

Overview: MOTOWN -Music, art and power

Niveau de classe: 1e

Etablissement: Lycée Hector Berlioz, La Côte St André (38)

Activités langagières dominantes : CO -EO

Niveau CECRL visé : B1 →B2

Problématique(s) : How did the Motown record label develop and thrive? How did Motown music invite itself into young America? Can stars of the music industry gain political voice? How did Berry Gordy promote the music of African-Americans without mentioning colour?

Champ culturel abordé: Art et pouvoir

Nombre de séances : 7

Supports :

Vidéo youtube retravaillé : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnRfyVQS_iA&t=358s

Berry Gordy - Oprah Winfrey Channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSbH1TrrEWM>

Michelle Obama 2019 Grammy Awards https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDLJLs1g_ik&t=5s

Motown hits

Time article A Brief History of Motown:

<http://content.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1870975,00.html>

Objectifs:

Objectifs culturels: label indépendant Motown; en exergue Detroit et Ford Motors; droits civiques aux Etats-Unis dans les années 1960s

Objectifs grammaticaux: HOW questions; asking questions

Objectifs lexicaux: lexique musique /studio d'enregistrement ; lexique droits civiques violence /ségrégation

Lesson plan -MOTOWN -Music, art and power -1e GT.

Lesson one: ppt what next? -watch and take notes in book: write a sentence to establish the subject of the next chapter. Feedback. What do you know about Motown? Watch 1_motown video - ①take notes ②listen again and answer questions. Feedback. Watch 2_motown video -①take notes ②listen again and answer questions. Feedback.

Hwk: use your notes to make a short presentation of the origins of the Motown music industry and Berry Gordy.

Lesson two: warm up, check hwk. -Reminder: who is Berry Gordy? -write down vocab from Berry Gordy doc then watch video -①take notes ②listen again and answer questions. Feedback. Do vocab sheet for Motown_3 documents.

Hwk: learn vocabulary.

Lesson three: warm up. Listen to document 3 (do it as a CO maybe). Watch 1_motown video -①take notes ②listen again and answer questions. Feedback. How questions -ppt find the questions then PRL + TE + exos. Berry Gordy childhood: watch video document -①take notes ②listen again and answer questions. Feedback.

Hwk: revise questions. TI: You are Oprah Winfrey- be prepared to interview Berry Gordy on all we have learned about his life.

Lesson four: Warm up activity: ppt talk for 30 secs. Watch Michelle Obama at Grammy awards: what is the link between Michelle Obama and Motown? Look at list she published in her autobiography *Becoming Michelle Obama* ; pick one title out of the hat for presentation in TF. Computer room -research on your given title.

Hwk: prepare TF.

Lesson five: Time article: group work activity: article chopped into three parts each group=specialist for designated part -prepare a QCM question sheet to submit to other groups. Swap papers between groups. Feedback and conclusion on text overall. Reminder: asking questions rules (word order, auxiliaries).

Hwk. overview of article + prepare TF

Final task activity: You are Berry Gordy. You are presenting an album cover to a journalist. Be prepared to present your given record and its sleeve using a record from Michelle Obama's list. Be prepared also to answer the questions the journalist will put to you. Prepare a picture of the album cover and a 30-second excerpt from the song. Explain the message of the song. Assess each other's performances to help everyone improve and vote for greatest new discovery.

Remember to include: *dialogue*questions*how questions

<https://www.motownmuseum.org/>

1. MOTOWN: How a music industry grows from nowhere.

Where? (which city?)

Who became the leader in pop music?

Socio-political context?

90:

\$800:

Corrigé MOTOWN: How a music industry grows from nowhere.

Where? (which city?) **Detroit**

Who became the leader in pop music? **a black man (Berry Gordy)**

Socio-political context? **troubled racial times/ times when black artists had no freedom in America**

90: **pop hits with black artists**

\$800 **money borrowed from family kitty to build edifice which became the greatest ever independent record company**

MOTOWN: How a music industry grows from nowhere.

