

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## B.B. King: The King of Blues

### Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. B.B. King's early life experiences shaped his interest in music by exposing him to gospel music in church, which became an outlet for his emotions. Growing up in poverty on a cotton plantation in the segregated South, he found solace in music, and it became a way for him to express himself and connect with others. These early experiences instilled a deep passion for music and storytelling in B.B. King, which he carried with him throughout his career.
2. "The Thrill Is Gone" is often regarded as B.B. King's signature song due to its powerful lyrics and emotional impact. The song expresses the feeling of lost love and the emptiness that follows. Musically, it features B.B. King's signature guitar playing style, including his expressive bending of notes and soulful vibrato techniques. These elements combine to create a sense of longing and sadness, making it a standout blues classic.
3. Lucille, B.B. King's guitar, is more than just an instrument; it represents his dedication and passion for music. The name "Lucille" originated from an incident where a fire broke out at a club while B.B. King was performing. He risked his life to save his guitar, and he later learned that the fight that caused the fire had been over a woman named Lucille. He decided to name his guitar after her as a reminder to never again risk his life for an object. Lucille became an iconic symbol of B.B. King's commitment to his craft and the emotional connection he had with his instrument.
4. B.B. King's guitar-playing techniques were central to his distinctive style. He used bending notes to give his guitar a vocal quality, mimicking the human voice's expressiveness. Additionally, his use of vibrato added depth and emotion to his playing. Vibrato involves quickly bending and releasing the strings to create a trembling or pulsating effect, enhancing the emotional impact of his music.
5. B.B. King's impact on blues music is immeasurable. He helped bring blues to a global audience by touring extensively and introducing the genre to new listeners worldwide. His heartfelt performances resonated with people from all walks of life, transcending cultural boundaries. B.B. King's legacy continues to influence musicians today, as his soulful guitar playing and emotional storytelling in his music remain timeless and iconic in the world of blues and beyond.

