

WORKSHEET

Songwriter Quotes

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read the quotes from professional blues songwriters. Underline or highlight any key words that explain the blues. Using at least one of the key words you identified, create your own definition or explanation of the blues.

1. “The blues are the roots and the other musics are the fruits. It’s better keeping the roots alive, because it means better fruits from now on. The blues are the roots of all American music. As long as American music survives, so will the blues.” —**Willie Dixon**
2. “White or black. Rich or poor. If you ever had your heart broken, you have the right to sing the blues!” —**Big Mama Thornton**
3. “The blues has lasted because the blues is about reality. Life is blue. Life ends. Sorrow is certain. Pain can’t be avoided. The blues lays it out. But as you sing the blues, and as you listen to the blues, something happens to you. In the middle of songs that have some of the saddest stories ever told, you feel more alive than ever. That’s the strength of the blues. That’s the miracle—watching the blues chase the blues away.” —**Jimmy Scott**
4. “If I was a rich man, had all the money I needed, and suddenly all that money left, my feeling would be what they call the blues.” —**Henry “Mule” Townsend**
5. “We write according to the facts of life, everyday life. If you live and die here, you got a part of the blues in you. Something you have to get up to do, it don’t work, that’s what the blues is all about. I think a person will have the blues as long as he lives, but some people just don’t want to bring it out like we do.” —**Buddy Guy**
6. “... The original blues songs are deep, emotional melodies, bespeaking a troubled heart.” —**Bessie Smith**
7. “There are happy blues, sad blues, lonesome blues, red-hot blues, mad blues, and loving blues. Blues is a testimony to the fullness of life.” —**Corey Harris**
8. “There’s a lot of things that give you the blues, that give me the blues, that give any man the blues: It’s somewhere down the line that you have been hurt someplace. I mean, it’s no certain type of hurtin’, but you have been hurt someplace and you get to playin’ the blues that reaches. And so that’s why when I sing the blues, I sing it with the big feelin’. I really means it.” —**John Lee Hooker**
9. “The blues? It’s the mother of American music. That’s what it is—the source.” —**B.B. King**

MY DEFINITION OF THE BLUES