Homesick Blues

a poem

by Langston Hughes
Student’s worksheet

Name: ....................................................... Date: .................................................................

1. Do you know anything about the lyrics or the origin of Blues?

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Homesick Blues

De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
De railroad bridge's
A sad song in de air.
Ever time de trains pass
I wants to go somewhere.

I went down to de station.
Ma heart was in ma mouth.
Went down to de station.
Heart was in ma mouth.
Lookin' for a box car
To roll me to de South.

Homesick blues, Lawd,
'S a terrible thing to have.
Homesick blues is
A terrible thing to have.
To keep from cryin'
I opens ma mouth an' laughs.

2. What does 'homesick' mean?

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3. In what situation have you ever felt homesick yourself?

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4. Do you think being homesick can be a serious problem? Why (not)? Please explain.

What do you read?

*Ever time de trains pass*
*I wants to go somewhere.*

5. Where do you think 'somewhere' could be?

*I went down to de station.*
*Ma heart was in ma mouth.*
*Went down to de station.*
*Heart was in ma mouth.*

6. How would you describe the feeling 'ma heart was in ma mouth'? 

*Lookin' for a box car*
*To roll me to de South.*

7. Explain what the poet is looking/longing for?

*Homesick blues, Lawd,*
*'S a terrible thing to have.*
*Homesick blues is*
*A terrible thing to have.*
*To keep from cryin’*
*I opens ma mouth an’ laughs.*

8. What do you think *laughing* and *crying* might have to do with each other?


9. What do you think ‘homesick’ and ‘blues’ have to do with each other?

About the language

10. Choose A, B or C to express the meaning of the words used in the poem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words used in poem</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A sad song in de air</em></td>
<td>Bad singing</td>
<td>A sad feeling</td>
<td>A song on the radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A box car</em></td>
<td>A toy car in a box</td>
<td>A box in a car</td>
<td>A wagon on a train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ever time de trains pass</em></td>
<td>Trains are not on time</td>
<td>Seeing trains go by</td>
<td>Trains are on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>LAWD</em></td>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>The law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Homesick</em></td>
<td>On sick leave</td>
<td>Being sick</td>
<td>Feeling blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Homesick blues</em></td>
<td>Face turns blue</td>
<td>Missing ‘home’ very much</td>
<td>Feeling very sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Roll me to de South</em></td>
<td>Bring me South on a train</td>
<td>Bring me South in a car</td>
<td>Rock ‘n’ roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>To keep from cryin’</em></td>
<td>Not allowed to cry</td>
<td>Doesn’t want to cry</td>
<td>Crying out loud</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Draw a picture

13. Draw a picture of what you feel/see when you read 'Homesick Blues'

14. Write a short story or a poem, titled 'homesick'