

student activity 1

Name _____ Date _____

Analyzing Protest Song Lyrics: Part 1

Analyze the provided lyrics of the song “We Shall Overcome”.

We Shall Overcome

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand,
We'll walk hand in hand someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid today.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

The Lord will see us through, the Lord will see us through,
The Lord will see us through someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We are not alone, we are not alone
We are not alone today
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We are not alone today.

Black and white together, Black and white together,
Black and white together someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

The truth will make us free, the truth will make us free,
The truth will make us free someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

We shall all be free, we shall all be free,
We shall all be free someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome someday.

*“We Shall Overcome” [lyrics of a traditional song]. In Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, eds.
Let Nobody Turn Us Around: Voices of Resistance, Reform and Renewal (Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield, 1999).*

Analyzing Protest Song Lyrics: Part 2

Choose two other protest songs and analyze their lyrics in the same manner. You may use the following list to draw from or find your own! Check the appropriateness of the lyrics based on instructions from your teacher.

Strange Fruit – **Billie Holiday**

This Land is Your Land – **Woody Guthrie**

Black And Blue – **Louis Armstrong**

Masters of War – **Bob Dylan**

Born This Way – **Lady Gaga**

Respect – **Aretha Franklin**

Revolution – **The Beatles**

Fortunate Son – **Credence Clearwater Revival**

What's Going On – **Marvin Gaye**

Paper Planes – **M.I.A**

Zombie – **The Cranberries**

We're Not Gonna Take It – **Twisted Sister**

Sunday Bloody Sunday – **U2**

The Message – **Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five**

Taking My Baby Up Town – **Joan Armatrading**

Get Up, Stand Up – **The Wailers**

Give Peace A Chance – **The Plastic Ono Band**

War Pigs – **Black Sabbath**

Ohio – **Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young**

Machine Gun – **Jimi Hendrix**

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Analyzing Protest Song Lyrics: Part 3
Once you analyze the three songs, answer the following questions.

| Song Name | What is the overall message of this song? | What words or phrases are especially meaningful or impactful? | What social movement/issue is being addressed? Is this meaningful for today? |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| We Shall Overcome | | | |
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