

# Study Guide for *Hear in Alabama*

**Level:** Grades 6-12

**Purpose:** This guide may facilitate review, group discussions, and written reflections after students have listened to some or all of the [Hear in Alabama](#) podcast.

## Episodes 1 & 2: The Great Crossroads Project

The mission of the Crossroads group is to “explore African-diasporic songs and poetry” from “Alabama’s Black Belt region and Minas Gerais, Brazil.” The term “**African diaspora**” refers to groups of people from Africa who were dispersed throughout the world, either forcibly through slavery or in other ways. These people brought with them meaningful cultural traditions, including music.

**Vernacular music** is learned in communities and passed down by ear from generation to generation, without necessarily being written down. **Vissungos**, **spirituals**, and other southern songs all originated in Africa, and they have similar features, including **call-and-response** structure.

You will hear more about Alabama’s Black Belt in Episode 4.

### Terms

African diaspora

lining out

*vissungos*

Black Spirituals

vernacular music

call and response

## Questions

1. Why did many Southern plantation owners go to Brazil after the U.S. Civil War? (trailer)
2. How does Lloyd Bricken compare prison conditions in the Deep South to the conditions of slavery? (episode 1)
3. What is “lining out”? (episodes 1 & 3)
4. What are *vissungos*? What did Lloyd Bricken and Luciano Mendes de Jesus discover about *vissungos* and southern songs? (episode 1)
5. According to Salloma Jovino Sallomão, how did enslaved African people endure the cruelties of slavery in both Brazil and the American South? (trailer, episode 2)
6. What does call-and-response mean?
7. How does Lloyd Bricken interpret the song “Give Me the Gourd” as a metaphor?
8. What is your favorite song in these two episodes? What is your least favorite? Why?

## Episode 3: Provewell Baptist Church

### Terms

Lining out

“Old Dr. Watts” hymns

“Throwing out” a hymn

Motherboard

### Questions

1. What kind of work does Mrs. Frances Ford do in Perry County, Alabama? What about Dr. Pilar Murphy?
2. When Mrs. Ford was a little girl, she went to school at Provewell School. Describe the school. What was it like for her to go to school there?
3. Where did Dr. Murphy grow up? What was it like for her singing in youth choir at church?
4. According to Mrs. Ford, what does it mean when people hum during a hymn or prayer?
5. Have you heard church music like this before? Where and when?
6. How is this music different from other religious music you might have heard? How is it similar?

## Episode 4: Perry County Band Partnership

### Questions

1. In 2017, how did the poverty rate in Perry County, Alabama compare to that in the rest of the country?
2. After hearing about Francis Marion School and Robert C. Hatch School in Perry County, describe what you think it would be like to go to school there.
3. How is Francis Marion School different now than when Dr. Cathy Trimble grew up?
4. According to Dr. Trimble, why do people leave Perry County?
5. How did Mr. Tony DeVaughn get started playing in band when he was growing up? What about Mr. Issac Lanier?
6. How was marching band culture different for Mr. Lanier when he moved south, compared to what he had experienced in New York?
7. How do Mr. DeVaughn and Mr. Lanier model healthy competition for their students?
8. What life lessons might you learn if you were in Mr. Lanier's band program?
9. How is this music different from other band music you might have heard or played? How is it similar?