

## DEAR EDUCATOR,

Ever wonder where your personalities, quirks, and interests come from? In Disney and Pixar's upcoming film *Soul*, middle-school band teacher Joe Gardner will go on an unexpected journey to find out where his love for jazz music comes from. Along the way, he'll meet a soul named 22 and discover what matters most in life.

This free educational program from the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI) has been designed to complement your language arts, social studies, and music curricula. The engaging activities introduce students to jazz and some legendary musicians who inspire Joe, and encourage kids to reflect on the movie's central theme of self-discovery.

Please share this program with other teachers in grades 3 to 5. Although these materials are protected by copyright, you may make as many copies as you need for educational purposes.

Return the enclosed reply card or comment online by visiting [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-PixarSoul](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/feedback-PixarSoul) to let us know your thoughts on this program. We depend on your feedback to continue providing free educational programs that make a real difference in students' lives.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley  
Editor in Chief  
Young Minds Inspired



"Soul" Materials © 2020 Disney/Pixar

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Students in grades 3 to 5 as a supplement to social studies, music, and language arts classes

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Familiarize students with the rich history and impact of jazz
- Build critical-thinking and literacy skills based on the film's theme of self-discovery

### ABOUT SOUL

What is it that makes you, *YOU*? Pixar Animation Studios' all-new feature film *Soul* introduces Joe Gardner (voice of Jamie Foxx)—a middle-school band teacher who gets the chance of a lifetime to play at the best jazz club in town. But one small misstep takes him from the streets of New York City to The Great Before—a fantastical place where new souls get their personalities, quirks, and interests before they go to Earth. Determined to return to his life, Joe teams up with a soul named 22 (voice of Tina Fey), who has never understood the appeal of the human experience. As Joe tries to show 22 what's great about living, he may just discover the answers to some of life's most important questions.

### HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

Distribute copies of the activity sheets to all students and display a copy of the poster in your classroom. Visit [ymiclassroom.com/PixarSoul](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/PixarSoul) for a standards alignment chart and to view the film's trailer.

### ACTIVITY 1 LET'S GET JAZZED!

Joe Gardner loves jazz. In this activity, students will learn about jazz and its influential history. Before distributing the activity sheet, ask students: *What is jazz?* Explain that jazz is a style of music in which musicians improvise, or make up, their own interpretations of a tune. *What does jazz sound like?* Descriptions may include smooth, lively, energetic, soulful, etc. Then pass out the activity sheet for students to complete. You can also play jazz music for students from Lincoln Center's Jazz Academy at [academyjazz.org/media-library](https://www.academyjazz.org/media-library). **Answers:** 1. saxophone; 2. New Orleans; 3. blues; 4. improvisation; 5. Jazz Age; 6. swing

**Extension:** Students can bring their activity sheets home to discuss jazz with their family members and to ask if they have a favorite jazz musician and why.

### ACTIVITY 2 MEET SOME JAZZ LEGENDS

Distribute the activity sheet. In the first part, students will meet some famous jazz musicians who inspire Joe Gardner. After students complete the quiz, review the answers as a class.

**Answers:** 1. John Coltrane; 2. Billie Holiday; 3. Satchmo

In the second part, prompt students to write about someone who has influenced and inspired them. Is it a friend, relative, or teacher? Is it someone famous, like an author, artist, musician, or leader? Or someone who helps others?

**Extension:** Ask students to research another jazz great such as Bud Powell, Fats Waller, Art Blakey, or Valaida Snow. Have students draw a portrait of their artist and add a word collage to describe them and their music. Create a bulletin board of the portraits with the *Soul* poster as the centerpiece.

### ACTIVITY 3 DEAR FUTURE SELF...

To begin, read the synopsis of the movie *Soul* to students. Then tell them that in this activity, they will explore the question, *What makes you, YOU?*

Distribute the activity sheet, which encourages students to reflect on this question by writing letters to themselves 15 years from now. Have students figure out how old they will be in 15 years and think about what their lives will be like when they open their letters.

**Extension:** Invite students to create time capsule boxes for their letters. They can write the date when they should open the box on the outside. Students can also include a list of songs that they like and think might reflect life today.

### RESOURCES

- [disney.com/soul](https://www.disney.com/soul)
- [ymiclassroom.com/PixarSoul](https://www.ymiclassroom.com/PixarSoul)
- [academyjazz.org](https://www.academyjazz.org)



# LET'S GET JAZZED!

In *Soul*, middle-school band teacher Joe Gardner pours his heart into his passion—jazz. Read on to learn about jazz and its history.

*Jazz is a kind of music that expresses different emotions. It is played all over the world. But did you know jazz got its start in the United States?*

*In the early 1900s, jazz was created by African Americans in New Orleans, Louisiana. Jazz traces its roots to music from Africa. It grew out of ragtime, blues, slave songs, spirituals, and other types of music, including marches and opera.*

*A unique part of jazz is called “improvisation.” That is when musicians make up their interpretation of a tune on the spot. Jazz musicians use improvisation to develop their own sounds and styles.*

*Jazz can be sung or played on many different instruments. For example, you can hear jazz played on the saxophone, trumpet, drums, guitar, and piano.*

*By the 1920s, jazz had spread to places like Chicago and New York City and soon became popular across the U.S. and around the world. This period became known as the Jazz Age.*

*Over time, new styles of jazz were born. In the 1930s, big band jazz was called swing music. People liked to dance to it. In the 1940s, a new style of jazz called bebop emerged. From rock to hip hop, jazz has even influenced music we listen to today.*

Now, read the clues below. Then, unscramble the answers.