I think when you consider the history of music, especially in America, I think it was one of the most important periods ever. Motown went on to influence everyone. It was one of the most important things in the history of mankind. The fact that a black man in very troubled racial times in Detroit became the leader in pop music. They had 90 or more pop hits with black artists at a time when black artists had no freedom in America. How do you borrow \$800 from your family kitty and on the structure of that \$800 you build this incredible edifice which was the greatest achievement in independent record companies there has ever been.

2. MOTOWN : from Ford to Motown

Who was Berry Gordy?

Where did Berry Gordy work?

What is the connection between his job and the music?

Corrigé MOTOWN : from Ford to Motown

Who was Berry Gordy? **songwriter; wrote Money for Barrett Strong**

Where did Berry Gordy work? **Ford motor company**

What is the connection between his job and the music? **Berry Strong applied the same assembly line technology to song production**

MOTOWN : from Ford to Motown

Berry Gordy at this particular time was doing a guy named Barrett Strong, and Barrett Strong was singing a song called *Money* and it became a big big hit. Berry had been a successful songwriter for Jack Lewis and Bill Robinson -Smokey- said Berry you should start your own label. He worked for Ford motor company and he worked on the assembly line. He began to marvel at how he would go to work in the morning and at the end of the day you had this brand new beautiful vehicle. He actually used that same simple technology, applying it to his artists.

3. Motown : the power of music.

Show that the Motown studios were an industry:

In which period did the Motown studios emerge?

What is special about the album covers of *Please Mr Postman* the album by the Marvelettes or *This Old Heart of Mine* by the Isley brothers?

Explain the idea of "the sound of young America":

What do we learn about the lyrics?

What important message for civil rights did Motown music spread?

How is the group Diana Ross and the Supremes described?

Conclude about Motown and the civil rights movement:

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Corrigé Motown : the power of music.

Show that the Motown studios were an industry: **open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, it was a hit factory**

In which period did the Motown studios emerge? **era of civil rights, in the face of persistent, now inconceivable hatred.**

What is special about the album covers of *Please Mr Postman* the album by the Marvelettes or *This Old Heart of Mine* by the Isley brothers? **They deliberately show no black people on the sleeve**

Explain the idea of "the sound of young America": **Motown music transcends race, it is not the sound of black America, music for everyone**

What do we learn about the lyrics? **They weren't about civil rights**

What important message for civil rights did Motown music spread? **black acts, were crossing over to the pop charts; black singers were integrating with white pop music**

How is the group Diana Ross and the Supremes described? **incredibly glamorous; like American royalty; anecdote show that white people allow the Supremes into their lives even though they reject black people**

Conclude about Motown and the civil rights movement: **Motown songs were about being young in America, they did not use a racial dimension however the artists were all black. The popularity of the music indirectly helped the civil rights movement because its message was just positive and not racially weighted BUT produced by black people.**

Motown : the power of music.

This place was open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, it was a hit factory one after the other. These things happened in this era of civil rights, in the face of persistent, now inconceivable hatred. This did affect Motown slightly in the sense that some of their early albums did not show black people. For example *Please Mr Postman* the album by the Marvelettes did not show any human beings, it showed a mailbox. And as late as 1965, the Isley brothers, *This Old Heart of Mine* showed two white teenagers on the beach on the cover. The young Americans who had grown up without the 100+ years of prejudice had just taken this to their hearts, it didn't occur to them to think it was anything other than what it was; Motown records regularly went into the charts in an astonishing way. He did start with the idea of creating a sound that would transcend race and transcend the boundaries that we found ourselves in in this nation in the 50s, and he was very successful in doing that it was the sound of young America. Not the sound of black America, not the sound of negro America, it was the sound of young America. The question came up; I don't want my music to be just heard just by this group of people, the Afro-Americans of the time, I want my music to be enjoyed by everybody, why don't we just make it music for everybody. That was a shift in thinking, to be able to think outside the prescribed record industry boxes. The lyrics themselves, weren't about civil rights. What was about civil rights was that fact all these acts, black acts, were crossing over to the pop charts. There was something different about Motown; the Supremes in their dresses and their wigs, they were incredibly glamorous, they became like American royalty. Berry Gordy had all of these acts; he had them record not just the hits but he had them record other albums; the Supremes sing *Rodgers and Hart*, the Four Tops did a Broadway album. He was really integrating that music with white pop music. He didn't think about it, he just accepted these acts: there was the Beach Boys, there were the Supremes, there were the Beatles and there were the Four Tops. It was like you were colour blind when you thought about these acts. That was very subtle, whether it was intended or not Mary Wilson had a middle-aged white woman who came up to her at the time and she said "we don't let our children watch negroes on television but they love the Supremes, that's just OK with us". It definitely advanced the civil rights movement. It was at a time, dark times in the racial struggle in America and they had 90 number one pop hits by black artists which was completely unheard of, you'll probably never hear of that again. I think it was basically the social backdrop and the music and the record industry feeding off each other and informing each other. Maybe these songs inadvertently initially started to strike a nerve within the social fabric. Obviously the artists such as Marvin Gaye and the writers started to take notice of this and be able to incorporate this and use it as food for their creativity. They'd already sold millions of records and they were like, OK, I've got a platform, let me use this to enlighten the public to my view of exactly what's going on.

