

WHO IS RITCHIE VALENS?

Est. Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: ELA, General Music, Social Studies

Age Range: Elementary & Middle School


See the full lesson [here!](#)

★ *TEACHROCK* ★



Who was Ritchie Valens?

In this lesson you will:


- Learn about Rock and Roll Pioneer Ritchie Valens
 - Discover the traditional Mexican roots of Valens' famous song, "La Bamba"
 - Use a timeline to understand the life of Ritchie Valens
- 

Read [this biography](#) of Valens to learn about his short but amazing life.





Consider or ask a friend:

- Why do you think that Ricardo Valenzuela changed his name to Ritchie Valens?
 - Can you think of any of today's popular artists that changed their names?
- 





OOH MY HEAD

Watch one of the few recordings of Ritchie Valens performing [here](#).



Consider or ask a friend:


- What five words would you use to describe what's going on in this video?
 - Why do you think that Ritchie Valens became so popular when he was just 17 years old?
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Ritchie Valens' song "La Bamba" is one of early Rock and Roll's most famous songs. But before Valens made the song so popular in 1958, it was a well-known Mexican Folk Song.

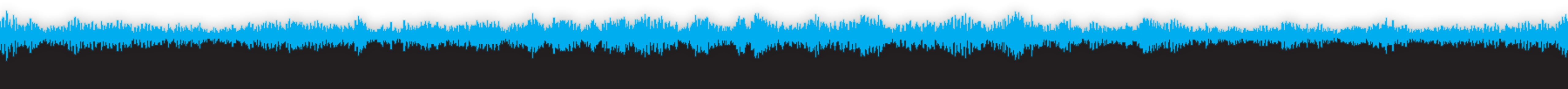
Listen to an excerpt of the traditional version of "La Bamba" [here](#).
Then listen to Ritchie Valens' version of "La Bamba" [here](#).

Use [this handout](#) to help compare and contrast the two versions of "La Bamba."





Consider or ask a friend:

- What differences do you hear between Valens' version and the traditional version?
 - How does the song combine elements of a traditional Latin song with Rock and Roll?
 - What do you think Valens was trying to express when he recorded this song?
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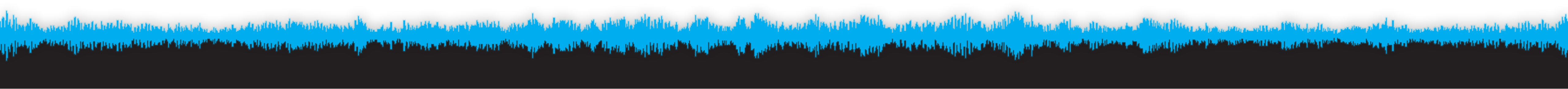
SUMMARY

- Ritchie Valens is known as the Father of Latino Rock
- He turned the traditional folk song “La Bamba” into a Rock and Roll Classic
- He lived a short, but important life



BE CREATIVE

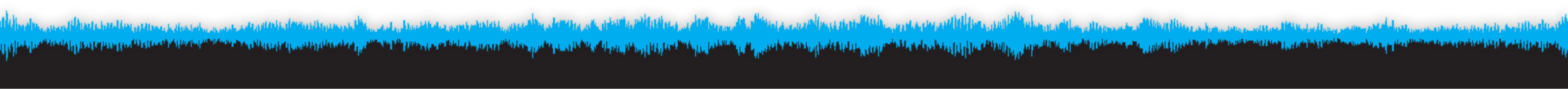
Use **this handout** to create a Ritchie Valens infographic, or use this handout to create a timeline of Valen's life.



BE CURIOUS

The movie “La Bamba” which was released in 1987, tells the story of Ritchie Valens. To watch it (with your parent’s permission) go to YouTube, Netflix, or Amazon Video.

Los Lobos covered “La Bamba” for this movie. The song topped the charts at #1 for 3 weeks in 1987. Watch them perform the song [here](#).



CONNECT

Share it with us! Either you or an adult in your life can share your infographic and timeline with TeachRock on **Instagram** or **Facebook**, email to **info@teachrock.org**, or Tweet it to **@TeachRock**



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