



VH1

Lesson for Humanities (Social Science
and English)

Soundtrack to War
VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lesson 2 - Historical Comparison of Anti-War
Music

Note to Teachers: The programs viewed in conjunction with these lesson plans may include references, consistent with the events portrayed, to violent acts, and topics of a war-like or political nature. Because this may be considered inappropriate for classroom use in some communities, you are encouraged to review the programs before presenting them to your students, and if necessary, choose those sections that enhance your lesson and are acceptable for use in your classroom.

Important Note: Due to the nature of this program and the topics discussed through the lessons, teachers should use careful judgment when deciding whether to present this material to students younger than high school age.

Overview/Goals

The *Soundtrack to War* video illustrates a moment in time that can be compared with other moments when this nation has been at war. Musical lyrics are actually historical documents put to song. A key skill of historians is the ability to compare and contrast events from different time periods. As students watch the video, after a study of previous wars in America, it should become evident that the anti-war movement of the Vietnam era is essentially not presented at the same level in the music of this video, as compared with the Vietnam era. Students will attempt to find the historical reasons for this. This lesson is suitable for an American History, International Relations or Current Events course. It could also be used in a World History course.

Objectives

- **Students will understand/be able to relate:**
 - connect to people (soldiers) through their music choices
 - that music serves as a major conduit for the transport of knowledge, (information and material goods between East and West and results in global exchange of scientific and cultural traditions)
 - illuminate the historical contributions that music makes socially and culturally to
 - explore musical influences within a broader global context
 - migration of ideas among communities
 - How in this world of increasing awareness and interdependence, music can act as a magnet to draw people together (as in the different groups of soldiers identifying with certain types of music).
 - as we interact with unfamiliar musical traditions we encounter voices that are not exclusive to one community. We discover trans-national voices that belong to one world.

National Standards for History

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

- Grade 9-12 Analyze how social change and renewed ethnic diversity 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 *Soundtrack to War*
- 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 timeline information. Students could then have access to the information needed.

Prior Knowledge:

- Students are familiar with the basic facts of the current war in Iraq and the war in Vietnam.
- Students can identify the various types of music in the program



Procedures

Day 1 – students watch the video *Soundtracks to War* (approximately 45 minutes) As they watch the video students will make note of the songs and lyrics or themes that appear.

Day 2 – Students need to have some familiarity with Vietnam War era music and the protest movement. Begin with reading the short essay available here: http://ohoh.essortment.com/vietnamwarprot_rlcz.htm After reading this short essay students should listen to a selection of songs from this era. Teachers can select music from this site: <http://www.jwsrockgarden.com/jw02vvaw.htm> The lyrics are also available at that site. Students should select three songs as a comparison set. For homework, have students prepare a timeline of significant historical events (minimum 10) for events leading up to and including the Vietnam war (1956 - 1972) and the Iraq War (1984 - 2004). Information for Vietnam timeline is available here: <http://www.landscaper.net/timelin.htm#time%20line> Information for Iraq timeline is available here: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/page/0,12438,793802,00.html>

Day 3 – Discuss the timelines by having students compare what events they chose. Students can continue to research anti-war songs from the Iraq war available at the links below. Students should find three songs representative of the anti-war music of the Iraq war.

| Websites To Guide Student Research | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 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 |
| http://www.vh1.com/music/songlists/antiwar/ | VH1 site of anti-war music |

Day 4 – Students should begin by reading the short essay comparing the anti-war music from both wars available here: <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml%3Fi=20041025&s=wiener> After reading this essay, teachers should initiate a discussion based on these questions:

1. Question 1 - As of October, 2004, fewer than 1500 combat deaths have been reported in the Iraq conflict. There were many weeks of the Vietnam conflict where more than 500 combat deaths occurred. How relevant is the number of combat deaths to the strength of the anti-war movement?
2. Question 2 - Compare the lyrics of the songs you have chosen from each conflict. How are they similar? How are they different? What is the central theme of each anti-war movement? Do you think any of the soldiers appear to be “anti-war”? What music would/could indicate this?
3. Question 3 - What differences does Mr. Wiener point out in the two movements? What similarities?
4. Question 4 - Historical evidence seems to indicate that in both cases (Vietnam - the Gulf of Tonkin incident, Iraq - the issue of Weapons of mass destruction) there was a possibility of government deception at the onset of the war. What effect does the perceived role of the government have on the anti-war movement?
5. Question 5 - How might the anti-war movement change in the coming years if the United States continues a protracted stay in Iraq? Does the Vietnam era anti-war movement give us any clues?

6. Question 6 - What 3 key events can you find in your timelines that set the stage for American public opinion about the war in Vietnam versus the war in Iraq? Explain your answer.
7. Question 7 - What examples from the video Soundtracks to War give you an indication of what the soldiers actually think of what they are doing?

Extensions

1. Students may also expand their knowledge with the other lessons attached to this documentary
2. An additional day might be spent by extending the timeline exercise. Students could find the dates for their selected songs and put them on the same timeline. Students would then look for developing ideas. Do the song themes change over time?
3. Students can read a description of the Vietnamese “Bob Dylan” available here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/1260527.stm>
4. There are considerable resources available to compare the current war with other wars (American Civil War, World War I and World War II).

Supplemental Resources:

- Ultimate Historical Guide to the War in Iraq (background information): <http://www.academicinfo.net/iraqwar.html>
- Online guide to the Vietnam war (background information): http://www.refstar.com/vietnam/online_study.html
- Study guide to the Vietnam war (non-online materials): <http://www.refstar.com/vietnam/>



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