



Classroom Guide for
SWEET MUSIC IN HARLEM
 written by **Debbie A. Taylor**
 illustrated by **Frank Morrison**

Reading Level

*Reading Level: Grade 3
 Interest Level: Grades 1–4
 Guided Reading Level: O
 Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 4.6/.5
 Lexile™ Level: AD800

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes

Friendship, Historical Interest, Music (Jazz), Neighbors, New York City, Community, African American Interest

Synopsis

C. J. needs to act fast. A photographer from *Highnote* magazine is on his way to photograph trumpet-playing Uncle Click, a well-known jazz musician, but Uncle Click's signature black beret is missing. C. J. volunteers to retrace his uncle's steps from the previous night to find the hat. Now it's up to C. J., who aspires to be as great a jazz musician as his uncle, to hunt down the hat in time for the photo shoot.

As energetic C. J. races to Uncle Click's favorite hangouts—from Garlic's Barbershop to the Midnight Melody Club—buzz about the photo shoot stirs in the Harlem air. C. J. returns home without the hat, but news of the photo has spread like wildfire.

Little does C. J. know that his whirlwind search through Harlem sets in motion the making of a magical moment of friendship and music. In preparation for the photo shoot, C. J. inadvertently gathers some of the greatest musicians of 1950s Harlem to join in on the picture. Soon all the best jazz musicians in the neighborhood have shown up at Uncle Click's front door for a photograph of historic proportions.

Illustrated with exuberance by fine artist Frank Morrison, *Sweet Music in Harlem* is an action-packed romp inspired by Art Kane's historic photograph, *Harlem 1958*, from Harlem's jazz heyday. *Sweet Music in Harlem* captures the energy and excitement of a magical time in Harlem's jazz history, highlighting the dynamic friendship of a close-knit community. Readers everywhere will rejoice in this fictional story and in the power of music to bring people together in wonderful, fun-filled ways.

Sweet Music in Harlem includes an Afterword that introduces readers to one of the most historic photos in jazz history, which is also the subject of the Academy Award-nominated documentary, *A Great Day in Harlem*.

BACKGROUND

Adapted from the Author's Note (on the last page of the book)

Sweet Music in Harlem was inspired by a photograph on a T-shirt the author's husband was wearing one day. In the photograph a crowd of famous jazz musicians poses on the steps of a brownstone in Harlem, New York, while children sit on the curb. The author Debbie Taylor wondered who those children were and what they might have thought about seeing all those people gathered on their street.

Months later, on the way to a hotel in St. Louis, the author passed nightclubs, restaurants, and streets with jazz-related names. They reminded her of that picture of jazz musicians. As she sat in the hotel eating breakfast the next morning, the plot of the story evolved clearly. A boy named C. J. started racing through Harlem, trying to find his uncle's missing hat in time for a photo shoot for a jazz magazine.

The picture on that T-shirt was taken in 1958 by Art Kane, a young photographer on his first assignment for *Esquire* magazine. He had invited some musicians to a photo shoot in Harlem, not knowing if anyone would show up. Magically, the news spread quickly, and fifty-seven of the greatest men and women of jazz gathered, as well as some curious neighborhood children.

For more background information on *Sweet Music in Harlem* and how author, Debbie A. Taylor, was inspired to write this story, read her [interview](#) with Lee & Low Books.¹

Teaching Tip

Sweet Music In Harlem would be useful as part of a unit on music history and as a book to feature as part of your celebration of Jazz Appreciation Month in April, International Jazz Day on April 30, or Black History Month in February.

