



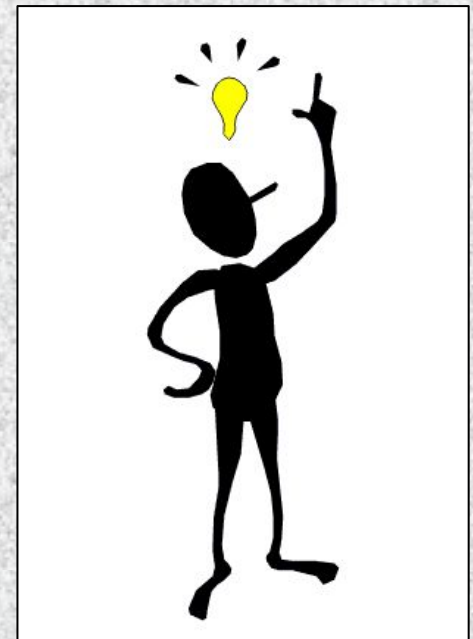
What is Popular Culture?

What do you do for fun?



Much of what you just listed IS Popular Culture!

- Popular culture is broadly defined as **whatever is widely popular with the masses** but that is not a complete definition.
- Pop culture encompasses a lot of things.
 - What you listen to or watch, what you read, what you wear, and how you speak are all examples of popular culture.



Celebrities: anyone who is watched, noticed, and known by a critical mass of strangers



Fads: A short-lived, intense & widely shared enthusiasm for something; a craze



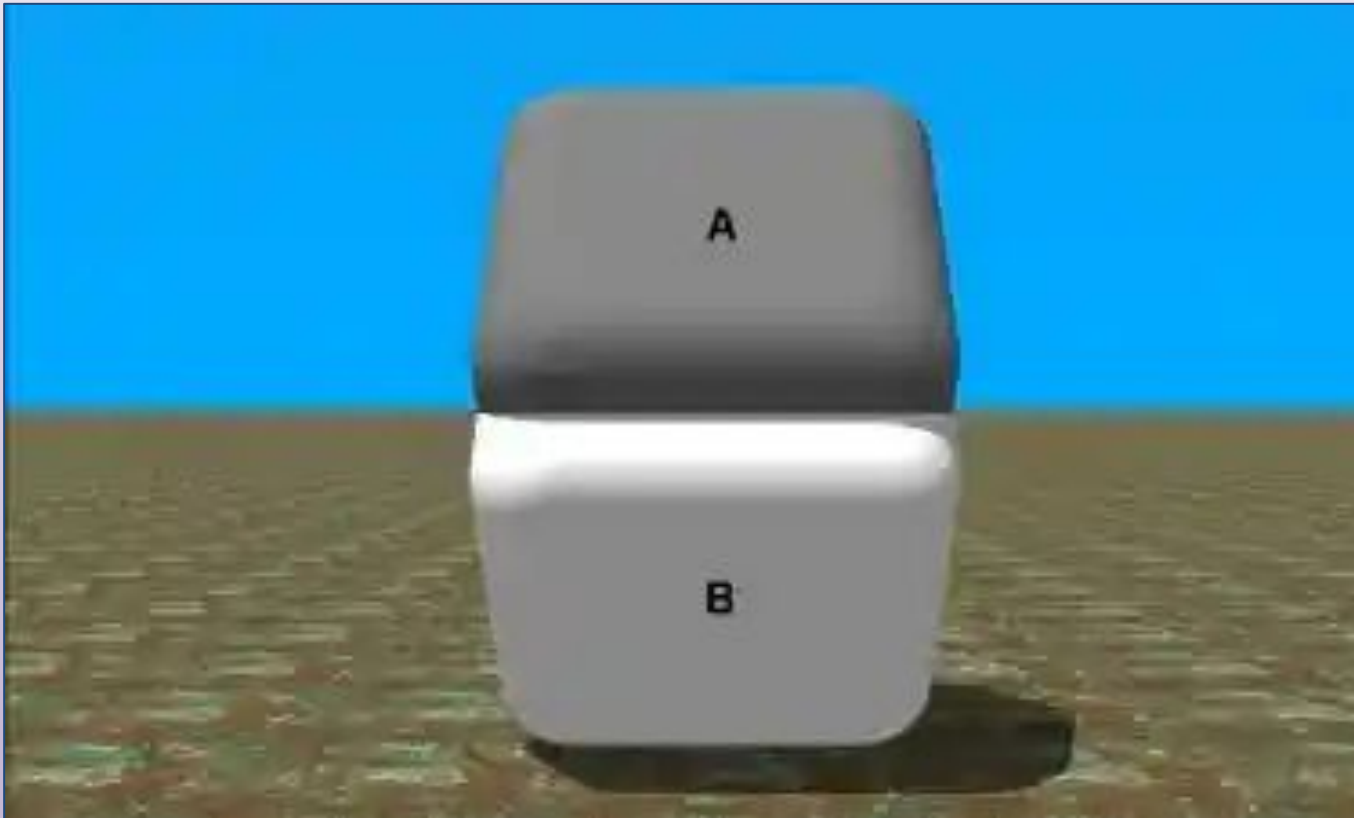
What do you see?

Is the dress blue/black or gold/white?

Is the shoe turquoise/grey or pink/white?

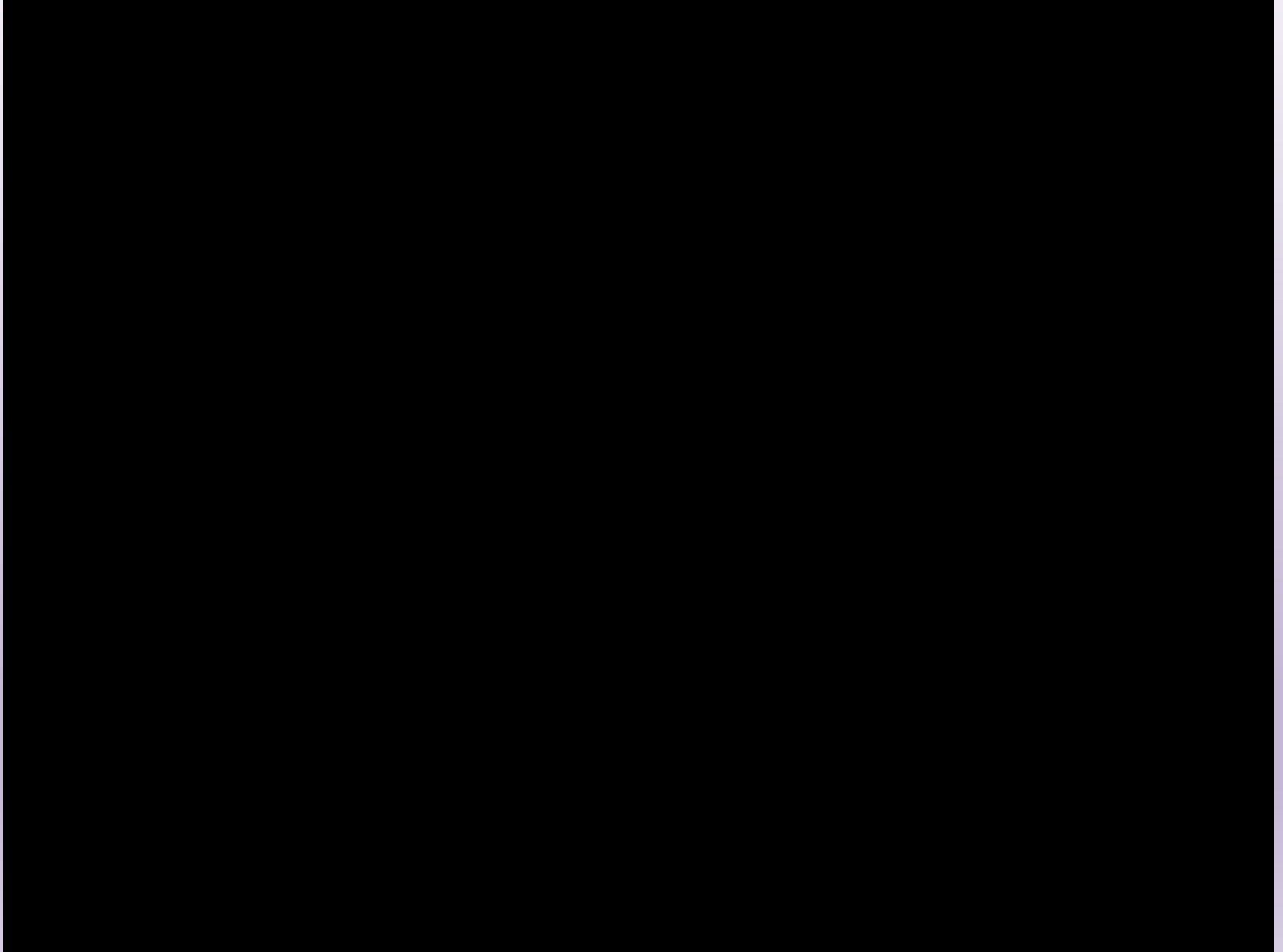


Look at the image below. The color of surfaces A and B are identical. Don't believe me? Place your finger over the point where the top and bottom half of the image meet.



