



ENGAGE NOW!

A SONG ANALYSIS PROJECT

by Rebecca Britten (April 2015)

For a lesson in American Literature on the Great Depression, I gave students lyrics from songs of the time-period and had them analyze the lyrics and determine the values of American Society at the time. As a class, we discussed how written text—in the form of poetry, songs, novels, plays, etc.—represent the values of a society. The students really connected with the idea that the art produced by a society provides a lens with which to view the goals and ideals of that society, so as a culminating activity, they had to choose current song lyrics and analyze how these lyrics represent the values of our culture.

Standards addressed:

ELACC11-12RL1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

ELACC11-12RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

ELACC11-12W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Song Analysis Project

Step 1: Choose a quality/value/idea that you feel BEST represents our society now. You will write this idea as a statement on your annotated song list.

Step 2: Choose songs to illustrate your quality

Choose 5-7 songs to illustrate the idea that you have identified. You will need to know the song title, the artist/s, and the lyrics which caused you to make the connection between this value / quality/ idea and the song(s).

Step 3: Design a CD cover

Design a CD cover for your anthology of songs. If you don't want to make the cover the exact size of a CD, enlarge it to scale, but make sure the final product is not bigger than something which will fit on an 8.5 x 11" sheet of paper. Your cover should be in ink or color. This will be graded on neatness, creativity, originality and **connection to thematic idea**.

Step 4: Write an Essay

Write a short essay (one page in MLA format double-spaced) which explains the quality/idea /value that you think BEST represents our society now. The essay also must explain how your CD cover art illustrates this theme. Make sure to have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.

Step 5: Provide a List of Songs and Artists

Following the essay, provide an annotated list of the songs and artists. Your annotation should include a short paragraph explaining why the song fits the idea you have chosen and a few lines of the song's lyrics, which illustrate the connection between the song and the theme. Your paragraph should be a two-chunk paragraph—with the concrete details in the form of direct lines/phrases from the song being discussed.