Art Kane and Harlem 1958 photograph: This image was Art Kane's first professional photograph and has been reproduced in countless books and on posters. It was used in Steven Spielberg's 2004 film *The Terminal*, and played a major role in Jean Bach's 1994 jazz documentary, [A Great Day In Harlem](#).² Students can read a 2013 film review on the documentary and first-hand accounts of jazz artists who were there the day the photograph was taken, called "[A Great Day In Harlem: The Spirit Lives—50 Years On](#)."³ Explore jazz history through this one photograph and learn about each of the fifty-seven

¹ <http://www.leeandlow.com/p/taylor.mhtml>

² <http://www.a-great-day-in-harlem.com/>

³ <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/a-great-day-in-harlem-the-spirit-lives-50-years-on-by-ian-patterson.php#.U9aCHYBdX60>

musicians, their instruments, and their jazz styles at [Harlem.org](http://harlem.org/).⁴ Kane's career spanned nearly fifty years as a photographer and art director. He captured images of actors, politicians, everyday Americans, and colorful characters everywhere and in-between. Check out some of his most profound and influential pieces at ArtKane.com.⁵

Jazz: Definitively American, jazz originated in New Orleans with deep roots in blues. Jazz is a unique art form because it requires a group of people to come together and improvise. Constantly evolving, jazz involves a group of musicians conversing in the language of music and complete awareness of the artists collaborating together in real time. Groundbreaking artists include Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. While jazz was born in New Orleans and matured in Chicago, jazz experienced its golden age in New York City, specifically in Harlem. Jazz has many different styles including New Orleans, swing, bebop, cool jazz, hard bop, free jazz, and fusion. Instruments used by jazz musicians include trumpet, saxophone, trombone, piano, guitar, bass, and drums. PBS's "[Jazz: A Film by Ken Burns](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/)" presents extensive jazz history and music theory, and discusses the cultural impact of the music.⁶ For a timeline, images, a glossary of jazz terms, and more, check out [Jazz In America](http://www.jazzinamerica.org/).⁷

Harlem: Even before the Civil War, African Americans had settled in Harlem. By the early 1900s, many African Americans sought out Harlem during a mass migration from the South. As a result, Harlem became a center for African American culture. The Apollo Theater in Harlem was a leading venue for black entertainment for most of the twentieth century, as was the Cotton Club. Indeed, 125th Street is Harlem's famous thoroughfare, home to not only the Apollo Theater, but also to the Harlem Opera House and other leading African American businesses. In addition to being a cultural center, Harlem has been a critical setting for politics and progress in racial equality. The neighborhood was embroiled in several historic riots over social injustice and was the location of the first branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which opened in 1910. *New York* magazine created a collection entitled "[Harlem: A History In Pictures](http://www.nymag.com/metrotv/02/blackhistory_photos/)" that allows viewers to see the role and evolution of Harlem in United States history.⁸ For more of the history of Harlem, check out the [National Jazz Museum in Harlem](http://www.jazzmuseuminharlem.org/)⁹ and [Welcome To Harlem](http://www.welcometoharlem.com/page/harlem_history/).¹⁰

BEFORE READING

Pre-reading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What clues do the author and illustrator give to help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?

⁴ <http://harlem.org/>

⁵ ArtKane.com

⁶ <http://www.pbs.org/jazz/>

⁷ <http://www.jazzinamerica.org/>

⁸ http://nymag.com/metrotv/02/blackhistory_photos/

⁹ <http://jazzmuseuminharlem.org/>

¹⁰ www.welcometoharlem.com/page/harlem_history/

2. What do you know about stories that are historical fiction? What are the typical features of historical fiction? What are some things that will not happen in historical fiction? Why do authors write historical fiction? How do you think their reasons differ from authors who write nonfiction?
3. What is jazz? What do you know about jazz? Where was jazz born? How is it different from other kinds of music? What features and instruments does jazz music have? Who are some famous jazz musicians? What mood(s) does jazz music evoke? What types of music today did jazz influence or inspire?
4. What is a community? What are the features of a community? What kinds of events can bring a community together? Why are communities important? What kind of communities are you a part of?
5. What do you know about New York City (in the 1950s)? What do you know about the neighborhood of Harlem? Which groups of people resided in Harlem in the 1950s? Why might it have been a cultural center for African American artists, musicians, and writers?
6. Why do you think I chose this book for us to read today?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title means. Then ask them what they think this book will most likely be about and who the book might be about. What places might be talked about in the text? What do you think might happen? What information do you think you might learn? What makes you think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, dedications, illustrations, and Author's Note with photograph.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out what brings the community in the story together and what the title, *Sweet Music in Harlem*, refers to. Encourage students to consider why the author, Debbie A. Taylor, would want to share this story with children.

VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

CONTENT SPECIFIC

trumpet player	beret	clarinet	jammed	cut loose
beat	headliner	handkerchief	Harlem	club
velvet	jazzy	bass player	brownstone	jazzman
(piano) keys	blowing a note	vibraphone player	packing them in	
twinkle in his eyes	plucked his instrument		wails on his instrument	

ACADEMIC

photographer	snappy	admiring	glistened	secondhand	jutting
scolded	fidgety	blurted out	buzzing	muttered	barber
jam-packed	muttered	strolled	exclaimed	plucked	folks
wedged	appreciate	(camera) lens	scrambled	adjusted	nestled
cradling	tightly	neatly	beamed		

AFTER READING**Discussion Questions**

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 3)

1. What reason does Uncle Click give for needing his black beret?
2. What does C. J. aspire to be when he grows up?
3. What causes Uncle Click to be so forgetful?
4. What evidence in the book demonstrates Uncle Click's forgetfulness?
5. As C. J. runs around town hunting for his uncle's hat, he encounters all kinds of neighbors and friends. How do the neighbors feel about Uncle Click? Give specific examples that show how they feel.
6. How does C. J. feel after spending the whole afternoon looking for the hat, but turning up empty-handed? How does Uncle Click react?
7. The narrator is the character who tells a story. Who do you think is the narrator of *Sweet Music in Harlem*?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 2 and 3, Craft & Structure, Strands 6)

1. What character traits will C. J. need to become a successful musician like Uncle Click?
2. Uncle Click says, "Those were the days. Back then I played the meanest trumpet in Harlem. Now all I do is lose things." What do you think the word *meanest* means in this sentence?
3. How does the author, Debbie A. Taylor, demonstrate the closeness of the community? How does she describe the friendships in the neighborhood? What words would you use to describe the mood of the neighborhood?
4. Compare all the places C. J. visits on his hunt for Uncle Click's hat. What characteristics do all these neighborhood spots have in common?
5. How does the author demonstrate that everyone in the neighborhood is looking out for one another?
6. At one point in the story it says, "As C. J. hurried away, he could hear the people in the barbershop buzzing about the photographer." What does the word *buzzing* mean in this sentence? What does the author want readers to compare the community to when she uses the word *buzzing*? What does this show about the community?
7. What words, phrases, and character reactions demonstrate the feelings of the community about the upcoming photo shoot?

8. What words or phrases does the author use to show C. J.'s urgency?
9. What is everyone's reaction to the news of a magazine photographer coming to take a picture of Uncle Click?
10. Why does everyone want to be in the photo shoot if the photographer is coming to see Uncle Click? Why does the photographer allow everyone into the photograph?
11. Why does Mr. Garlic think C. J. "won't have any trouble packing them in at the Apollo in a few years?" What makes Mr. Garlic think C. J. will be a great musician someday?
12. Why does a new clarinet make the perfect birthday gift for C. J.?
13. What characteristics describe Uncle Click and C. J.'s relationship? How is Uncle Click C. J.'s "most admiring audience in all of Harlem?"
14. Why does Uncle Click give C. J. his black beret?
15. What is the main lesson or message you get from the story? What do you think the author wants readers to learn from C. J. and Uncle Click's experiences?
16. How does the art capture the mood of the story? What about the style of the illustrations suggests music? What about the illustrations demonstrates the closeness of the community?
17. What about the illustrations shows C. J.'s energy and urgency?
18. What is the power of music in this community? How does music bring people of all ages together?
19. While on the hunt for Uncle Click's hat, C. J. unintentionally brings the whole neighborhood together. What do you think the author wants readers to understand about the impact of children on the world around them?
20. What is the purpose of the Author's Note at the end of the story? Why is it important that the author included more background information about the photograph and how she was inspired to write the story?
21. How does this book demonstrate the text structure of problem/solution?

Literature Circles

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3 & Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

If you use literature circles during reading time, students might find the following suggestions helpful in focusing on the different roles of the group members.

- The **Questioner** might use questions similar to the ones in the Discussion Question section of this guide.
- The **Passage Locator** might look for lines or sentences in the story that express C. J.'s urgency and excitement.
- The **Illustrator** might create a poster for C. J. showing him after he becomes a professional musician.
- The **Connector** might find the book *Rent Party Jazz* and use that story and *Sweet Music in Harlem* to make connections about how jazz brings communities together.
- The **Summarizer** might provide a brief summary of the group's reading and discussion points for each meeting
- The **Investigator** might look for information about Harlem's golden age of jazz.

*There are many resource books available with more information about organizing and implementing literature circles. Three such books you may wish to refer to are: GETTING STARTED WITH LITERATURE CIRCLES by Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 1999), LITERATURE CIRCLES: VOICE AND CHOICE IN BOOK CLUBS AND READING GROUPS by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse, 2002), and LITERATURE CIRCLES RESOURCE GUIDE by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 2000).

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)
(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–6, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work, if they wish to.

1. In this Harlem neighborhood, jazz has the powerful effect of bringing the community together. Ask students to think about the communities of which they are a part, such as their school, neighborhood, religious, sports, music, and/or language. What special characteristics does each community have? What common traits, interests, or experiences bring the people of the community together? Can people belong to more than one community? Why do you think people seek out or create communities?
2. Uncle Click is quite forgetful in *Sweet Music in Harlem*. When has there been a time in your life that you were so focused on something that you were forgetful? What caused you to feel so distracted? How did people help you? How did you solve the problem of your forgetfulness? What advice would you give to someone to help them tackle their forgetfulness?
3. Imagine you are the magazine photographer in the story who came to capture a snapshot of Uncle Click and instead captures a picture of almost an entire neighborhood. Write a letter to your editor (boss) who sent you on this task about what happened and why you decided to get the bigger picture. How would you persuade your editor that your photo of the larger group should be published in the magazine *Highnote*.
4. C. J. aspires to be a famous jazz musician like Uncle Click. What does C. J. need to do to achieve this goal? What advice do you have for C. J.? When has there been a time when you dreamed of achieving a goal? How did you achieve it or how are you working toward it now? What challenges might you face when the goal is a long way off?
5. C. J. looks after Uncle Click a lot in the story. When has there been a time when you looked after or helped an adult? Why did that person need your help? What were you able to do for the adult?
6. Have students write a book recommendation for *Sweet Music in Harlem* explaining why they would or would not recommend this book to other students.

ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English language learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on

each page, first orally, then in writing.

- Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about what they admire about a character or central figure in the story.
 5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7, "Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise. They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking.")

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas.

Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2 and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

1. Have students research the history of jazz. Where was jazz "born?" What instruments are used to play jazz music? How has jazz changed over time? What role does the blues play in jazz history? Who was Louis Armstrong, and what impact did he have on jazz and American music? Who was Duke Ellington, and what impact did he have on jazz and American music? What is *improvisation* and how is it important to jazz? For a timeline of developments in jazz, students can explore [Jazz In America](#).¹¹
2. Have students investigate the role of women in jazz. What parts of jazz have women typically participated in? Who are some famous women jazz players and singers? How were women jazz musicians treated in the jazz community and broader music community? What challenges did women singers and players face? How did jazz open opportunities for women? Helpful information can be found on Women In Jazz and *Jazz Profiles* from NPR Women In Jazz, [part 1](#)¹² and [part 2](#).¹³
3. Encourage students to research Harlem and New York City in the 1950s. Which groups of people lived in Harlem in the 1950s? Which groups reside in Harlem today? Why was Harlem such a central spot for jazz? Why has Harlem been a critical setting for African American culture? What major current events were happening in New York City and the United States at the time Art Kane took his famous photograph of jazz musicians?

