

Elvis Presley Enterprises

“Tracing Where the Roots of Rock Began to Roll”

Mississippi to Memphis

An Economic and Marketing Analysis

Created by

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Abstract

Overview

An analysis of the life of Elvis Presley and Elvis Presley Enterprises as it exists today reveals an economic and marketing success story like none other. Because many students struggle with grasping basic economic and marketing concepts, a glimpse into the world of Elvis Presley offers students an opportunity to learn a real life story like none other. From his impoverished upbringing in the hills of Mississippi to being posthumously named Entertainer of the Century, an economic study of the life of Elvis Presley unveils an array of economic terms, processes and thought provoking discussions. Students engaged in this analysis will be exposed to very specific economic terms which will allow an opportunity for the instructor to teach skills that will be utilized in a very in-depth final project. Students will analyze the historical significance of the Great Depression in the United States; and how this affected not only the Presley family but families across the country. Terms and case studies identified during this study include but are not limited to: Unemployment rates (comparison from the Great Depression to present time), Cost analysis of basic necessities during the Great Depression, the effect of a natural disaster (Tupelo tornado, 1936), job markets, government housing (what it is and why the Presley family resorted to it), blues music and how it relates to economic struggles, gross pay/net pay (early paychecks of Elvis Presley), musical styles in the early 1950s, role of an agent/manager, selling an image, supply and demand (the management style of Colonel Tom Parker as he kept Elvis from the public to increase demand by the fans), contracts, business math concepts (figuring percentages as Col. Parker earned 50% of everything Elvis made), tax laws, last will and testament, copyright and copyright laws (Elvis Presley Enterprises) and the economic impact of the Elvis Presley Birthplace in Tupelo, MS and Graceland in Memphis, TN. Student outcome shows a gain of economic knowledge while learning to appreciate the significance that Elvis Presley had not only on music but pop culture in general. This unit has achieved effective quantitative results as proven by their pre-test which consists of questions related to Elvis Presley and economic trivia. Very successful qualitative results are evident as students complete a final project in which they develop an economic and marketing plan for Elvis Presley Enterprises. In addition, an in-depth study of Elvis and Elvis Presley Enterprises offers the opportunity for a wonderful field trip to the birthplace and to Graceland where students see firsthand the economic impact that Elvis has today, 37 years after his passing.

Chronology and Instructional Process

The following is a chronological listing of ideologies taught during the study of Elvis Presley Enterprises.

Introduction - Students are introduced to Elvis and Elvis Presley Enterprises through video and audio analysis of the top ten hits of 1954. Students are asked to identify the beat, mood, clothing style and overall impression of each song played from the 1954 top ten hit list. Students then are told to listen to and watch a video of Elvis singing "That's Alright Mama" which was recorded on July 5, 1954. The same questions are asked of the students including how the beat sounds, what the mood is like, what the clothing style of Elvis Presley is like and what their overall impression is of the song.

Online Elvis Trivia Opportunities - The official website of Graceland, elvis.com, offers many educational resources for educators including an online Elvis trivia game. Students are able to answer some very basic introductory questions relating to the life of Elvis Presley. This online trivia game is full of many pictures and music to interest students as they begin the lesson. Further online opportunities will be offered to students as the lesson progresses. This online Elvis trivia game may be played along with a written pre-test for students.

Reading /Listening Time - The instructor will then read the book entitled "Shake Rag" written by Amy Littlesugar and illustrated by Floyd Cooper. This children's book serves as an excellent way to educate students on the early life of Elvis Presley including the economic impoverishment that the Presley family endured from 1935 until Elvis's rise to fame in 1954. "Shake Rag" explains not only how Elvis was affected economically but socially as his peers ridiculed him on many levels.

A Study of Colonel Tom Parker - Students are asked to put themselves in the shoes of Colonel Tom Parker as they analyze what Colonel Parker witnessed the first time he saw Elvis perform. Students are encouraged to notice the way Elvis dressed, his movements, his musical style, his charisma, and the audience reaction. Students learn the background of Colonel Parker and what his offer was to Elvis and his family.

Contracts - The first lesson in defining a contract is learned as students look at how Elvis was "bought" from Sun Recording Studios for \$35,000. An analysis of this sale between RCA and Sun indicates how badly RCA wanted Elvis and the plans they had for him. Students will also identify Elvis's new contract in terms of what RCA expected from him. In addition, students will project how much \$35,000 would be worth in today's market value.

Colonel Parker's Management Style - A wonderful lesson on supply and demand can be taught using an entertainer and their fan base. Students will observe how Colonel Parker's style helped Elvis's rise to fame skyrocket. As Colonel Parker booked Elvis in smaller than needed arenas, lines would begin to form outside. Because seating was limited, fans then demanded Elvis more.....hence, limited supply yields a higher demand and a higher price. Students will be able to identify many occasions when the Colonel used this concept including when Elvis was drafted into the Army.

Eras of Elvis - As supplemental instruction and to gain interest of the students, various songs and videos are observed in order to showcase the many styles and talents of Elvis Presley. Students are encouraged to choose their favorite era of music that Elvis was involved in. A look at the 1950s Elvis portrays a very happy time in the United States as music was very lighthearted and reflected a post WWII atmosphere. The birth of Rock and Roll during the 1950s changed pop culture as we know it today. A study of his 1960s music reflects a changing time with songs such as In the Ghetto that have perfect lyrics that portray economic struggles of many people. The 1970s releases tend to somewhat reflect personal family struggles that Elvis experienced himself.....teaching a very valuable lesson that no matter how much money you have or how successful you have become, happiness is not always ensured.

The Death of Elvis Presley / The Creation of Elvis Presley Enterprises - By the time this portion of the chapter is covered students are totally enthralled with the life and legacy of Mississippi's hometown boy. Video footage of Elvis's funeral procession allows students to see the impact of his death on the residents of Memphis and fans worldwide. An investigation of this event allows students to see that the death of Elvis is compared to the deaths of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Students then learn that upon the death of Elvis Presley the establishment of Elvis Presley Enterprises was quickly created. A study of Elvis Presley Enterprises allows the teaching of many legal terms including contracts, trademarks, royalty checks, last will and testament, various forms of taxes, definition of an estate, beneficiary including the age required to become a beneficiary and estate planning. Students will learn the many ways that Elvis Presley Enterprises functions today to protect the name, Elvis Presley, the silhouette, any photographs, signature, TCB, Graceland, Thank You, thankyouverymuch as well as other Elvis related insignias. Elvis Presley is simply the most protected image in the entertainment industry. The EPE and Graceland staff is

available for private consultation to any educator and/or class that would like more information about how to educate younger generations on the life of Elvis Presley.

Field Trip to Graceland – The culmination of the chapter on Elvis and Elvis Presley Enterprises is a one day field trip to Graceland in Memphis, TN. Student group ticket prices are very affordable for the platinum ticket which includes a tour of the mansion, hall of gold and museum, racquet ball court where all of Elvis’s platinum albums from international sales are housed, numerous exhibits, the automobile museum, the Lisa Marie jet and smaller jet as well as the Sirius XM 19 radio headquarters which plays Elvis music and Elvis related interviews 24 hours a day. Students enjoy the tour which lasts until around lunch and then they are free to browse the many gift shops in Graceland Plaza the remainder of the afternoon. While touring Graceland, many concepts learned are reinforced as students witness how many employees are staffed in the mansion, museums and gift shops. Elvis Presley Enterprises is a well- oiled machine, effectively integrating many economic and marketing principles.

Lesson Plan #1 Synopsis

Lesson plan #1 will introduce students to the entertainer, Elvis Presley, and the beginning of his career as the King of Rock and Roll. This lesson will also include the economic background that Elvis Presley came from which started in the hills of North Mississippi. This lesson is written for students that are juniors and seniors in high school; however, it may be adapted for various age levels. Several economic national benchmarks will be reinforced as students make associations between Elvis’s life and current and past economic references. The time required to cover the introductory lesson is approximately two days. The use of supplemental video and audio clips may lengthen the lessons as deemed necessary by the instructor. Materials encouraged are mobile or mounted projectors, laptop computers / television, DVDs, CD players, notebooks, writing utensils and handouts (pre-test).

National Benchmarks Reinforced

The following national economic benchmarks can be covered during the first few days of instruction on Elvis and Elvis Presley Enterprises:

Grade 12 "Earning Income"

#1 People choose jobs or careers for which they are qualified based on the income they expect to earn and the benefits, such as health insurance coverage or a retirement plan, that they expect to receive.

#2 People choose jobs or careers for which they are qualified based on non-income factors, such as job satisfaction, independence, risk, family or location.

#3 People vary in their willingness to obtain more education or training because these decisions involve incurring immediate costs to obtain possible future benefits. Discounting the future benefits of education and training may lead some people to pass up potentially high rates of return that more education and training may offer.

#6 Changes in economic conditions or the labor market can cause changes in a worker's income or may cause unemployment.

#7 Taxes are paid to federal, state and local governments to fund government goods and services and transfer payments from government to individuals. The major types of taxes are income taxes, payroll (Social Security) taxes, property taxes and sales taxes.

#8 People's sources of income, amount of income, as well as the amount and type of spending affect the types and amounts of taxes paid.

12th Grade Income Related Choices

Students may answer these questions for themselves as they answer how Elvis probably would have answered these questions as a senior in Humes High School in Memphis:

- Should you get a summer job? Should you work during the school year?
- What type of postsecondary education do you want? What will be the expected costs and benefits of that education?

- How many hours a week do you want to work? How important is leisure time to you?
- What types of fringe benefits are important to you? How valuable are these benefits?
- What kinds of education or training will best help you advance in a job or a career in which you are interested?

Lesson Plan Day #1 and Day #2

Lesson Description: The lesson for day one and two of the chapter will introduce the students to basic definitions and concepts related to economics and marketing. Objectives covered then lead students to identify many events that happened prior to Elvis hitting the music scene as well as events post July 5, 1954.

Objectives

- *Students are given a pre-test on economics / marketing as well as a pre-test about Elvis.
- *Students will identify and define marketing.
- *Students will list various tangible and intangible items that can be sold.
- *Students will define economics and observe how music many times reflects current economic statuses.
- *Students will observe the top ten hits that were played on mainstream radio in 1954.
- *Students will identify the sound / atmosphere of the top ten songs of 1954.
- *Students will identify various other factors relating to the top ten songs such as the mood of the songs, the artists' hairstyles and clothing.
- *Students will observe the first recording that Elvis cut at Sun Studios in Memphis, TN.
- *Students will observe photographs of Sun Studio in Memphis and discuss the economic affects gained by the vast amount of tourism to the studio.
- *Students will learn the significance of the Chisca Hotel associated with Elvis in Memphis and how it is being refurbished to gain more tourism.
- *Students will identify the sound / atmosphere of "That's Alright Mama" as well as what they notice about Elvis's style.
- *Students will define target market and demographics.
- *Students will identify the racial divide that bled over into music during the early 1950s.
- *Students will identify aspects of the blues and why the lyrics often times related to hard times.
- *Students will define agent.

*Students will put themselves in the shoes of Colonel Parker and identify aspects of Elvis that the Colonel was drawn to.

Class Procedures

Students will be given a pre-test on economics and marketing to gauge their incoming knowledge of the topics. Students will also be given a pre-test on Elvis trivia to see how much they already know about the entertainer.

Students will follow along with the instructor as a power point is utilized. Students are encouraged to take notes during the discussion.

Required Materials

*Microsoft Power Point

*Student Notes / Writing Utensils

*CD Player

*Visual Images from Internet

*Welcome packets from Tupelo Visitors and Convention Bureau (optional)

Integration of National Benchmark Objectives on Earning Income

The following national benchmarks will be integrated as Day 1 and Day 2 are covered. The first two days of instruction informs students of Elvis's background including economic struggles, social battles and his way of life after he moved from Tupelo to Memphis. These benchmarks offer many opportunities for open discussion about issues that not only existed when Elvis was a child but issues that exist today. Students are intrigued as they learn how Elvis overcame these struggles to become the most recognized and admired entertainer of the century.

#1 People choose jobs or careers for which they are qualified based on the income they expect to earn and the benefits, such as health insurance coverage or a retirement plan, that they expect to receive.

Discussion: The instructor will introduce the students to the Presley family who lived in East Tupelo during the early 1930s. Students will learn characteristics of most families that lived during this era. Vernon Presley will be analyzed including his struggle to find and keep a job. Questions probed during this discussion may include:

**What were Vernon Presleys qualifications as an employee?*

**What were Vernon's options for a job considering that he had no formal education?*

**What benefits would there have been for the work that Vernon performed?*

**What was Vernon Presley's average pay in 1936 - 1948 in Tupelo, MS?*

**Why was Vernon Presley sent to Parchman Prison when Elvis was two years old?*

**What economic struggles did the Presley family endure during Vernon's imprisonment?*

**What choices did Elvis's mother have to make as a result of these hard times?*

**What do you think Vernon wanted for his family? What were his concerns? Would the Presleys have had health insurance?*

#2 People choose jobs or careers for which they are qualified based on non-income factors, such as job satisfaction, independence, risk, family or location.

