

# A compare and contrast essay on blues and gospel music essay sample

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Have you ever gone out on Saturday night to hear someone sing the blues? Have you ever gone to a Baptist church the next morning and heard a joyful gospel song? You may think the two musical expressions have nothing in common, but if you listen closely and study their histories, you will find some surprising similarities.

When you first hear gospel music and the blues, you can't help noticing how different they are in mood and in the stories they tell. Blues songs are sad, full of heartbreak and disappointment. They talk about everyday problems like losing a job or a girlfriend, like having no money or no friends. Gospel songs, on the other hand, are the happiest songs you'll ever hear, full of joy and hope. Unlike the blues, gospel songs tell about the power of faith in tunes so catchy, they make you want to get up and dance.

Both kinds of music, however, have African roots and similar African musical forms. For example, blues is known for its "blue" or "bent" notes that exist somewhere in between the formal notes and the do-re-me scale.

Gospel music also has bent notes. The other characteristic of African music they both have is the congregation answers. In the same way, a blues singer intones a line, and an instrument echoes or answers him or her.

Both, blues and gospel music help create what we know as rock music today. In the 1940's black musicians in the South and northern cities like Chicago, where black Americans had migrated in large numbers, started playing a new type of blues that was faster and a heavier beat. The style was "rhythm and blues". Later, black artists like Ray Charles and James Brown added gospel harmonies and piano riffs to the rhythm-and-blues mix. This new

sound found a wider and wider audience and came to be called “ rock and roll.” So you see, even though gospel and blues songs have different moods and tell different kinds of stories, their roots and musical characteristics are very similar.

Both have had a big a big influence on today’s pop music. They are like two different sides of the same coin. Many important black musicians grew up singing the blues on Saturday night and gospel songs on Sunday morning, and the qualities of both kinds of music come together in their musical styles.

Resources:

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)<http://afgen.com/gospel1.html><http://www.scaruffi.com/history/blues.html>