FYI: the color we see isn't just a matter of the light coming into eyes, inferences cause that input. We use the context around the image to inform our color experiences. Some people just see what's in front of them and others take in the broader context.

Example from summer 2022



Example from summer 2022



What are some other
fads you've seen?

21 . 07 . 23



#girldinner



STYLE

Doctors to parents: Stop smashing eggs on your kids' heads on TikTok



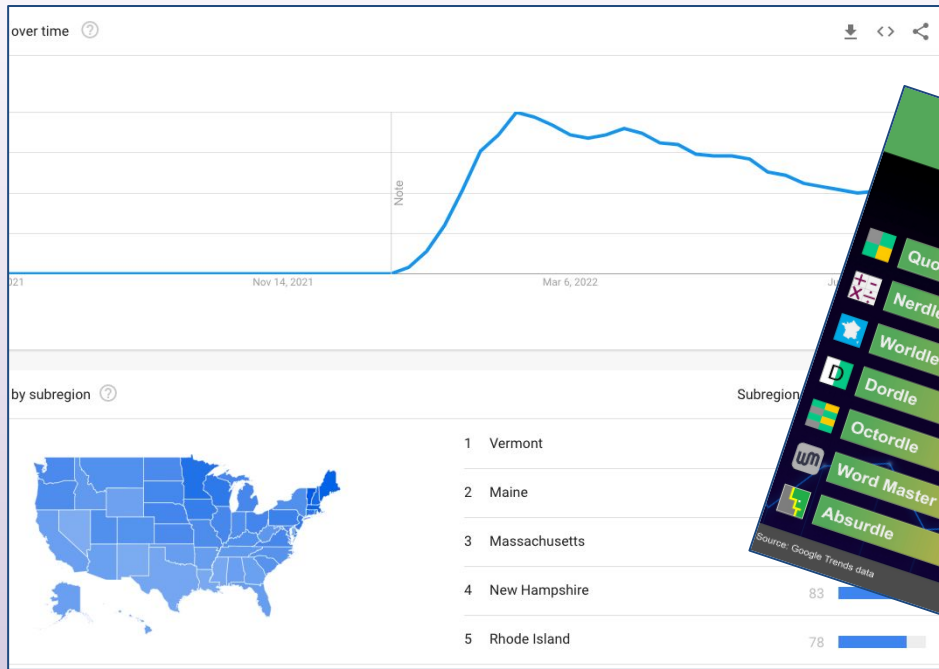
By Victoria Bisset

Updated August 25, 2023 at 3:00 a.m. EDT | Published August 25, 2023 at 2:00 a.m. EDT

#eggcrackchallenge



Wordle











DAILY DOT
COH

WHAT IS THE MILK CRATE CHALLENGE?

FOX10

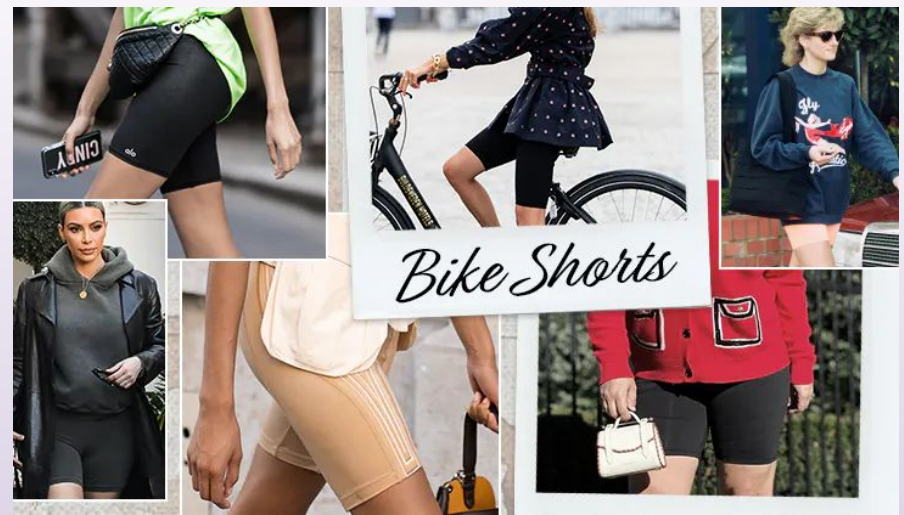
JEFF HYUNDAI

FOX10.com GOOGLE: 2821.99 ▲ 53.35 FOX10.com MERRILL

NEWS
STIGERS

Trend: A long term pattern or interest





Summer 2022

Hoochie Daddy Shorts



RECAP: What types of topics fall under the umbrella of popular culture?

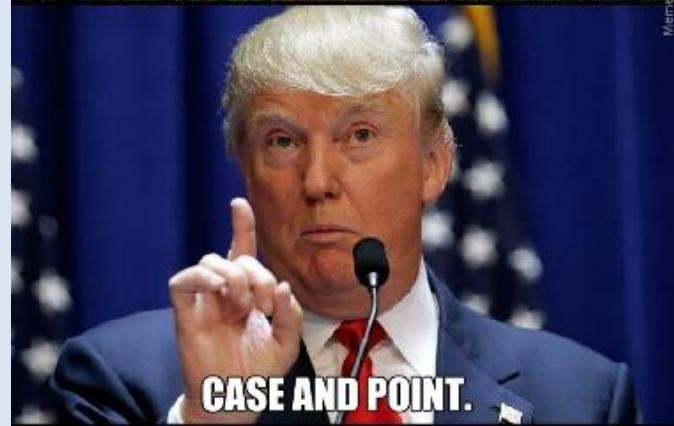
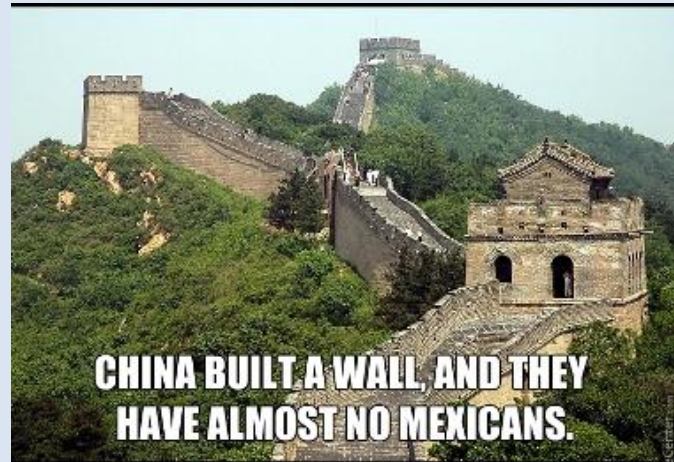
What is NOT Pop Culture? (POLITICS & POLITICIANS)



Protest against and removal of Confederate status, 2020



When do politics become pop culture?





I think we feel very strongly as a league that it's time for people to take notice and to take part in what should be a nationwide effort to limit the gun violence that's out there.

Steve Kerr on why the Warriors and Celtics are both wearing "End Gun Violence" shirts before Game 2 of the Finals



When do politics become pop culture?



Lizzo changes lyric in 'Grrrls' following backlash over ableism



RAP BATTLE

EMINEM TELLS RAMASWAMY TO STOP USING HIS MUSIC



What is NOT Pop Culture? (RELIGION)



When does religion become pop culture?



Pop Culture defined

Today, pop culture refers to cultural products like music, art, fashion, dance, film, internet culture, & TV that are consumed by the majority of a society's population.



Pop culture is...

- ★ **entertainment focused**
- ★ **a form of material culture (the objects & artifacts we as a society consume)**

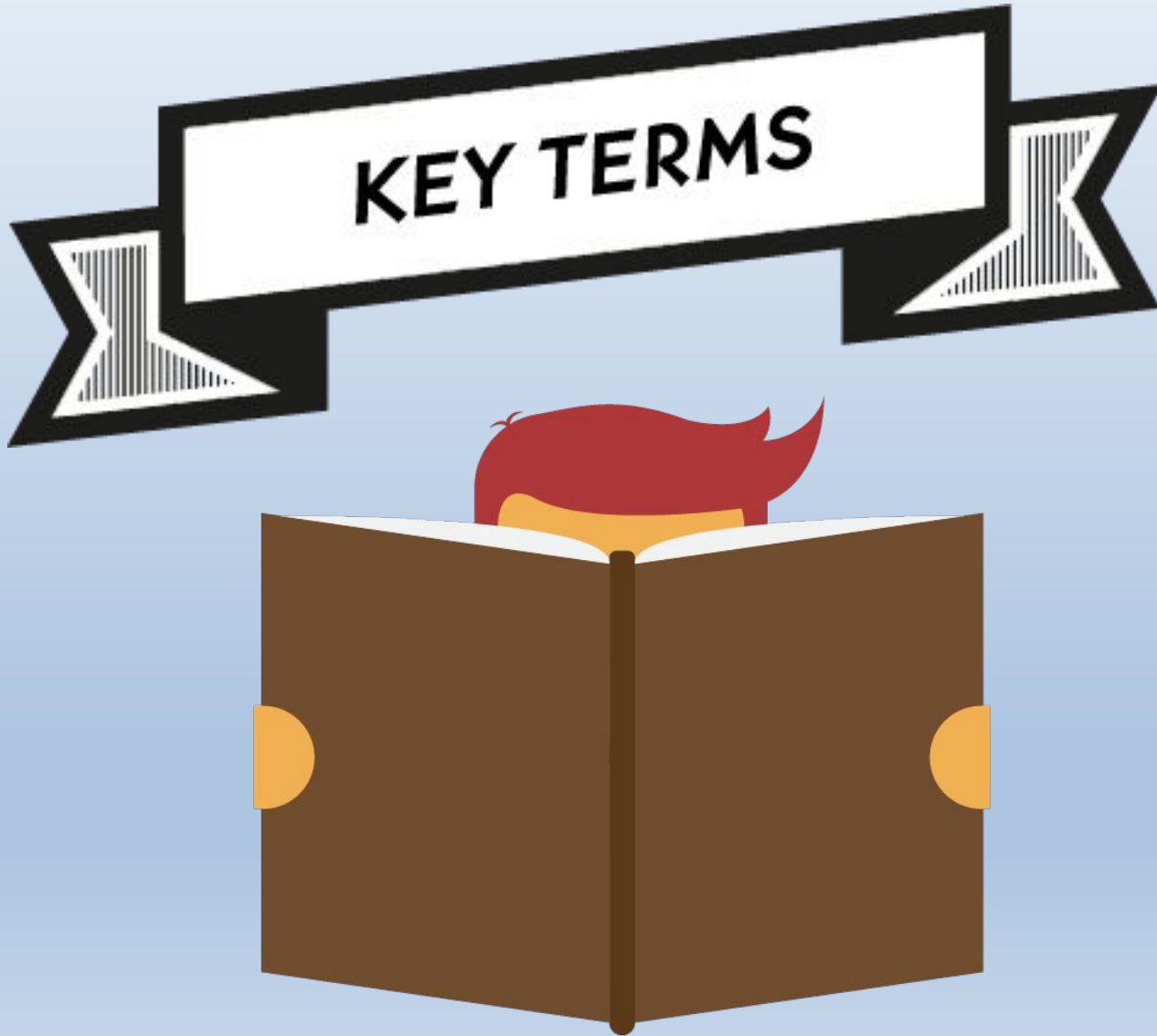
YOUR HOMEWORK:

Pop Culture Collage

- Make a collage that represents your pop culture interests.
 - What elements of popular culture do you CHOOSE to consume on a daily basis?
 - What aspects of pop culture MEAN SOMETHING to you?
 - What pop culture do you ENJOY?
- Your collage can be a combination of pictures & words, both printed/cut out or drawn.

Popular + Culture

KEY TERMS



How would you define the
word “popular”?
What makes something
popular?





Key Terms: “Popular”

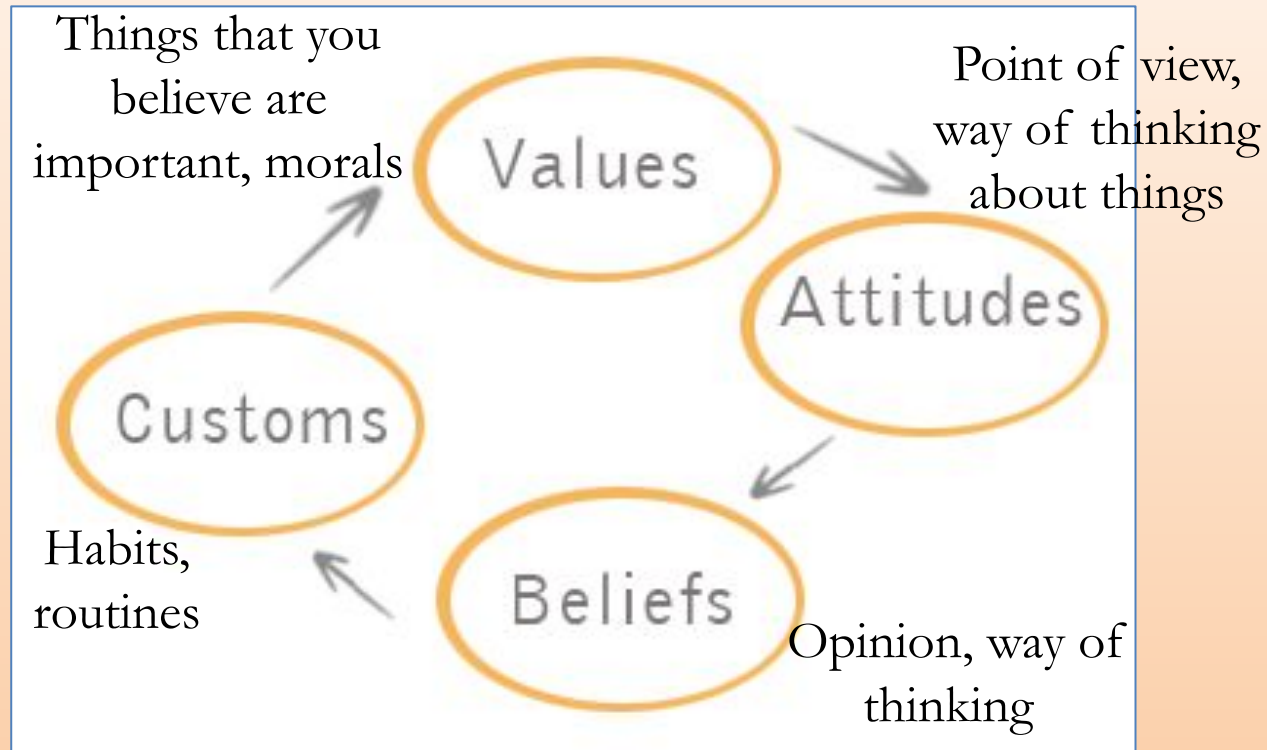
- **Well-liked by large groups of people**
 - This can often be demonstrated through sales #s.
 - How many people have to like something for it to be popular?
- Something that is made with the goal of being interesting to people

Key Terms:
Culture



What makes “culture” as a word hard to define is that it’s the stuff that’s all around us that we are constantly exposed to but don’t often talk about.

Key Terms: “Culture”



- Culture refers to the values, customs, attitudes and beliefs of society and the things that influence us.

What are some of the things that have an influence on who you are or who you become?

(What/who shapes your values, customs, attitudes & beliefs?)



Consider the culture of these 2 workplaces.

(Culture is whatever is celebrated/included/valued by a group of people.)



What is valued here?

Consider the culture of these 2 workplaces.

Culture is whatever is celebrated/included/valued by a group of people.



What are the norms, relationships, etc.?



What is celebrated/included & what is excluded?



This year we're going to be talking about popular culture - about entertainment that is both **popular** AND which has **culture** embedded into it.

- The former (popular) is easy to measure and understand.
- The latter (culture) is something we're going to practice training our eyes to see.

Let's put the words “Popular” + “Culture” together:

- What's the culture in a show like *“Modern Family”*?
 - What does the show say about what families look like in the 21st century?
- Consider how this show might be interpreted years from now by cultural historians.



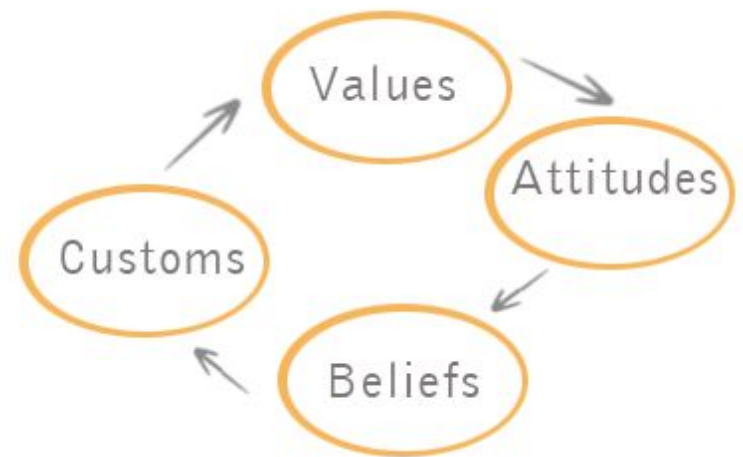


What message is being sent about what families look/act like in the 21st century?



modern **family**

What is the “culture” of “Modern Family”?



Let's put the words “Popular” + “Culture” together:

- Consider a song like NWA's “F*ck tha Police”.
 - What does the song say about not just police/ community relationships but also life in Compton in the 1980s-90s?



NOTE: we have to do a little more research with this ex because we weren't alive then & likely are less familiar with the attitudes, experiences and beliefs of the creators.

Gangsta rap

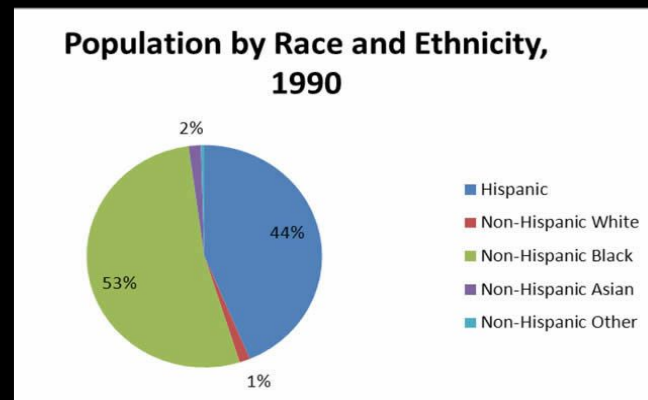
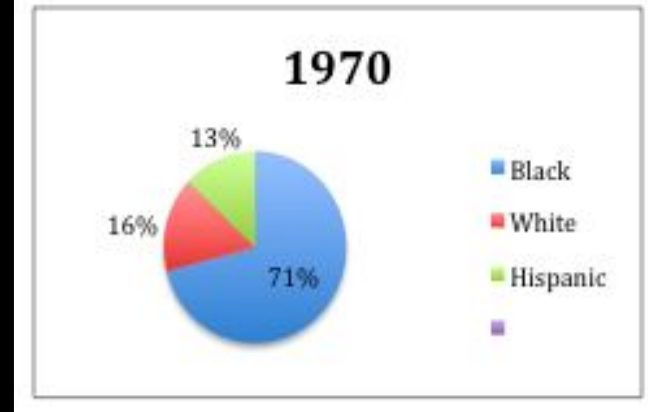
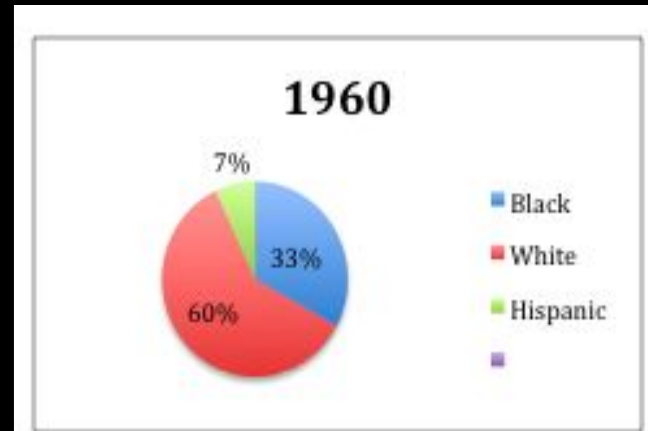
Emerged from Compton, CA in late 1980s

California



Compton was struggling in the 1980s-90s:

- Big demographic shift from 1960s->'80s
- Hit hard by the crime wave that followed the influx of crack cocaine in the 1980s
- Declining educational opportunities
- Gang-related violence became a serious problem



Life in Compton...



Straight Outta Compton (2015)

“F*ck tha Police,” NWA (1988)

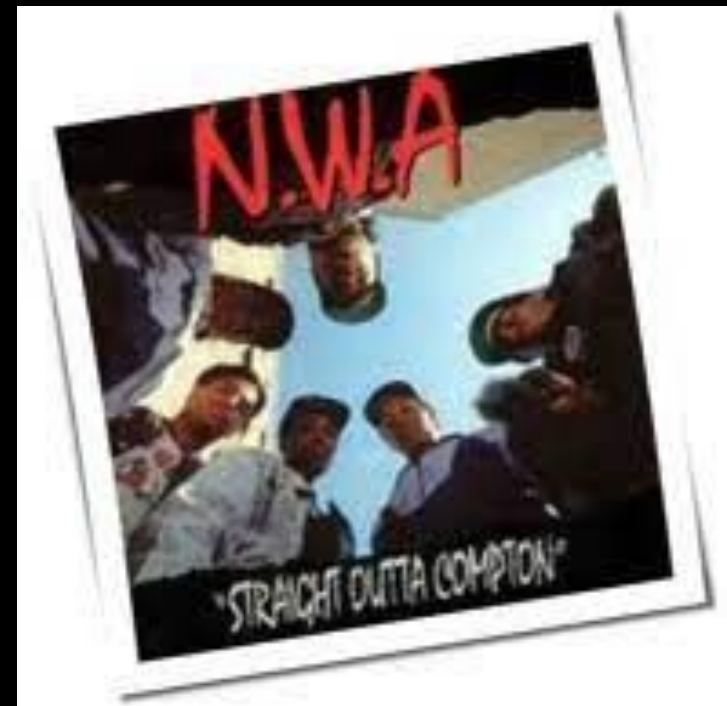
1. How does the song reflect what was going on at the time? How does this connect to some of the experiences seen in the previous clip?
2. What is the message/tone of the song?