1. A popular jazz instrument

AONOXPEHS \_\_\_\_\_

2. The city where jazz was created

WNE ROSALNE \_\_\_\_\_

3. One type of music that contributed to jazz

SULBE \_\_\_\_\_

4. When jazz musicians make up their own interpretation of a tune

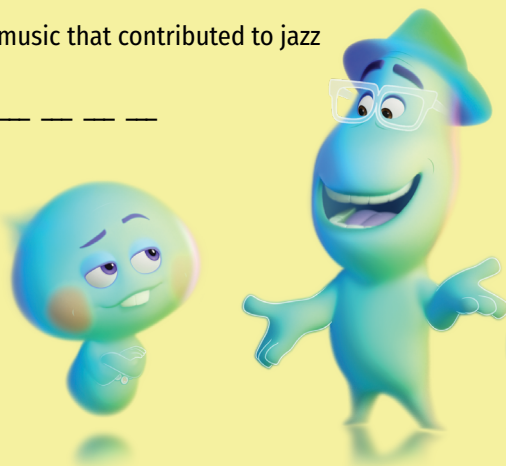
OITNSAIRMIPOV \_\_\_\_\_

5. What the 1920s is called

ZJZA EAG \_\_\_\_\_

6. Jazz music played by the big bands

GINWS \_\_\_\_\_



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
How does jazz encourage creativity and self-expression?



# MEET SOME JAZZ LEGENDS

In the new movie *Soul*, Joe Gardner is inspired by some of the greatest jazz artists in history. Read about some of Joe's jazz heroes.



## LOUIS ARMSTRONG

(1901-1971)

Louis Armstrong is the most famous jazz player of all time. Born in New Orleans, he grew up poor, but loved watching local jazz musicians play. Nicknamed Satchmo, Armstrong was a great trumpet player, singer, and bandleader. One of his hit songs was "What a Wonderful World." Armstrong was also known for scat, which is making up words in a song.



## JOHN COLTRANE

(1926-1967)

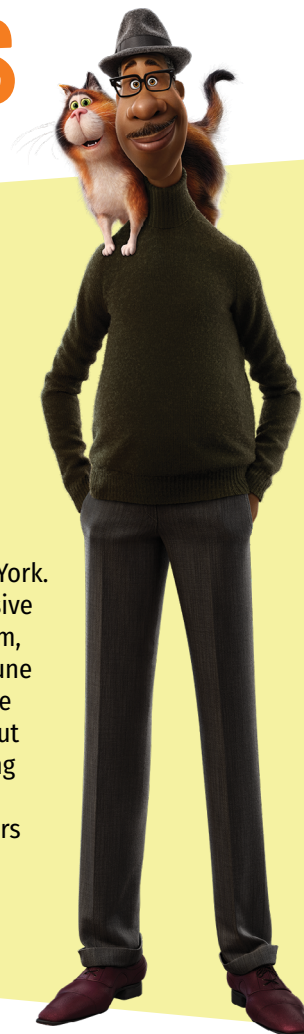
John Coltrane, born in North Carolina, was an acclaimed American saxophonist, bandleader, and composer, and became an iconic figure of 20th-century jazz. To Coltrane, a musician was a message-giver, and music provided a spiritual purpose. Many people think he is one of the greatest saxophone players of all time.



## BILLIE HOLIDAY

(1915-1959)

Billie Holiday was born in Philadelphia and began her singing career in Harlem, New York. She was known for her expressive voice, inventive sense of rhythm, and ability to improvise on a tune while she was performing. Billie never learned to read music, but that did not stop her from being voted best female jazz vocalist four years in a row. Many singers have been influenced by Billie and her techniques.



### Part 1: Answer the questions below:

1. Who is recognized as one of the greatest saxophone players of all time? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which artist could improvise while singing? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was Louis Armstrong's nickname? \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 2: Now, think about someone who inspires you. Answer the questions below.

1. Who inspires you?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why does that person inspire you?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What qualities does that person have that you admire?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How has that person influenced your life or interests?  
\_\_\_\_\_



# DEAR FUTURE SELF...

In *Soul*, Joe Gardner has his heart set on becoming a jazz musician. After finally landing his dream gig, he is unexpectedly taken from the streets of New York City to The Great Before—a fantastical place where new souls get their personalities, quirks, and interests before they go to Earth. Determined to make it back in time to perform, Joe teams up with a soul named 22 who is reluctant to begin her human experience. Through Joe's journey, they learn from each other, finding out what about life is truly important to them.

Now, it's your turn to think about what matters most to you. Write a letter to your future self about what your life is like now, and what you love. What do you think you'll be doing in 15 years? Fill in the information below to write your letter.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old and in \_\_\_\_\_ grade.

Some of the best things about school are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite things to do are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When I grow up, I want to be: \_\_\_\_\_

By the time I read this letter, I hope to have accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When I open this letter in 15 years, this is what I think my life will be like: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Finally, here is my advice for my grown-up self: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

