



Group 3: British Music Halls

Imagine your group is helping one of the Beatles write his autobiography. You will work in small groups and use your knowledge of history to help your Beatle enrich his book. Here are the guidelines:

- Below you will see your assigned historical term. Each group has a different term from a different period in their subject's life.
- You also have received sources related to that term.
- Use this information to write a paragraph of 3-5 sentences for your Beatle's autobiography.
- Your sentences should connect his life to the term and use the first person. For example, "I remember watching the ships come in to the Liverpool docks."
- Write your paragraph on the board or on a piece of paper large enough for the whole class to read.
- Share it with the class.
- As the other groups share their paragraphs, copy the story in your "Autobiography of a Beatle" handout.

Term: Music Hall

For more than a century, British music halls were one of the main sources of entertainment for ordinary Britons, particularly from the working class. Music halls featured variety shows offering many different types of performance, but were best known for offering catchy songs in which the audience would join in on the chorus. Performers often laced their songs with comedy, sometimes wearing eccentric costumes on stage. While they eventually declined, music halls were still a popular form of entertainment immediately after World War II, a place where hard-working people could go and forget about their troubles. The music hall was a significant part of the Liverpool culture scene and had a large impact on the Beatles. In fact, Paul McCarthy was the son of a music hall performer, and his songs such as "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" and "Octopus' Garden" reflect the music hall sound.

Source 1: British Music Hall in the late 1800s



Source: London Theatre Museum

Source 2: Video of Liverpool-born Gerry Marsden of the band Gerry and the Pacemakers discussing the influence of music Hall performers such as George Formby on British musicians

Source 3: Video of George Formby, “Leaning on a Lamp Post”

Source 4: Video of the Beatles, “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer”