



VH1

25 Greatest Protest Songs
VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson for Social Studies & Humanities

Lesson 1 - Give Peace a Chance

Objectives

The *25 Greatest Protest Songs* video is both informative and enjoyable for students to watch. Few things excite students more than music and music videos in the classroom. Each song is, in a short small way, a reflection of a much deeper issue that it represents. These lessons are presented as a way to go “in depth” with three of the issues represented by many of the 25 songs. As such, they also represent a template for taking a deeper look at any of these 25 songs (or any other protest song of the teachers choosing). The major goals of all three lessons are threefold:

- **First**, an appreciation of the use of music to bring a concept (peace, civil rights, freedom) to the forefront of public debate by an individual artist or group. Music is often seen as a simple medium of expression, but in reality it is perhaps it’s primal nature, or our own, which allows a tune, or a musically expressed idea, to resonate with the public. Each person or group brings a certain set of circumstances to their music.
- **Second**, it is hoped that each lesson will bring historical reality of a particular time period to the songs. Many students are too young to remember the events of these lessons, so historical research is necessary to fully understand the words and the particular impact of the songs. These lessons are not meant to be the total coverage of an historical period, merely an introduction (or supplemental lesson) of the pertinent historical issues to help students better understand the music and it’s roots.
- **Third**, music is not only a tune, but is words. Word choice, phraseology, syntax and all the things that are studied when analyzing the written word will also be approached.

Objectives

National Standards:

Standard 2D - The student understands contemporary American culture. Therefore, the student is able to

- Grade 9-12 Analyze how social change has affected artistic expression and popular culture. [Analyze cause-and-effect relationships]
- Grade 7-12 Explain the influence of media on contemporary American culture. [Explain historical continuity and change]

Materials

- VHS VCR Player
- Television
- Audio playback equipment
- VH1's *25 Greatest Protest Songs*
- Web-based lesson materials
- Pencils/pens and paper (students)
- Internet Access (library or home) - If Internet access is not available, teachers can print out the lyrics to songs and the historical information. Students could then have access to the information needed.

Prior Knowledge:

- Students do not need any prior knowledge for these lessons

Procedures

Day 1 - Students watch the video *25 Greatest Protest Songs* (approximately 45 minutes) As they watch the video students will make note of the songs and lyrics or themes that appear. Teachers could print out the list from the web site above to make it easier for students to tabulate the main “protest ideas” of the 25 songs. This Excel spreadsheet [<http://www.phs.princeton.k12.oh.us/vh1/music25list.xls>] is also provided as a preliminary guide for teachers which students may be given.

Day 2 - On this day students will need access to an internet lab (unless materials are printed out on each topic before hand). Students should use the links below to begin research on their topic. Student could be assigned groups by artists, or by topics. The links are meant as a starting point and could be added to by the students. Give students a day to review the websites and to research on their own. Students should bring their notes back to class. In this lesson, the songs related to the war protests surrounding the Vietnam war are the issue. Students should use a search engine to find additional information in these areas. Start with the song itself (good introductory information and the lyrics of many songs can be found at this site www.songfacts.com) Then, search for biographical information on the artists. VH1 has biographical information on most performers at this site: www.vh1.com/artists/. Finally, the issue of the Vietnam war itself. The chart below gives examples for the Anti-War/Vietnam songs and artists from the list of 25 Protest Songs. It also has several links for preliminary/review information on the Vietnam war.