Students will probe the following questions as they continue to look at Vernon and Gladys Presley:

**What do you believe was the mood around the Presley household during the mid-1930s?*

**Do you believe Vernon Presley had much job satisfaction when he did find work?*

**What was the risk for the Presley family to remain in Tupelo? Was there a risk to move to Memphis?*

#3 People vary in their willingness to obtain more education or training because these decisions involve incurring immediate costs to obtain possible future benefits.

Discounting the future benefits of education and training may lead some people to pass up potentially high rates of return that more education and training may offer.

Students will identify the answers to many questions that the Presley family most likely discussed especially when Elvis came of age and was about to graduate high school.

**Students will observe where the Presleys lived once they moved to Memphis. (Lauderdale Courts / Low income government housing) Students will define what government housing is and who qualifies.*

**Students will identify the struggles Elvis would have had if he had chosen to attend college.*

**Students will weigh the advantages and disadvantages of Elvis going to work for Crown Electric in Memphis. Students will be able to investigate how much Elvis was paid from Crown Electric by internet research.*

**How much would Elvis have paid for college if he had chosen to attend?*

**Students may compare the cost of college in the early 1950s vs. now.*

**If Elvis had chosen to stay with Crown Electric instead pursuing a career in entertainment, what would be the difference in his lifetime earnings? (Fabulous activity)*

#7 Taxes are paid to federal, state and local governments to fund government goods and services and transfer payments from government to individuals. The major types of taxes are income taxes, payroll (Social Security) taxes, property taxes and sales taxes.

The next two objectives are covered more in the latter part of the chapter as an analysis of Elvis's estate is discussed. Students will be able to identify various types of taxes including inheritance taxes, probate taxes and other legal fees associated with settling an estate.

**Students will identify how old Elvis desired Lisa Marie to be before she could take over the estate.*

**Students will identify the position that Pricilla took as Lisa Marie's mother at the time of his death (because of divorce)*

**Students will identify how Elvis Presley Enterprises was formed and why.*

#8 People's sources of income, amount of income, as well as the amount and type of spending affect the types and amounts of taxes paid.

**Students will identify approximately how much Elvis made during his lifetime and even after his death.*

**Students will figure percentages to arrive at approximate amounts Elvis would have paid in taxes.*

**Students will identify how much Graceland affects the local Memphis economy on a yearly basis and especially during Elvis Weeks during January and August.*

Optional Activities for Students (Extension Activities)

The following activities may be incorporated depending on time allotments:

**Students may divide up into groups and dress up as the various eras of Elvis's life including the Great Depression, the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Each group will be responsible for explaining their dress as well as the economic state of each era. Students may utilize power point presentations, posters, music, video, etc. This can serve as a major test grade or extra credit.*

Guest Speakers (optional)

The following guest speakers are wonderful resources for this project / unit. The people that knew Elvis the best are very generous and are willing to usually travel to classrooms (pending distance) or perform telephone interviews. The following people are wonderful resources:

* Guy Harris, childhood friend of Elvis in Tupelo.

*George Klein, national DJ and friend of Elvis from Humes High School in Memphis. George was Elvis's first friend in Memphis and went to work for him soon after he released That's Alright Mama. He worked for Elvis until Elvis's death and remains active in the Elvis world.

*Marian Cocke, Elvis's personal nurse

*Jerry Schilling, close friend.

*Barbara Hearn, girlfriend of Elvis.