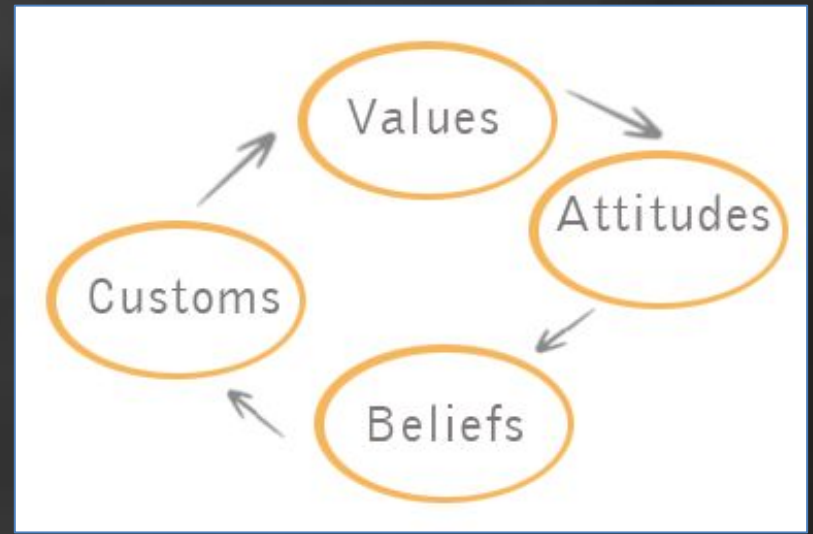


F*ck the police comin' straight from the underground
A Young n**** got it bad 'cause I'm brown
And not the other color so police think
They have the authority to kill a minority
F*ck that shit, 'cause I ain't the one
For a punk motherf*cker with a badge and a gun
To be beatin' on, and thrown in jail
We can go toe-to-toe in the middle of a cell

F*ckin with me 'cause I'm a teenager
With a little bit of gold and a pager
Searchin' my car, lookin' for the product
Thinkin' every n**** is sellin' narcotics

You'd rather see me in the pen
Than me and Lorenzo rollin' in the Benzo





What's the message of the song? What does this tell us about life in LA in the '80s-'90s?

What is the "culture" of "F*ck tha Police"?

Take a few minutes & consider 1 example of popular culture that you enjoy:

- ★ How do you know it's popular?
(What metrics can we use to evaluate its popularity?)
- ★ What is the culture that is embedded into it? (Consider what it says about our interests, values & norms. What do you think someone 50 years from now will learn about us by reflecting on this?)



Why study popular
culture?



Why study popular culture?



What's the value of pop culture? (Why is it important that we NOT dismiss it & instead respect it & learn to preserve it?)

2:44-7:05

8:15-10:00

Why is it worthwhile to study popular culture?

1. Pop culture helps build connections between people.
2. Pop culture has the power to influence society/people.
3. It can be one way to get people talking about important issues/topics or challenge accepted norms.
4. Americans' beliefs/values are shown in our popular culture.
5. It is one way to study & understand history (themes of race, class, power and gender can all be seen in our pop culture.)

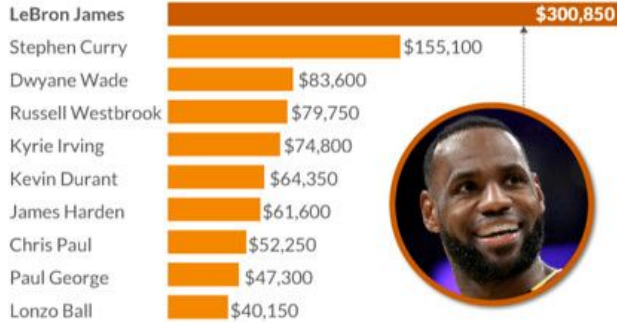
With your table group, please review your assigned slide(s).

1. Summarize your slide's main idea using the example(s) given. (LEFT)
2. Come up with 1-2 additional pop culture examples to support it. (RIGHT)

Be prepared to share with/ explain to the class.

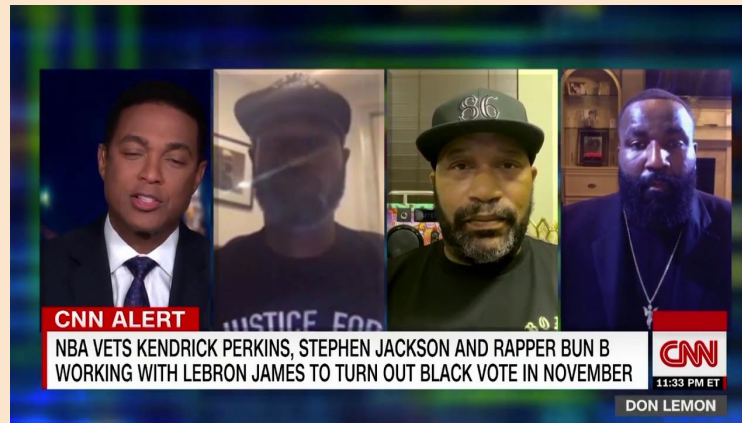
Top 10 Instagram earners in the NBA

LeBron James makes more per sponsored Instagram post than any other NBA player



Sources: HopperHQ's Instagram Rich List, Later

Consider the power that athletes like LeBron James have to influence, use their platform and impact their fans and the broader world.



Hopefully, someday down the line, people will recognize me not only for the way I approached the game of basketball, but the way I approached life as an African-American man.

LEBRON JAMES

via The New York Times



LeBron James

LOS ANGELES LAKERS

\$37.4M | SALARY



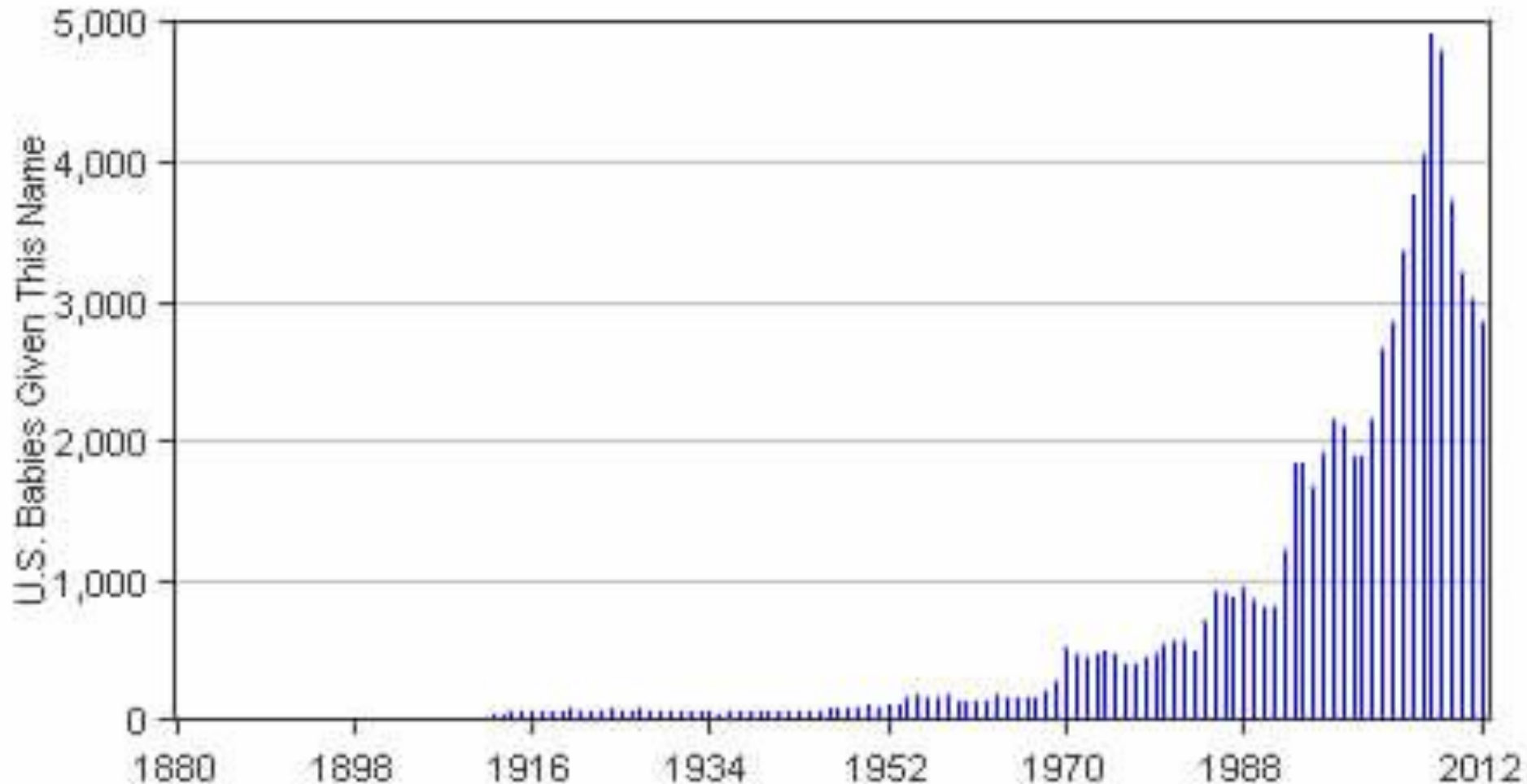
\$55M | ENDORSEMENTS

Our tastes and interests are shaped by popular culture, so it's not a stretch to imagine that many of our own names are drawn from pop culture.

- Many top names are influenced by movies, books tv shows, & celebs.
 - *Hunger Games* made Katniss a trending girls' name.
 - *Game of Thrones* inspired a spike in the names Arya, Khaleesi, Theon, and Snow, among others in the U.S. and U.K.
 - *Frozen*: Elsa & Anna
 - *Star Wars*: Leia, Anakin, Ren, Rey
 - Celebrities & their children: Blue moved up the naming charts thanks to Beyoncé & Jay-Z, Apple gained recognition thanks to Gwyneth Paltrow, Melania has increased in popularity, and George/Louis/Charlotte have moved up in the rankings, a tribute to Britain's young royalty.



Consider the rise in popularity of the name “Brady.”





**It both is a form of
influence & gets
people talking about
social issues**



It's a way to get people talking about important issues or challenging accepted norms

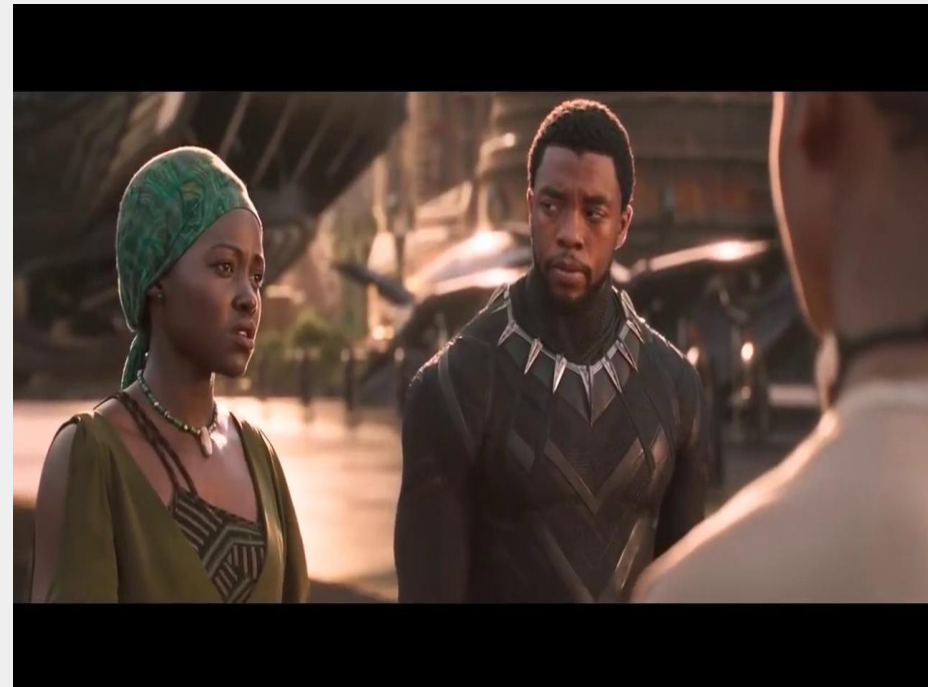




Wonder Woman

**It reflects our
beliefs/
values**

Black Panther



It's a way to understand history

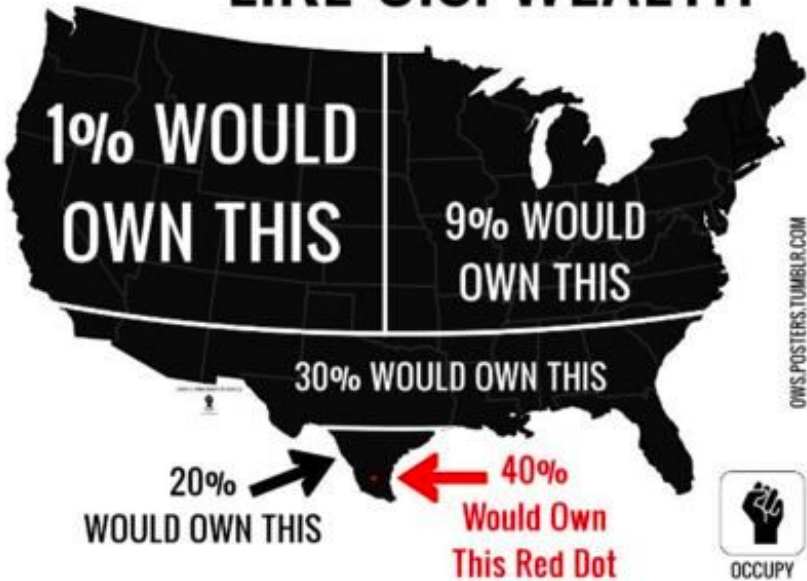


Lil Baby
“The Bigger
Picture”

Pop culture also is a way to give a voice to
“regular people”

Pop culture is and has become a way for “outsiders” (immigrants, women, the poor, racial minorities) to find success & have a voice.

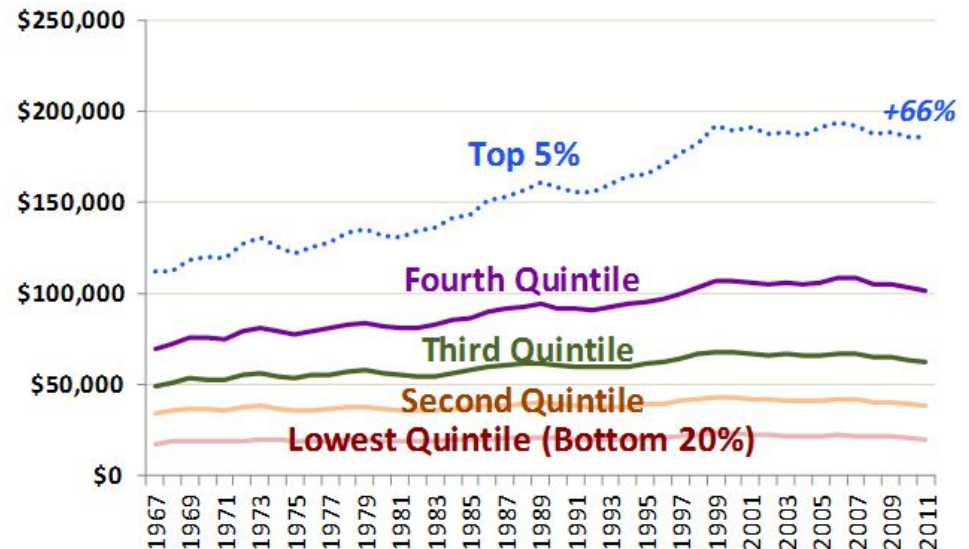
IF U.S. LAND WERE DIVIDED
LIKE U.S. WEALTH



Historical US Income Inequality

Source: US Census Bureau, Income Limits for Each Fifth and Top 5 Percent of Households

(2011 Dollars)



Who has traditionally held power? White men. One example of that?
Major league sports teams. Consider the 3 biggest US sports leagues:

- There are no black majority owners in the 30 team NBA. Jordan sold his stake in the Charlotte Hornets this summer leaving only 2 POC & 3 women as principal owners in the NBA.
- Only 8% of principal owners in the NFL are non-white while 38% are women.
- There is only 1 POC in the 30 team MLB and that figure's remained unchanged for the past 20 years.

