



25.

One time, after they finished a big test I gave them last period, my students started happily singing Lil Wayne's "La La La" on their way outside. "Come on, Ramsey, sing along, you know it."

And so I did. "Born in New Orleans, raised in New Orleans, I will forever remain faithful New Orleans . . ."

That I *wasn't* from New Orleans didn't much matter, so long as I was game to clap and dance and sing. It was a clear and sunny day, Lil Wayne was the greatest rapper alive, and school was out. It was time to have fun.

Engaging with the Text

1. How does David Ramsey **ORGANIZE** his text? Why do you think he chose to organize it in this way? What role do the **HEADINGS** throughout the essay play in the organization? What is the source of those headings?
2. Ramsey notes that New Orleans natives often say to newcomers, "this is New Orleans." What does that phrase mean? How is it used in the essay?
3. This essay both narrates a first year teaching and reviews Lil Wayne's music. What is the **PURPOSE** of the essay? What are we meant to take away from it? How are Ramsey's students and Lil Wayne's lyrics related?
4. Throughout his essay, Ramsey inserts **DIALOGUE**. How does the dialogue function in this essay? Whom does he quote, and how is their role central to the essay?
5. **For Writing.** Select a favorite artist, and think about how that artist's work relates. Write an essay **ANALYZING** or **REFLECTING** on his or her work. Include images of the work. If you write about a musician and are writing online, add audio.



ALISON BECHDEL

Fun Home

Alison Bechdel became a cartoonist and writer after growing up in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, where both her parents were high school English teachers; her father also ran a family-owned funeral home that his children called the "fun home." This selection is from *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006), a best-selling graphic memoir that was chosen by Time magazine as number-one of its "10 Best Books" of 2006. In it, Bechdel chronicles her childhood and her coming to recognize both her own homosexuality and her father's, which she learned of only after his death. Before publishing *Fun Home*, she had become known for her cartoon strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*, which followed the lives of a group of lesbian characters over twenty-five years; the strips were published in gay and lesbian newspapers and eventually on the web, as well as in twelve book-length collections. In 2012, Bechdel published another graphic memoir, *Are You My Mother?*, which focuses on her relationship with her mother. Bechdel's work has also appeared in *Ms.*, *Slate*, *the Village Voice*, *the Advocate*, *Out*, and many comic books and anthologies.

