

# Song Lyric Analysis Essay Assignment Rubric

<p><b><u>Paragraph 1: Introduction to the Musical Genre</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>50 Points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Provides a thorough analysis of the origin of the music genre and its intended purpose as a means of social criticism.</li> <li>*Provides a thorough analysis of how the music genre has evolved over time and makes a claim about its contemporary impact on current culture.</li> <li>*Provides a thorough analysis of the music genres effect on its intended target audience.</li> <li>*Incorporates a minimum of 3 pieces of direct evidence from research and properly sites evidence according to MLA Format</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Paragraph 2: Introduction to the Artists</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>50 Points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Provides relevant researched background information about formative experiences that influence the artist and his/her musical choices.</li> <li>*Provides relevant researched information about the artist's personal influence on the music genre itself and its target audience.</li> <li>*Makes an argumentative claim about the importance of the artist as a social activist</li> <li>*Incorporates a minimum of 3 pieces of direct evidence from research and properly sites evidence according to MLA Format</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Paragraph 3: SOAPSTONE Analysis</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>50 Points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Clearly identifies the both the literal and critical SUBJECT of the song lyrics to be analyzed.</li> <li>*Clearly identifies the OCCASION for why the song was written including both the author's event and the social circumstances in the culture from which the song emerged to establish its significant need</li> </ul>

	<p>*Clearly identifies the Direct Target Audience and the primary purpose (change) the author desires in that specific audience.</p> <p>*Clearly identifies Indirect Audience(s) and correlating sub-purposes for each of those identified audiences.</p> <p>*Clearly Identifies the Tone of the song, any relevant Tone shifts, with an explanation of how the tone is appropriate to the subject, audience, and purpose.</p> <p>*Incorporates a minimum of 3 pieces of direct evidence from research and/ the song lyrics itself to support all inferences, and properly sites evidence according to MLA Format</p>
<p><b>Paragraph 4: The Ethos of the Lyrics</b></p> <p><b>50 Points</b></p>	<p>*Begins with a clear central claim that identifies the Moral Argument being forwarded by the author.</p> <p>*Uses a minimum of 2-3 pieces of direct evidence from the lyric in support of the central claim, and properly sites evidence according to MLA Format</p> <p>*Clearly identifies the literary or rhetorical strategies used by the author in each piece of chosen evidence.</p> <p>*Elaborates on how the evidence achieves the identified ethos using the language of the identified strategies.</p> <p>*Concludes with an evaluation of the author's effectiveness in achieving he ethical argument with the target audience, and offers an evaluation of the relevance of he moral argument in the culture he song is intended to influence.</p>

**Paragraph 5: The Pathos of the Lyrics**

**50 Points**

\*Begins with a clear central claim that identifies the Emotional Argument being forwarded by the author. The specific key emotions the author intends to evoke are identified with an explanation of how they work to achieve he purpose.

\*Uses a minimum of 2-3 pieces of direct evidence from the lyric in support of the central claim, and properly sites evidence according to MLA Format

\*Clearly identifies the literary or rhetorical strategies used by the author in each piece of chosen evidence.

\*Elaborates on how the evidence achieves the identified emotional manipulation using the language of the identified strategies.

\*Concludes with an evaluation of the author's effectiveness in achieving the emotional argument with the target audience, and offers an evaluation of the relevance of the targeted emotions in achievement of the artists' purpose.

**Paragraph 6: The Logos of the Lyrics**

**50 Points**

\*Begins with a clear central claim that identifies the type of Logical Argument being forwarded by the author. (Cause and Effect, Argument by Analogy, Argument by Definition).

\*Uses a minimum of 2-3 pieces of direct evidence from the lyric in support of the central claim, and properly sites evidence according to MLA Format

\*Clearly identifies the literary or rhetorical strategies used by the author in each piece of chosen evidence.

\*Elaborates on how the evidence achieves the identified logical appeal using the language of the identified strategies.

	<p>*Concludes with an evaluation of the author's effectiveness in achieving the logical argument with the target audience, and offers an evaluation of the reason in achievement of the artists' purpose.</p>
<p><b>Paragraph 7: Conclusion</b></p> <p><b>50 Points</b></p>	<p>*Offer a final reflection on the relevance of the artist and your song of choice as a form of social activism and its value in the culture for which it is intended to influence.</p> <p>*Support your personal opinion with evidence from personal experiences, observations, or research.</p>
<p><b>MLA Formatting and Mechanical Correctness</b></p> <p><b>50 Points</b></p>	<p>*The entire paper uses proper MLA formatting including headers, line spacing, font type and size, and siting of sources.</p> <p>*The paper includes a MLA reference page accurately listing all sources cited.</p> <p>*The entirety of the essay is void of misspellings and incorporates proper English grammar and sentence structure, which clearly communicates the writer's thinking and mastery of communication through writing.</p>

Part 1: The Genre:

The role of music over the course of the history of the United States has always served a far deeper purpose than mere entertainment. While we all love to get our occasional jam on during the morning shower, traveling in our cars, or doing our freaky thing in the kitchen, it is important that we consider the greater purpose and history of the music we love. Iconic songs, such as *Yankee Doodle Dandy* during the American Revolutionary War, *Go Down Moses* during the history of American Slavery, Billie Holiday's *Strange Fruit* marking the lynching of African Americans post Civil War and segregation, Bob Dylan's *The Times They Are A Changing* protesting the Vietnam War of the 1960's, or *Bianca's Formation* protesting police brutality and Black Lives Matter in our current decade, all echo the trials and desires for social change marked by the eras in which they were produced (Henwood 3).

However, the impact of music as a form of protest aimed at evoking political and cultural change found its height and power in the mainstream during the counter-culture movement of the 1960's. As the youth of this country began to protest against the war in Vietnam, the draft, civil rights, women's rights, and gay and lesbian rights, the musical artists of that period gave voice to these social movements and propelled them forward through the median of popular radio. Protestors and their agendas found inspiration in the likes of Bob Dylan, Sam Cooke, Joni Mitchell, Creedence Clearwater Revival, and Country Joe McDonnell just to name a few. "This

music was thus a response to the dominant concerns of the day and also a reaction that would shape the way people thought and responded to their society” (Smith 2). The music of the 1960’s set the standard for the potential and power of music to bring awareness and sound the alarm to serious cultural issues of the time. The lyrics were deeply thoughtful, and the rhythms could either inspire riots or call for unity.

Today, these socially essential artist and their creations are still relevant. We still hear them at current protests around the country confronting many of the same civil and women rights issues of the past. We still hear them on the radio and in our parent’s vinyl collections. We still hear them mixed into the lyrics and influence of the contemporary artists of today... and, we still desperately need such a voice as America continue to fight against contemporary social injustice. “Perhaps the high-water mark of this protest genre came on August 18, 1969, when guitarist Jimi Hendrix stood on stage at Woodstock and played his version of “The Star-Spangled Banner. With this performance, Hendrix put an exclamation point on a decade of protest music aimed at America’s military adventures in general, and the Vietnam War in particular” (The Gilhder Lerhman Institute of American History 5). In the age of climate change and school shootings, in the decade of Black Lives Matter and immigration policies that strip infants from their parents, in a time where the haves get “havier” and the nots get “nottier”, perhaps we need the sound of the oppressed teeth on electric guitars more than ever.

Part 2: The Artist: