

Vietnam War Protest Music

Listen to the songs as directed for each section and answer the corresponding questions. All songs and lyrics can be found online; many have music videos available on YouTube.

Music As A Tradition

Listen to *I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die Rag* by Country Joe and the Fish

1. What issues are being addressed? How does the song represent these issues?
2. What do you think was the purpose of this song?
3. Compare the lyrics of this song with the lyrics from George M. Cohan's "Over There" from World War I. How do the two songs illustrate the country's attitude towards war? Give examples from each song.

Music As A Statement

Select one Vietnam War era song from each of the lists below (pro-war and anti-war) and answer the following questions for each:

1. Song title and artist
2. How is the war presented in this song?
3. What issues, events, or conditions are presented?
4. What do you think was the purpose of this song?
5. What emotions or images does the song evoke?
6. Does it have any effect on you now or could you relate or appreciate the messages being sent?

Anti-War

- *Find the Cost of Freedom* by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
- *Alice's Restaurant Massacree* by Arlo Guthrie
- *For What It's Worth* by Buffalo Springfield
- *Fortunate Son* by Creedence Clearwater Revival
- *The Unknown Soldier* by The Doors
- *I Should Be Proud* by Martha and the Vandellas

- *War* by Edwin Starr

- *Revolution* by The Beatles

Pro-War

- *Ballad of the Green Berets* by SSgt. Barry Sadler
- *Okie From Muskogee* by Merle Haggard
- *The Fightin' Side of Me* by Merle Haggard
- *Hello Vietnam* by Johnnie Wright

Music As A Message

Listen to a current song with a political or social message and answer the following questions. A suggested list of songs is available below.

1. Song title and artist
2. What problem or issue is illustrated in the song you chose? Give examples from the lyrics to illustrate your point.
3. What elements of the song you chose are similar to the songs of the Vietnam era? How is it different?
4. Why do you think protest songs are not as prevalent today as they were in the 1960s and 1970s? Do you think they're relevant today?

- *Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue* by Toby Keith (*Explicit)
- *Dear Mr. President* by Pink
- *American Idiot* by Green Day (*Explicit)
- *A-Team* by Ed Sheeran
- *Shuttin' Detroit Down* by John Rich
- *Same Love* by Mackelmore and Ryan Lewis
- *Keep Ya Head Up* by 2Pac (*Explicit)
- *Where Is the Love* by Black Eyed Peas
- *Hold On* by Good Charlotte