

Title: *Mind, Body, and Soul: A Literary and Historical Investigation into the Meaning of Music*

Subject Areas: American Literature & Composition, United States History

Grade Level: 10th Grade

Duration: Approximately 6 Weeks

Driving Question: *How does music affect us, and how does it reflect societies and cultures?*

Project Summary: Students presented a written and oral argument for the right to investigate a song of historical significance in American history. They wrote three comprehensive essays that address the historical significance, literary devices, and the mood & tone of their song. Students created an original album cover that best conveys the meaning of the song. The project culminated with the students creating informative music videos and an oral PowerPoint presentation of how their chosen song reflected and affected American society at the time it was written.

Major Student Products:

Individual – Written and Oral Project Proposal, Three Informational Essays, Album Cover, Music Video, Oral Presentation

How the Project Was Conceived and Planned: The seed of this project came from our students' collective love of music. Nearly all of our students carry and listen to their iPods throughout the school day, and many of them have cited how vital it is to their daily lives. It was important for us to capitalize on this interest to introduce our academic content. We ultimately wanted to use our students' engagement in music as a platform to have students write, create, inquire, critique, present, and reflect about their learning.

Entry Activity: We began this project by asking our students to take out their iPods and scroll through their library to find the one song that has the most emotional impact to them and listen to it. As the students were listening to the song, they thoroughly and specifically wrote about why the song had such meaning to them. Many then volunteered to share their song and meaning to the rest of the class. After a brief PowerPoint presentation on album covers and their visual meanings, students listened to their meaningful song again, and used colored pencils to sketch out an original album cover that best exemplifies and captures the meaning of the song as it relates to them. After students sketched their album covers, they wrote an art critique on how the album cover visual relates to their meaning. Students were then shown multiple music videos that have emotional meaning and historical relevance (U2 – "Sunday, Bloody Sunday", Bob Marley – "Redemption Song", Scorpion – "Wind of Change"). Students studied the lyrics and a class discussion followed. The entry event culminated in students being given the task of choosing, and arguing for, one song of significance that would be the focus of their project.