4. Berry Gordy's lesson on race

Where did Berry Gordy sell his black newspapers?

Explain his initial success:

Explain his subsequent failure:

What conclusion does he make?

How does he apply this newspaper incident to his record industry?

Give examples: ① _____
② _____
③ _____

What conclusion does Berry Gordy make about the world?

Corrigé Berry Gordy's lesson on race

Where did Berry Gordy sell his black newspapers? **downtown Detroit; in the white neighbourhood**

Explain his initial success: **sold every newspaper, not one left**

Explain his subsequent failure: **returns with brother, sells no newspapers**

What conclusion does he make? **one black boy is cute, two black boys are threatening**

How does he apply this newspaper incident to his record industry? **no black faces on the record sleeves of early albums**

Give examples: ① **Mickey's Monkey by The Miracles -picture of an ape**
② **This Old Heart of Mine by The Isley Brothers -couple of white lovers on the beach**
③ **Bye Bye Baby by Mary Wells -picture of a love letter**

What conclusion does Berry Gordy make about the world? **there are more similarities than differences between people; people are beautiful; it is better to insist on the sameness rather than the differences**

Vocabulary - Berry Gordy's lesson on race

neighbourhood	-	quartier, voisinage
downtown	-	centre-ville
to realise	-	se rendre compte
to move out of the way	-	éviter
an ape	-	un singe
don't judge a book by its cover	-	il ne faut pas se fier aux apparences

Here is the full Michelle Obama Motown playlist:

Ain't No Mountain High Enough - Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell
The Way You Do The Things You Do - The Temptations
Dancing in The Street - Martha Reeves & The Vandellas
Please Mr. Postman - The Marvelettes
The Old Heart of Mine (Is Weak for You) - the Isley Brothers
Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing - Marvin Gaye and Tammy Terrell
Baby Love - The Supremes
It's The Same Old Song - Four Tops
Just My Imagination (Running Away With Me) - The Temptations
Signed, Sealed, Delivered (I'm Yours) - Stevie Wonder
I Heard It Through The Grapevine - Gladys Knight & The Pips
My Guy - Mary Wells
It Takes Two - Marvin Gaye, Kim Weston
I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch) - Four Tops
Who's Loving You - The Jackson 5
Beauty Is Only Skin Deep - The Temptations
The Tracks Of My Tears - Smokey Robinson & The Miracles
For Once In My Life - Stevie Wonder
Baby, I'm For Real - The Originals
Ain't Too Proud to Beg - The Temptations
I'll Be There - The Jackson 5
Reach Out, I'll Be There - Four Tops
What's Going On - Marvin Gaye
Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology) - Marvin Gaye
As - Stevie Wonder
Color - Zhane
I Love Your Smile - Shanice
Treat Her Like A Lady - The Temptations
Zoom - Commodores
The Truth - India.Arie
Didn't Cha Know - Erykah Badu
My Cherie Amour - Stevie Wonder
Woman's World - BJ The Chicago Kid
I'm Coming Out - Diana Ross
Video - India.Arie
Square Biz - Teena Marie
Rhythm of the Night - Debarge
You and I - Stevie Wonder
Someday We'll Be Together - Diana Ross & The Supremes
Feel So Good - Do The Right Thing/Soundtrack Version - Perri

