

## Writing Bigger's Blues—Character Analysis

### What is Call and Response?

The first line is repeated as the “call” for help and the final line is the “response” or the answer to the problem/situation at hand. Additionally, the call and response has a distinctive rhythm and rhyming pattern. The consistent rhyming pattern is an end rhyme (*aaa-bbb-ccc*) where the last word of each line of each stanza rhymes. Loose rhyming and different rhythms provide individuality and creativity within the *Call and Response*.

“Got My Mojo Working” by Muddy Waters, “Preachin’ Blues” by Robert Johnson, and “Texas Flood” as performed by Stevie Ray Vaughan all provide excellent examples of *Call and Response*.

Example from “Texas Flood”:

*Well I'm leaving you baby and I'm going back home to stay.  
Yeah I'm leaving you baby and I'm going back home to stay.  
Well back home there are no floods or tornadoes baby and the sun shines every day.*

### What can we write about?

Suggestions—homework blues, test day blues, essay writing blues, lunchroom blues, alarm clock blues. The following student example was written by a freshman in high school. Lauren proves here that she not only understands the form of the Blues but also demonstrates a creative way of dealing with her biggest problem.

#### “Honors English Blues” by Lauren

*Honors English is my worry, writing essays is my fear  
Honors English is my worry baby, writing essays is my fear  
I'm so stressed—I have no time, can I get myself outta here?*

*I'm going to rewrite my paper, it wasn't good enough  
I'm going to rewrite my paper baby, it sure wasn't good enough  
Jane Schaffer is an evil lady, Lord, this is tough!*

*This is why I sing the blues, the low-down Honors English blues  
Yes this is why I'm singin' the blues, the Honors English blues  
Too much homework, no more time, we're all singin the blues!*

### How Blue Can Bigger Get?

Bigger Thomas has dug himself quite a hole at this point in *Native Son* and one wonders if he could ever get out. By writing Bigger's Blues, you have the opportunity help him deal with his hopeless situation. Be sure to include relevant facts from the novel to accurately characterize Bigger's problems. Consider the following questions to help get

started: What are Bigger's biggest problems? How did he get in this situation? What hope does Bigger hold onto? Why?