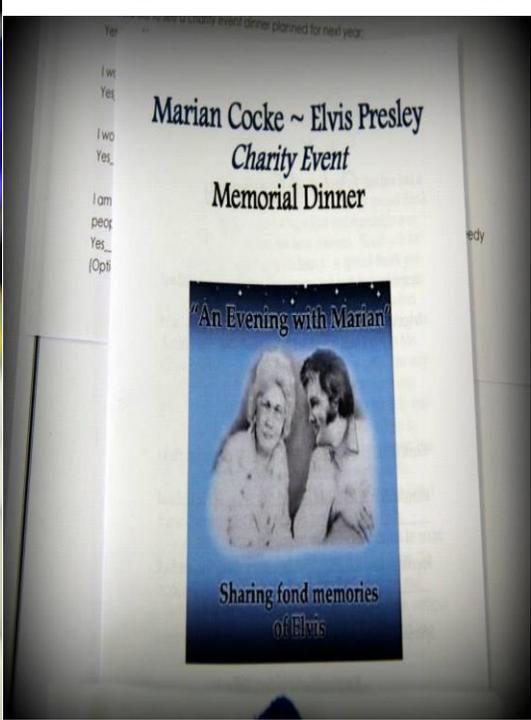
*June Juanico, girlfriend of Elvis and Biloxi, MS native.

*Cynthia Pepper, co-star of Elvis.

Philanthropy in Elvis's Name

One of the many wonderful lessons from a study of the life of Elvis Presley is learning about Elvis the man. Underneath the persona of Elvis the entertainer was a person that was so giving that he gave away much of his fortune. Behind the shine of the diamonds and rhinestones was a man that was very concerned with his fellow man. If he knew of a need he usually fulfilled that need without anyone ever knowing about it. About three years ago I was privileged to start a fan club known as the Moody Blues Elvis Presley Fan Club of Itawamba County.

Because all of the Presley family roots lie in Itawamba County, I was very eager for our county to be recognized among fans worldwide. I am very proud to say that we are officially endorsed by Graceland and Elvis Presley Enterprises and remain a very active club. The Moody Blues has two main goals. First we are dedicated to promoting Itawamba County as the birthplace of Vernon Presley, Elvis's father as well as the birthplace of Minnie Mae Hood Presley, Elvis's grandmother. Both of Elvis's great grandparents are buried in Itawamba County. Our second goal is to help as many needy people as possible in our community. I have been blessed to meet and get to know many people that worked with Elvis and had a huge part in his life. One of those people is Marian Cocke, Elvis's private nurse who pretty much lived at Graceland. Ms. Marian has raised over \$700,000 in twenty three years with the Elvis Presley Memorial Dinner hosted at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis. This year the Moody Blues was very honored to host a dinner at IAHS in Fulton featuring Ms. Marian as our special guest. 100% of the proceeds made from this dinner helped establish the Moody Blues Charitable Foundation for our most needy students. We were pleased to present our principal with a check for over \$9,000 on May 15, 2015. This money will be used for educational purposes to assist our most needy students with scholarship money and registration fees associated with academic competitions. If a student needs new eyeglasses, clothing, shoes or even blankets for warmth, the Moody Blues Charitable Foundation is there to help. We know that this is what Elvis would want. This past year my students were actively involved in the planning and implementation of the entire event. Students learned many lessons including appropriate dining etiquette plus much more.





Evaluation

Student outcomes for this chapter can be measured using various data obtained from pre-tests, post-tests as well as written projects at the end of the chapter. Information obtained from student pre-tests during most school years showed that less than 50% of students were familiar with basic economic and marketing principles. When the same students were given post-tests and projects the average increase was 39% bringing student scores to an average of approximately 89%. Many student outcomes are also measured on a qualitative level as student interest and excitement increases. In the beginning many students believe that they chapter will be boring but after exposure to video, audio and actually visiting Graceland their interest level soars.

Many applications of learning have been utilized as this chapter has been taught over the years. Student performance assessments include written tests, oral tests, and written projects focusing on the Elvis Presley Birthplace as well as Graceland in Memphis, TN.

Public speaking has also been measured using a rubric for grading purposes.

Economic / Marketing Pre-Test Questions:

1. Describe what you believe the study of economics is:
2. What do you think of when you hear the word, "economics"?
3. How do you believe the economy will affect you?
4. Describe what you believe demographics is:
5. What do you believe a target market is?
6. What is marketing?
7. What all can be marketed?
8. Explain the basic concept of supply and demand:
9. Explain how pricing affects supply and demand:
10. How do you believe the economy and marketing affects the entertainment industry:

Elvis Trivia Pre-Test

1. Where was Elvis born?
2. Did Elvis have any brothers and sisters?
3. Why did Elvis's mother want Elvis to have a guitar?
4. How old was Elvis when he moved to Memphis?
5. Where did Elvis live when he moved to Memphis?
6. Where did Elvis work before he recorded his first record?
7. What was Elvis's first recording at Sun Studio?
8. What was Elvis's first record that was released at Sun Studio?
9. Why did Elvis buy Graceland?
10. What was Elvis's wife's name?
11. What was Elvis's daughter's name?
12. What year did Elvis die?