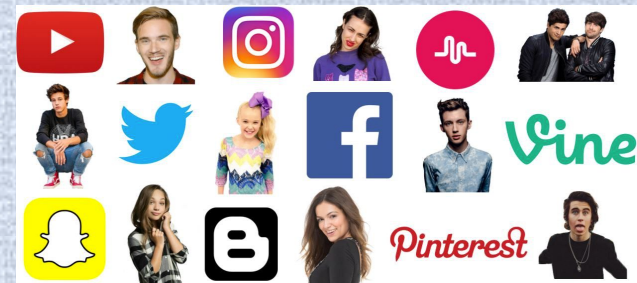
Yet the racial makeup of the NBA is roughly 75% POC, the NFL is 70% POC, while the MLB is 42% POC.



African-American comedian, Paul Mooney, once famously joked, "White men can't jump. They don't have to. They own the team."



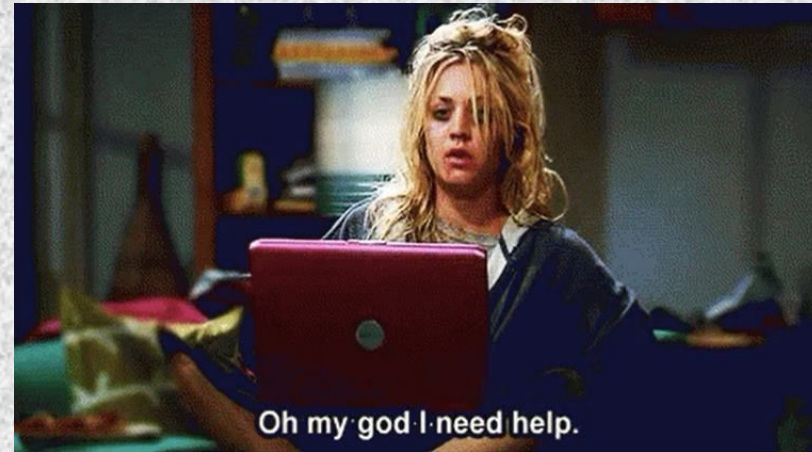
- Pop culture creates an opportunity for regular people to have a wider influence on society:
 - Many of the founders of early Hollywood studios were Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe (Paramount, 20th c. Fox, MGM, and Warner Bros. ->
 - Some of the best, most widely-recognized blues musicians are from Mississippi, one of the poorest states in the nation.
 - Think about how many singers have been discovered through YouTube, Soundcloud, etc.. (Bieber, Shawn Mendes, Charlie Puth, Post Malone, Lil Uzi Vert, etc.)
 - Social media has created opportunities for a range of regular people to find fame.



Pop Culture & the Critics

- In spite of its popularity, some people still argue that pop culture teaches us nothing, contains no worthwhile messages and has no value.

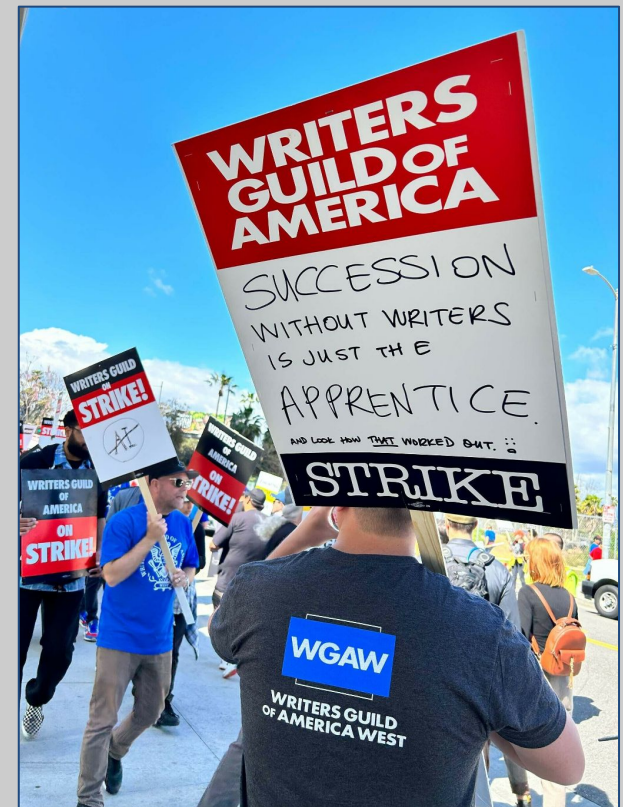
(This class, at its core, is designed to show you the many ways that pop culture HAS value.)



CASE STUDY: SAG Writers/Actors Strike

Why does it matter? Consider the issues at play in this “entertainment story.”

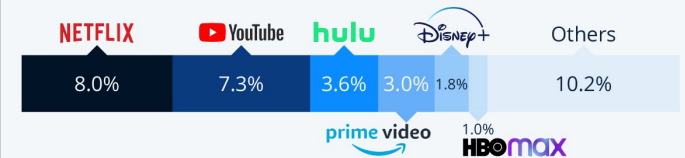
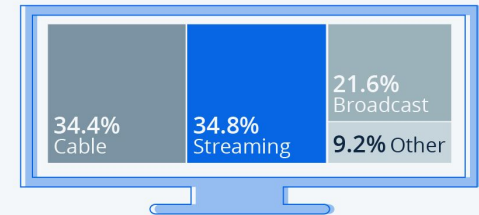
- Entertainment - how/where are Americans spending their time?
- Technology - rise of AI, streaming
- Economics & power - labor vs management



Consider how technology has changed viewing habits

Streaming Surpasses Cable Viewing for the First Time in U.S.

