Music and History

Students will cooperatively research music from the past 5 or 10 decades and compare and contrast the lyrics with historical events/culture of the decade, answering the question: How does/did history affect music and lyrics?

Grade Level: 8 - 10th
Subject: Social Studies
Length of Time: About 45 - 90 Minutes

Objectives & Outcomes

The students will be able to analyze music and lyrics from the past ten decades, compare/contrast it, and identify influences upon the music from the events of the decade.

Materials Needed

- Access to the Internet or other resources with music and song lyrics from past decades (To be accessible during the lesson.)

Prepare ahead of time: Sample lyrics for a song and a connection to the decade’s current events or culture.

Procedure

Opening to Lesson

- As students enter the classroom, have a song from the 60s or 70s playing for all students to hear.
- As the song plays distribute a copy of its lyrics.

Body of Lesson

Modeling

- Ask students: What events occurred during the (decade)? What was life like in the U.S.?
- Discuss the students’ responses and ask if the song lyrics reflect the era
- Ask students to review the lyrics: Choose specific lines that connect the line to an historical event or culture at the time.

Guided Practice

- Say to the class: Today, we will explore the music and lyrics from different decades and its connection to the events or cultural influences during those years
- Distribute the first set of lyrics to each student
- Ask them to underline lyrics which may be connected to the decade

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• Play the song for the students
• Ask students to identify events from the song’s decade
• Have students reflect on the song’s lyrics again and identify lyrics which may reflect
  the times
• Discuss their responses, opinions, etc.
• Repeat the above steps for several more decades.

**Independent Practice**

• Assign the students a song (not used during class) to research on their own, writing a
  report based on the lyrics and the connections to the song’s decade. Students will turn
  the report in for an assessment.

**Closing**

Have each student write a one or two sentence song lyric based on a current event today. Allow students to share the lyrics with the rest of the class.

**Assessment & Evaluation**

Teacher-created worksheet with multiple-choice questions listing song lyrics to the historical event(s) or other occurrences of the decade

**Modification & Differentiation**

Students do the research individually or in pairs or larger groups. Choose just one or two decades for all students to research and analyze. Use one song only, or one single song artist or group to analyze. Research the question: Can music influence the culture or does the culture influence the music, or both?

**Related Lesson Plans**

**Help a Cause**

Students will use recycled materials to create toys for a local shelter.

**President vs. President**

Each student will research a past deceased president, review their life, speeches, quotes, term in office, etc., and use it to run for President versus another past President.

**It's a Wonder - Filled World**

Students will learn about the list of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World compiled by the ancient Greeks.
Mini Debates

Each student will be assigned, or may choose, an historical figure to research, selecting a speech given by the figure, and then write a rebuttal challenging some of its content backed by facts.