The pre-tests can be made longer and more in-depth if necessary.

Elvis Presley Enterprises Project (Final Test Grade)

*As a final project for the unit, students may become a team responsible for setting up a tent / booth during Elvis Week in Memphis. Students are responsible for naming their team (something Elvis related) and deciding the location of their booth, what they will sell and offer as entertainment during each day of the week, devising prices, times and what charity the money will be donated to. This project must be typed with a cover sheet and contain very detailed information about each event. Students must develop a security plan for the week as well as identifying vendors for all items sold. Students are required to design a t-shirt that will be sold for their team during Elvis Week. Students must adhere to all copyright rules set forth by Elvis Presley Enterprises.

Students are graded according to the following rubric:

1. ___ Folder
2. ___ Cover Sheet (team name, team members and dates)
3. ___ Location of event described effectively (paragraph)
4. ___ Setup (what is physically required for setup on the premises)
5. ___ Vendors (name specific vendors for food and supplies)
6. ___ Advertising proposal (name what forms of advertising will be used and how)

7. ____ Security (describe security measures taken during the week)
8. ____ Creativity
9. ____ Neatness
10. ____ August 9 - 17 filled with fun activities (each day and event must be described)

Student teams will be rated on a scale from 1-10 with 10 being the highest score per line.

Bibliography

Elvis, Inc., Sean O'Neal, Prima Publishing, 1996

elvis.com (official website of Graceland and Elvis Presley Enterprises)

youtube.com

elvispresleybirthplace.com

The Roots of Elvis Presley, Julian C. Riley, Phantom Printworks, LLC, 2010

Marian J. Cocke, Personal Interview, 2013

Supplemental Materials

[elvis presley enterprises](#) Power Point Presentation

Ctrl + Click to follow link



The Moody Blues presented all children at the Tupelo Children's Mansion with teddy bears adorned with blue bows. Elvis was a supporter of the Tupelo Children's Mansion and it is our wish to carry on his tradition.

Thank you, thankyouverymuch.

Elvis, Elvis Presley, any image / silhouette of Elvis Presley, TCB, Graceland and thankyou, thankyouverymuch are registered trademarks of Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. 2014.

[..\Videos\FALL LEADERSHIP ELVIS VIDEO.wmv](#)

I created this video for DECA's 2013 Fall Leadership Conference held in Tupelo. It was a huge success!

[..\Downloads\Elvis Lisa Marie Presley My little Girl.wmv](#)

[..\Downloads\Hit Parade USA 1954 Top 10 DanntaS.wmv](#)

(used in the lesson introduction)

[..\Downloads\Elvis Polk Salad Annie.wmv](#)

(Lyrics of Polk Salad Annie can be analyzed to show how people survive with limited means)

[..\Downloads\Elvis and Gladys Presley.wmv](#)

(This video tribute shows the close relationship Elvis had with his mother and the sadness that permeated the Presleys even after Elvis became famous. A wonderful discussion can be led by the instructor as to why Gladys seemed so sad)

The students are literally drawn into this video.

[..\Downloads\The Elvis Letter Help me Lord.wmv](#)

Towards the end of Elvis's life he scribbled words on a piece of paper one night late in his hotel room. He crumpled it up and threw it away. Some of the guys in the group found it later and kept it. After his death it ended up in an auction. Wayne Newton was a very close friend of Elvis so he purchased the note. Later, Wayne Newton put Elvis's own words to music and released it. "The Letter" is the only song that Elvis ever wrote and he did not intend it for a song. The lyric of this song let us know how sad Elvis was towards the end of his life. This proves that all the money and fame in the world do not buy happiness. I play this for my students and they understand the seriousness of what was happening in Elvis's life. They are very respectful of the song.

To MCEE...

Thank you for the opportunity to gather all of my resources together into one document. Although I have taught this chapter for many years I have never done this. It is a great honor to be able to share this with other educators in the hope that it will further educate younger generations about the life and legacy of Elvois Presley. Thank you.