retorted, "We've got a campaign to stamp out Detroit."

Outside the terminal some four thousand fans anxiously waited in the winter cold to greet The Beatles. Nervous on the flight from London to New York, The Beatles had hoped for a warm response to their arrival in America. What they experienced amazed them and was a sign of things to come.

Exhibit: *Ladies and Gentlemen...The Beatles!*

Text: The Ed Sullivan Show

On Sunday, February 9, 1964 a record 73 million Americans watched The Beatles perform on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. The event made television and Rock & Roll history.

The Beatles' appearance on the popular television program was partially due to coincidence. On October 31, 1963, The Beatles were returning to London's Heathrow Airport from their Swedish tour at the same time Ed Sullivan was arriving from New York. Sullivan was stunned by the near riot caused by The Beatles' return to England, prompting him to remark to his wife, "These boys have something." He later booked



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The Beatles for three appearances on his show in early 1964.

In Miami's Deauville Hotel a week after their triumphant New York performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, The Beatles made their second appearance on the show. Two sets in the program nearly mirrored what The Beatles had performed the previous Sunday. The group returned to England on February 22. Their third and final appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* aired the following day; it had been taped on the afternoon of February 9.



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2. American Concert Highlights

- Washington D.C., Coliseum, 1964
- NYC, Carnegie Hall 1964
- NYC, Shea Stadium, 1965
- Memphis, 1966
- San Francisco, Candlestick Park, 1966

What was unique about each of these concerts?

Use the following exhibit text to help the group begin their exploration

Exhibit: *Ladies and Gentlemen...The Beatles!*

Text: Carnegie Hall

After playing Washington, D.C., The Beatles returned to New York City on February 12 for two sold-out shows at Carnegie Hall. The Briarwoods, an American folk group with no connection to Rock & Roll, opened both the early and late shows. The Beatles performed for little over a half hour at each, playing much of their Washington, D.C. set to the delight of some six thousand fans who were fortunate enough to have purchased tickets, priced \$3 to \$5.50.

Despite playing one of the most esteemed concert venues in America, hearing the Beatles proved challenging at Carnegie Hall like it would everywhere else the group performed in America over the next couple of years. Screaming fans and a primitive rock concert sound system prevented The Beatles' songs from arching over the screaming hysteria in the audience.



3. Media and Marketing

- What was the first Beatles music Americans heard?
- What advertising campaigns did Capitol Records and local DJs launch?
- What licensing / merchandise was arranged to advertise The Beatles?
- Aside from music, where else were The Beatles seen in America? (look for movies, cartoons, ...)
- How was The Beatles' music received on the American music charts?

(Use the following exhibit text to help the group begin their exploration)

Exhibit: *Ladies and Gentlemen...The Beatles!*

Text: Beatlemania in 1964

In the weeks after The Beatles' appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, Beatlemania surged in America. More singles were released. "She Loves You," "Can't Buy Me Love," "Love Me Do," "A Hard Day's Night" and "I Feel Fine" all made it to number one in 1964. After the chart-topping success of *Meet the Beatles*, Capitol Records released four more Beatles albums in America in 1964: *The Beatles' Second Album*, *Something New*, *The Beatles' Story*, and *Beatles '65*. United Artists released the soundtrack to the film *A Hard Day's Night*. Earlier, Vee-Jay Records released the album *Introducing...The Beatles*, while Atco rushed out *Ain't She Sweet*, with tracks recorded by The Beatles in Hamburg in 1961. America was awash with the sound of The Beatles in 1964.

It wasn't just on American airwaves and in record stores where The Beatles were found. The critically acclaimed and commercially successful film *A Hard Day's Night* was released in August. It played to sold-out movie houses across the country and further fueled Beatlemania. Also that month, The Beatles began their first full tour of America, playing 32 shows in 24 cities in 33 days. And in stores everywhere, Beatles fans could buy Beatles wigs, boots, bobbleheads, board games, trading cards, and so much more.

In the 1960s, many middle-class suburban homes in America featured separate bedrooms for the teens in the family. Such household space afforded them privacy unavailable to previous generations of young Americans. Many teens turned their bedrooms into private domains, decorating them with pop culture objects like photos and posters of sports, music, and movie stars. Phonographs and record collections competed for space with schoolbooks, diaries, trophies, and stuffed animals. Private telephones were an added luxury. In the mid-'60s, at the height of Beatlemania, many teen bedrooms sported a Beatle motif.



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4. Celebrity encounters

- Murray the K
- Cassius Clay
- Bob Dylan
- Elvis Presley

How did these visits impact Beatlemania, and The Beatles themselves?

5. The look, the critics and the pushback

- The suits, the hair and their age!
- Early newspaper reviews
- Stamp Out The Beatles!
- Parent reactions
- The Beatles' success was not without critique. What was some of the less than positive reaction?

Examples: Articles were written about The Beatles, before they ever landed in America, most notably:

- o *Newsweek* magazine, November 18, 1963
- o *TIME Magazine*, November 15, 1963
- o *LIFE* magazine, December 13, 1963