Selected Starting Points on the Internet		
1. The Song	2. The Performers	3. The Issues
Give Peace a Chance http://www.songfacts.com/detail.lasso?id=1111	BasicLennon Bio http://www.hotshotdigital.com/WellAlwaysRemember.2/JohnLennonBio.html	Basic 1969 Facts http://www.multied.com/dates/1969.html
Lyrics to Peace http://www.bagism.com/lyrics/lennon-collection-lyrics.html#GivePeaceAChance	VH1 Lennon Bio http://www.vh1.com/artists/az/lennon_john/bio.jhtml	The Beatles 1969 http://www.multied.com/dates/1969.html
Fortunate Son http://www.songfacts.com/detail.lasso?id=1916	Creedence Clearwater Revival Bio http://www.vh1.com/artists/az/creedence_clearwater_revival/artist.jhtml	Vietnam Basics http://ohoh.essortment.com/vietnamwarprot_rlc.htm
Born in the U.S.A. http://www.songfacts.com/detail.lasso?id=1014	Bruce Springsteen http://www.vh1.com/artists/az/gaye_marvin/artist.jhtml	Vietnam Protests http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/vietnam/protests.html
Ohio http://www.songfacts.com/detail.lasso?id=1124	Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young http://www.vh1.com/artists/az/csny/artist.jhtml	The Event - Ohio http://www.may4.org/may4.htm
Analyze Lyrics-Ohio http://www.thrasherswheat.org/fot/ohio.htm		NewsArticle-Ohio http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/%7Eh316/protest/pdf/pro10.pdf
What's Going On http://www.songfacts.com/detail.lasso?id=1547	Marvin Gaye http://www.vh1.com/artists/az/gaye_marvin/artist.jhtml	

Day 3 - Have students, in their groups, prepare a list of questions and responses for each topic. Suggested questions to start with (which may or may not be shared with students before they begin) are listed here. Students should develop and answer their own questions in preparation of reporting back to the class on their findings.

Topic 1 - The Songs and their lyrics

1. Select 5 key terms in the song lyrics and define them . Relate your definition to the time period and the topic of protest.
2. Select any of the people/events listed in your lyrics and identify them by relating them to the protest movement.
3. Are the lyrics always about a single issue or can they cover multiple issues? (e.g. civil rights, pure anti-war topics). What additional issues are mentioned?

Topic 2 - The Artists

1. Select 5 key or significant events in the artist's life or background that would lead you to suspect he/they will eventually become a "protest" artist.
2. How is the song Ohio, which relates to such a specific event, different from the other songs?
3. Specifically from the video, what do the artists say that would give you an indication as to their personal motivations for the song?

Topic 3 - The Issue

1. People often believe the song "Give Peace a Chance" is referring to more than the Vietnam conflict. Do you agree? What evidence do you have that it did? What evidence do you have that it was a greater "peace" that Lennon was referring to?
2. How is the anti-war movement during the Vietnam war related to the draft? What was the draft and how did it work?
3. The decade of the 1960's was a tumultuous time in American History. How did the assassination of key figures (John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr.) add to that social unrest? What other factors of life in the 1960's were significant?
4. In the song Ohio, the events of Kent State are central. What are the basic facts of that day? How did later explanations seem to change what historians think happened?

Day 4 - Check student work. Students should, individually or in their small groups, present to the class what information they have found. Leave time for questions by other students. After hearing all presentations, students should for homework find someone who was at least 15 years old in 1969. They do not need the name of the person, only the age. They should prepare to interview this person. Suggested (but not mandatory) questions for the interview might include:

1. Question 1 - What events of the 1960's do you remember?
2. Question 2- What was your opinion of John Lennon? Positive/Negative
3. Question 3- What was your opinion of the Vietnam war? Positive/Negative
4. Question 4- In your opinion, What is the role of music in an anti-war movement? How important is it?

Day 5 - Have students bring their interviews back to class for discussion. Divide the results into specific age groups (those that interviewed teenagers through people who were in their 20's in 1969). Then make a second group of people who were 30 or older in 1969. Analyze the results to determine if there is a significant difference in their responses. Discuss the results.

Extensions

1. Students may also expand their knowledge of protest music with the other lessons attached to this documentary.
2. Students can also expand their research of protest music with additional websites below:

Supplemental Resources:

Websites related to Protest Music	
http://www.lacarte.org/songs/anti-war/	Links to Legal Downloads and Lyrics
http://www.peace-not-war.org/jukebox/index.html	Peace Jukebox - War Music
Lesson on AntiWar Music http://www.vh1.com/partners/vh1_music_studio/supplies/specials/soundtrack_war-lesson2.html	Historical Comparisons of Anti-War Music lesson



This lesson plan was created by Tim Dugan, Cable in the Classroom National Teacher Advisor, Princeton High School, Cincinnati, OH