Music

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

¹¹ <http://www.jazzinamerica.org/>

¹² http://www.npr.org/programs/jazzprofiles/archive/women_1.html

¹³ http://www.npr.org/programs/jazzprofiles/archive/women_2.html

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2 and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

1. Have students investigate a famous jazz artist. When did this person play? What instrument did he or she play? How did he or she change jazz music? What challenges did the person face? How did jazz help the jazz musician? What music did he or she create and perform? With whom did the musician collaborate?
2. Ask students to listen to a jazz recording. Students can then research who created the piece, where it was performed, who performed it, and the central idea or message of the piece. Students can look for music reviews to learn about audience reception. Was the piece popular when it was first performed? Why or why not? Do you think audiences today would still enjoy it or find it meaningful? Why or why not? For students to explore different jazz songs, listen to free jazz audio snippets across the history of jazz at [Jazz In America](#).¹⁴
3. Invite your school, local community college, or nearest university's music department to bring jazz instruments to your classroom. Ask the musicians play each instrument, and allow students to touch each instrument, if permitted. What instruments are popular in jazz? How do the different instruments affect the mood of a jazz song?
4. Help students understand jazz instruments and the sounds they produce, song structure, lyric writing, musical styles, and ear training. PBS created [Chuck Vanderchuck's "Something Something" Explosion](#) to expose children to music and music composition.¹⁵ You will find videos, audio clips, and lessons to teach jazz musical concepts and performance skills.
5. In November 2011, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) officially designated April 30 as International Jazz Day "to highlight jazz and its diplomatic role of uniting people in all corners of the globe." For educational resources and events for Jazz Day, check out [JazzDay.com!](#)¹⁶

Writing

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

1. Author Debbie A. Taylor took an historic photograph and created a fictionalized story about the people in it. Have students choose another historic photograph and create a story behind it. As students write, they should consider what brought all the figures in the image together and give a backstory to one or two of the figures. To continue in the jazz sphere, students may wish to choose images from [JazzinAmerica.org](#), which displays many jazz performances and practice sessions.
2. *Sweet Music in Harlem* is a great book for the study of verbs and word choice. *Buzzed*, *muttered*, *rushed*, and *zipped* are just a few of the strong action verbs used. The author rarely uses the same verb twice to describe a character talking or moving. Invite students to make a list of all the synonyms for *said* and *moved* used in the story. Encourage students to discuss why the author chose to use words such as *moaned* instead of *said* and *raced* instead of *walked*. How does word choice make the story more interesting and exciting? How do the words used help set the mood of the story? Have students use their list in their next writing assignment. Reflect on how strong and varied vocal and action verbs improve writing and visualization.
3. Uncle Click gives C. J. a new clarinet and his black beret for his birthday. Based on what you learned about each character's personality and interests, what gift(s) might

¹⁴ <http://www.jazzinamerica.org/JazzResources/Audio>

¹⁵ <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/chuck-vanderchucks-something-something-explosion/>

¹⁶ <http://jazzday.com/>

C. J. give Uncle Click for his birthday? Write a letter to C. J. with your recommendation and provide evidence from the book to persuade C. J. that your choice would make the perfect gift for Uncle Click.

4. Have students read [Rent Party Jazz](#), another book about the power of jazz and community.¹⁷ As students reflect on each story, ask them to compare how jazz brings communities together in both Harlem and New Orleans. What is the central idea in each book? What do the authors, William Miller and Debbie A. Taylor, tell readers about the impact children can have on the world around them? What does each story demonstrate about the value of community?

Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2 and 3 and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strand 7)

1. Encourage students to interview a parent, grandparent, guardian, or adult mentor about their experiences with jazz. What does she or he know about jazz? What jazz music or jazz artists were popular when the adult was growing up? What memories does the person have about jazz in popular culture? What jazz song(s) would she or he recommend?
2. Encourage students to interview a parent, grandparent, or guardian. Students might ask questions such as the following: When have you had a time where you made a difference in or impacted the world around you? What changed because of your actions? How did people, a system, or a community change because of something you did or said? What challenges did you face? Do you think anyone can make a difference? Why or why not? Does age matter, or can even children make a difference in the world around them?
3. The Academy Award-nominated documentary *A Great Day In Harlem* is available on YouTube in seven parts. Encourage students to watch the first part of the film with their families. Then have students write about the reflections of the musicians about the day the photograph was taken. What was Harlem like in 1958? How did Art Kane get all these musicians to come together? Why is this a special photograph? What features made Harlem the perfect place to be for a jazz musician?
4. Have students interview a parent, grandparent, or guardian about what he or she does or carries for good luck. C. J. keeps a penny in his shoe. What are other symbols of good luck? Do you believe in good luck and tokens of good luck? When do you try to bring good luck to yourself or other family members (at a sports game, contest, wedding, and so on)?
5. Ask students with their families to find a photograph from a newspaper, magazine, or photo album and write a fictionalized account of how the photograph came to be. What brought the people in the image together? What were they doing before the picture was taken?
6. Invite students to interview a parent, grandparent, or guardian to think about music at home. What makes music important to you and your family? What instruments, if any, are played in your home? What instruments do you play or would you like to play? What kind of music does your family like to listen to?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debbie A. Taylor made her picture book debut with *Sweet Music in Harlem*, a story inspired by the famous photograph of jazz musicians *Harlem 1958*, by Art Kane. Taylor

¹⁷ http://www.leeandlow.com/books/98/pb/rent_party_jazz

holds degrees from Case Western Reserve University and Ohio Dominican College, and earned her master's degree in creative writing at Cleveland State University. She works at the University of Michigan and has had several stories published in children's literary magazines, including *Spider*, *Cricket*, and *New Moon*. Taylor came up with the idea for this story after seeing her husband's T-shirt that featured an image of Art Kane's photograph. Taylor and her family live in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Visit her website at www.sweetmusicinharlem.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Frank Morrison's artwork has appeared in *Essence* magazine and the National Black Fine Art Show. As a teenager, he experimented with graffiti before developing his unique fine art style. Morrison's works focus on themes of music, family, and spirituality, and are included in the private collections of Bill Cosby and Maya Angelou, among others. He has illustrated numerous award-winning books, including three titles published by Lee & Low Books. He is the recipient of a Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent in Illustration. Morrison lives with his family in Georgia. This was his first picture book. You can find him online at <http://www.morrisongraphics.com/>.

Awards and honors *Sweet Music in Harlem* has received include:

- Youth List, Collaborative Summer Library Program
- Original Art Show, Society of Illustrators
- Book of the Week, Cooperative Children's Book Center
- Children's Book Award Notable, International Reading Association
- Best Children's Books of the Year, Outstanding Merit, Bank Street College of Education

Book Information

\$17.95, HARDCOVER

ISBN 978-1-58430-165-3

\$8.95, PAPERBACK

978-1-62014-080-2

32 pages, 8 3/8 x 10 1/2

*Reading Level: Grade 3

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades 1–4

Guided Reading Level: O

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 4.6/.5

Lexile™ Level: AD800

Themes: Friendship, Historical Interest, Music (Jazz), Neighbors, New York City, Community, African American Interest

RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about *Sweet Music in Harlem* at: <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2458>

Also illustrated by Frank Morrison

George Crum And The Saratoga Chip

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/52/hc/george_crum_and_the_saratoga_chip

BookTalk with Debbie A. Taylor on *Sweet Music In Harlem*:

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/taylor.mhtml>

Order Information

On the Web:

<http://www.leeandlow.com> (general order information)

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2458> (secure online ordering)

By Phone:

212-779-4400 ext. 25

212-683-1894 fax

By Mail:

Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10016

Copyright © The Active Learner
Lee & Low Books, all rights reserved.
For questions, comments and/or more information,
please contact us at general@leeandlow.com