

# ROCK'N'ROLL

1

Musically, rock'n'roll was not really new. It was a case of white American teenagers discovering Afro-American rhythm and blues, which had been popular on race radio stations from the 1940s. Research 1940s rhythm and blues, looking particularly at the following characteristics.

- The musical characteristics: Was the music 12-bar blues based? What tempos were used? What was the predominant vocal style?
- Instrumentation: Which instruments were used? Were the instruments closer to traditional jazz instruments or modern rock instruments? What role did each instrument play in a rhythm and blues band?
- Artists: Who were some of the major rhythm and blues artists? Can you find examples of classic songs?
- Song topics: Were song topics similar to those of rock'n'roll or did rhythm and blues musicians sing about other things?

What conclusions can you draw about how rhythm and blues and rock'n'roll are related musically?

OR

2

A distinctive form of rock'n'roll pioneered by artists such as Elvis was rockabilly. What were the musical characteristics of rockabilly, and who were the major performers? What happened to rockabilly? Why was it a relatively short-lived rock'n'roll variation?

OR

3

Virtually all well-known rock'n'roll artists are men. However, some female artists, such as Connie Francis, were successful in the rock'n'roll era. Research successful female artists from this era, and comment on their musical characteristics. From your knowledge of rock'n'roll and the subculture associated with it, can you suggest why women artists were not as successful/popular during this time?