Share of total television usage in the U.S. in July 2022, by delivery platform

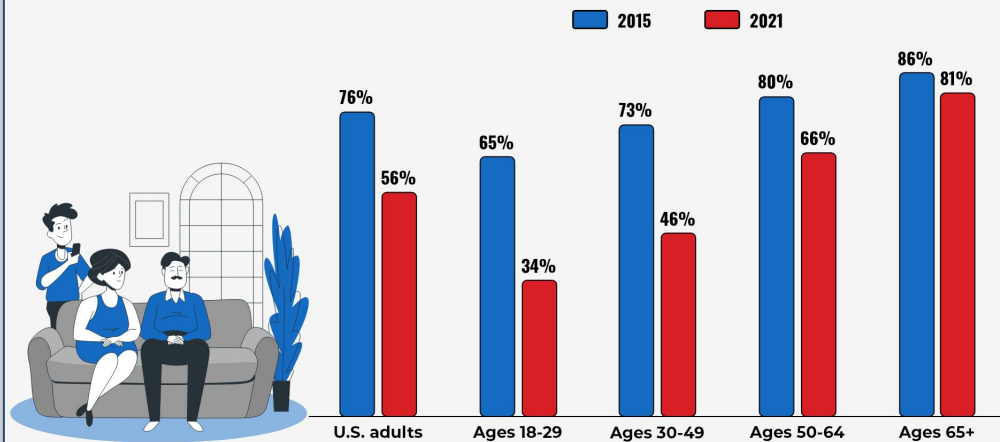


Source: Nielsen

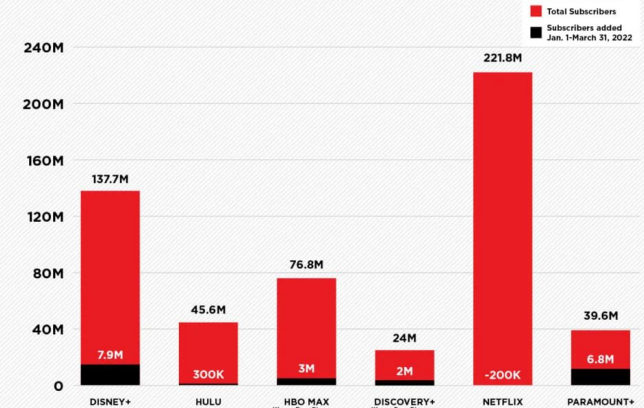


statista

Percent of People Who Get Satellite or Cable TV, 2015 vs 2021

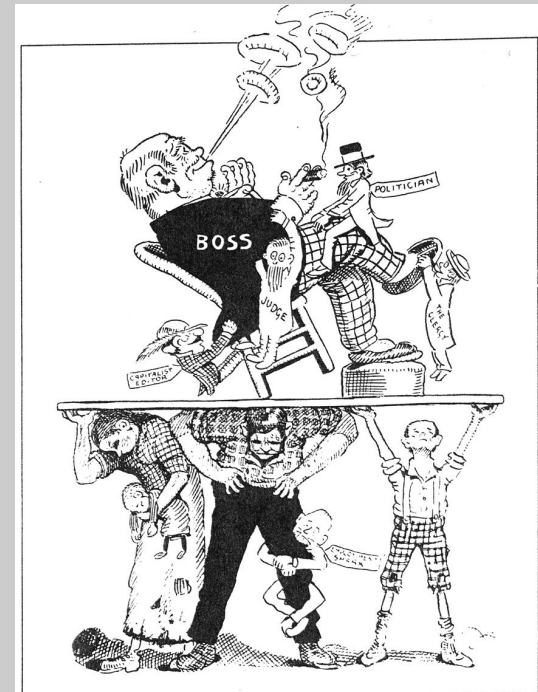
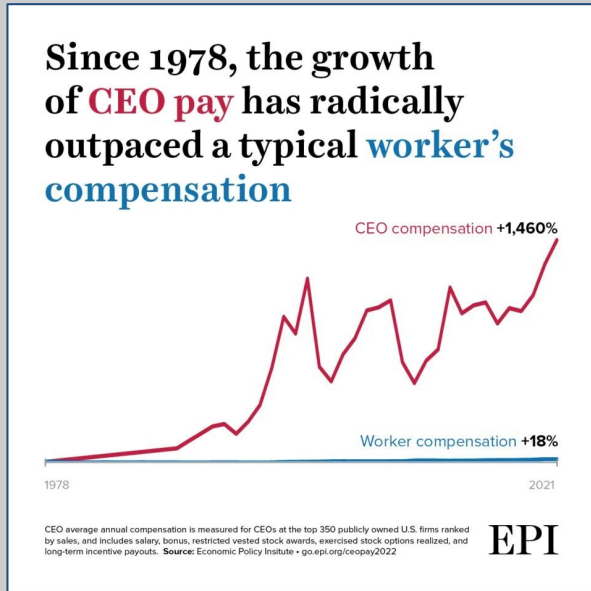
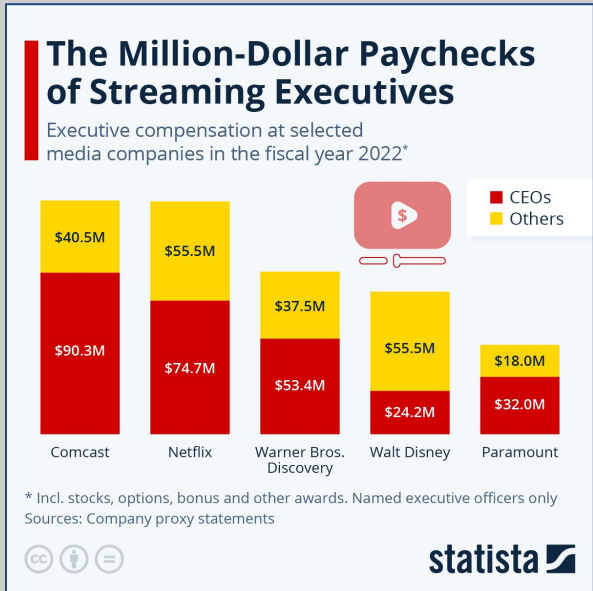


HOW ALL THE MAJOR STREAMING SERVICES STACK UP IN SUBSCRIBERS



SOURCE: COMPANY QUARTERLY REPORTS

THE WRAP





DEADLINE

TIP US

IF THE ACTORS GO ON STRIKE

Receiving positive feedback from Wall Street since the WGA went on strike May 2, Warner Bros Discovery, Apple, Netflix, Amazon, Disney, Paramount and others have become determined to “break the WGA,” as one studio exec blatantly put it.

To do so, the studios and the AMPTP believe that by October most writers will be running out of money after five months on the picket lines and no work.

“The endgame is to allow things to drag on until union members start losing their apartments and losing their houses,” a studio executive told Deadline.

Acknowledging the cold-as-ice approach, several other sources reiterated the statement. One insider called it “a cruel but necessary evil.”

The studios and streamers’ next think financially strapped writers would go to WGA leadership and demand they restart talks before what could be a very cold Christmas. In that context, the studios and streamers feel they would be in a position to dictate



CASE STUDY: Jason Aldean, “Try That in a Small Town”

Jason Aldean's "Try That In A Small Town" opens with, “Cuss out a cop, spit in his face, stomp on the flag and light it up. Yeah, you think you're tough?” The song hit No. 1 this summer on the Billboard Hot 100.

The music video, released 2 months after the song first debuted, features Aldean singing those lines while protest footage from the 2020 BLM uprisings flash across the screen. Aldean is singing in front of a courthouse where a Black teen was lynched, in a town 40 minutes from where the KKK was founded.

The video was pulled from CMT, but the song has continued to climb the Billboard charts.





Ron DeSantis @RonDeSantis · 49m
 When the media attacks you, you're doing something right. @Jason_Aldean has nothing to apologize for.



Jason Aldean @Jason_Aldean · 1d
 In the past 24 hours I have been accused of releasing a pro-lynching song (a song that has been out since May) and was subject to the comparison that I (direct quote) was not too please... Show more

320 621 4,308 182K



Sheryl Crow @SherylCrow

.@Jason_Aldean I'm from a small town. Even people in small towns are sick of violence. There's nothing small-town or American about promoting violence. You should know that better than anyone having survived a mass shooting.

This is not American or small town-like. It's just lame



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

Jason Aldean is a fantastic guy who just came out with a great new song. Support Jason all the way. MAGA!!!



*“I love our country...I want to see it restored to what it once was before all this bulls**t started happening to us... I will do anything to protect that.”*

- J. Aldean



Jason Aldean @Jason_Aldean · 22h

In the past 24 hours I have been accused of releasing a pro-lynching song (a song that has been out since May) and was subject to the comparison that I (direct quote) was not too pleased with the nationwide BLM protests. These references are not only meritless, but dangerous... [Show more](#)

25.3K 21.7K 137.2K 4.9M



Shannon Watts @shannonwatts

Translation: Jason Aldean simply wants to return to a time in America when “good old boys” could shoot or beat the shit out of people who they didn’t think belonged in their town. Also, this song is two months old and now far past the legal song judgment period. Good day.

2:51 PM · Jul 18, 2023 · 806.5K Views

Some things to consider



- The last time a country song by a solo male artist reached No. 1 was 42 years ago.
- This summer was the first time in the history of the Billboard Hot 100 chart that the top 3 slots were occupied by country songs (it's usually a mix of pop, rock, R&B, and hip hop.)
 - Last week a 4th country artist jumped into the #1 spot.
- It's been 37 years since 3 white male artists held the top 3 spots.
- Each the men have also faced race-related criticisms & threats of “cancellation.”
- Part of their success is driven by conservative backlash to wokeism, cancel culture and their perceived persecution. Each one of their fan bases have grown in spite of controversy over their actions/music.

"That which appears the most mundane, innocuous, and everyday offers some of the most provocative and telling cultural and ideological information about a society."

- Adilifu Nama, Prof. of American Studies at Loyola Marymount University



“Our culture is as polarized as our politics. At the same time, our culture is more nuanced than our politics. An audience that is challenged in its culture, can be moved in its politics.”

- Tressie McMillan Cottom, *New York Times* columnist

