

History of Rock 'n' Roll: 1950s

I. The Roots of Rock & Roll

- a. Rock and roll first emerged in the 1950s and was heavily influenced by rhythm & blues
- b. African-Americans had been playing rock and roll for years – but white audiences hadn't heard it because radio, like society, was segregated.
- c. The genre also changed as white musicians sped up the tempo & changed the look and some of the lyrics.

II. What helped to popularize rock & roll?

- a. By the mid-1950s, rock & roll had become wildly popular with white and black audiences. WHY?
 - i. White teens started to secretly
 - ii. White artists began to
 - iii. White radio stations (facing increased competition from TV) began to

III. The role of record labels

- a. Making covers: Major record labels made a practice of re-recording minor hits originally recorded by black artists with their own white artists.
- b. Designing hits: To guarantee hits, major record labels: created and mass produced attractive male teen idols & (re)wrote and marketed songs for a mainstream white audience

Video: *The Fifties: The Beat*

1. How did growing up in Memphis help shape Elvis Presley as a musician?

2. How did Elvis help to break down racial barriers?

3. What power did teens have in the 1950s?

4. How did control over music change hands in the 1950s?

III. Elvis' Influence:

Critics	Fans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Became successful by singing the music that countless uncredited black artists sang before him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Helped popularize rock & roll ● Opened the door for black artists in a way ● Appealed to diverse musical styles & audiences ● Brought country & R&B music into rock & roll and created a sub-genre of rock and roll = <u>rockabilly</u>

** What do you think? Is Elvis worth celebrating or is he a thief?*

IV. '50s Rock & Roll Stars

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| a. Buddy Holly | c. Little Richard |
| b. Jerry Lee Lewis | d. Chuck Berry |

V. Role of Teens/Youth Culture:

- a. **By the mid-1950s, how many teenagers were there in the U.S..?**
- b. 1950s teens had more money than ever before.
 - i. **HOW DO WE KNOW THIS? (Support this statement with 2 pieces of evidence.)**
- c. Teens were eager to develop their own culture, separate from their parents.

VI. **CONSIDER: Why did teens embrace rock & roll?**

VII. Rock & roll music and dance

IX. Rock & roll's critics:

- a. **What did some people think was wrong with/concerning about rock & roll music? (LIST)**

X. The Lasting Influence of '50s Rock & Roll

- a. At a time of widespread racial segregation, rock & roll broke the color line in music.
- b. Teens played a major role in adopting/popularizing the new musical style (this involvement continued and expanded in the '60s and beyond.)
- c. Rock & roll continued and blossomed into many different styles of rock in the '60s and beyond.

XI. Rock & roll and **juvenile delinquency**.

i. DEFINE (in your own words):

ii. Why did people worry about delinquency? (How did the numbers support this fear?)

XII. The teenage menace in film:

i. How do movies describe teens and their behavior? What words do they use?

ii. CONSIDER: What messages do these films send to adults about teenage life & temptations in the 1950s?

Rebel Without A Cause: Film Questions

1. What are some of the issues/themes this movie raises?
2. Traditional gender norms were very much a focus in the 1950s. How does the film address gender roles?
 - a. **MEN:** Compare the main character, Jim, to his father and then to his friend, Plato. How is each character living up to (or not) what it means to be an “ideal/real” man?
 - b. **WOMEN:** Consider the characters of Judy and Mrs. Start, Jim’s mom. What do you think the film is saying is the “proper” role of women?
3. Keeping in mind the wholesome, happy all-American family ideal of the 1950s (think *Leave it to Beaver*), where do you see dysfunction in each of the 3 main characters' families? (Jim, Judy, Plato)
4. *When they're at the mansion, Jim, Judy and Plato attempt to create their own idealized version of family. What does that look like?*
5. *Consider the role that the color red plays in the film. It switches from character to character. Who is wearing red in which scenes? Why do you think they're wearing red in those scenes/moments? What does the red symbolize?*
6. What’s the message at the end of the film?
7. Think about the title of this film. How would you define a “rebel”? In what ways would you characterize Jim (and by extension, Judy and Plato) as rebels?
8. Although many parents feared that their children would become juvenile delinquents if they watched the film, how could you make the case that *Rebel Without a Cause* is actually more of a wake-up call to adults than a negative influence on youth?
9. *Rebel Without a Cause* was unique among juvenile delinquency films, because it dealt with the delinquency of middle class kids, rather than working class kids like *Blackboard Jungle* (1956). Why do you think the rebellion of middle class youth was so threatening?

Historical Context

KEEPING IN MIND WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE 1950s, DISCUSS THE QUESTIONS BELOW.

1. In 1953, the Senate Sub-Committee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency was established to study the issue of juvenile crime and teen culture. What issues do you think they would have had with the film?
2. We discussed the film industry’s own form of self-censorship, the Production Code, earlier this year. Although created in the 1930s, this self-regulation was still in effect in the 1950s. What specific scenes or plot lines do you think would have ran into trouble with the code?

- iv. How did that step-by-step process get integrated into Motown records? List some of the steps artists went through as part of their training with Motown.

- v. Why did Gordy require this level of training/polishing of his acts? (Consider how that supported his mission of “making music for the whole world.”)

e. **Rock & Roll**

- i. “Soft rock” (EX: the Beatles, the Beach Boys)
- ii. “Hard rock” bands pushed for rock to have a harder edge (EX: the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, etc.) – became known as psychedelic rock or acid rock (drug inspired)
- iii. How would you describe the difference between hard rock and soft rock?

MATCHING - Draw lines to match the image to the type of music.



Folk



Folk-Rock



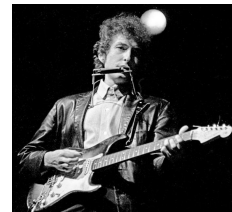
Motown



British Invasion



Soft Rock



Hard Rock

The (1960s) Counterculture in music, art, fashion & film



- I. After WWII the U.S. experienced an economic boom and a huge spike in the birth rate (known as the Baby Boom.) By the middle of the 1960s, most of these kids were young adults.
 - a. These **Baby Boomers** questioned what about America? (LIST)

- II. Baby Boomers & the Counterculture
 - a. **DEFINE: “COUNTERCULTURE”:**

- b. **What did the counterculture believe? What did they value?**

BELIEFS	VALUES

- III. Older generation vs. Counterculture

 <p>What do you notice about the “normal” 1950s family?</p>	<p>What do you notice about this family?</p> 

- IV. Rejection of the old - **counterculture fashion**
 - a. The suits, sweater vests, corsets and designer dresses of the 1950s-1960s were rejected by members of the counterculture.
 - i. **What fashions did they prefer?**

- V. Rejection of the old - **drug use & experimentation**
- a. For many members of the counterculture, drug use was...
 - b. Drugs were thought to provide some of the new worldview many young people were seeking - helped to “unlock the doors of perception”, **meaning what?**
 - c. Prescription Drug Use in the U.S. (by the mid-1960s, drug use in the U.S. was widespread)
 - d. To members of the counterculture, not all drugs were equal...
 - i. **What drugs were seen as good/bad drugs? (LIST)**

Good drugs (If a drug expanded your mind, it was good.)	Bad drugs (If the drug dulled your senses, it was bad.)

- e. **Marijuana**
 - i. Emerged as the most popular drug for youth in the ‘60s.
 - ii. **What was the appeal of marijuana?**
- f. **LSD** – origins
 - i. **Created in 1938 by a pharmaceutical company with what goal?**
 - ii. **It did NOT work for that but the scientist who invented the drug did discover that it did do what?**
 - iii. **Timothy Leary** was a Harvard professor who went from studying the effects of mind-altering drugs to advocating their use. **Told people to “turn on, tune in, drop out” - MEANING?**

VI. **Influence of drugs/counterculture values on the music, film & art of the 1960s**

- a. Characteristics of **Psychedelic Rock**
 - i. created or played under the influence of LSD
 - ii. feedback on guitars & lots of instrumental solos/jams
 - iii. more complex songs than in the 1950s and early 1960s
 - iv. lyrics often sounded like poetry and/or encouraged drug use
- b. **DESCRIBE: How do album covers of this genre also reflect the psychedelic feel?**

- c. Musical examples of Psychedelic/Acid Rock
- i. The Grateful Dead: at the center of this musical and experimental drug movement.
 - ii. The Beatles, "I Am the Walrus": **Look at the characteristics of psychedelic rock listed above. Why might someone say this is an example of psychedelic rock?**

 - iii. Jefferson Airplane: Their song "White Rabbit" was inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and it urged listeners to use drugs. **How do they connect the story of Alice in Wonderland to LSD use?**

 - iv. The Beatles: June 1967, the Beatles released *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.
 1. **CONSIDER: Why might someone say that "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" has something to do with LSD?**

 2. **CONSIDER: The Beatles, *Yellow Submarine* - MESSAGE: How does *Yellow Submarine* address the issues that many youth were concerned about?**

 - v. Woodstock Music and Art Fair: 3 day music concert held in Bethel, NY (August 15-17, 1969.) Featured performances from the Who, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Crosby, Stills & Nash, etc... Between 400,000-500,000 young people attended. In spite of overcrowding, rain and mud, inadequate restroom facilities – **the festival was peaceful and became a defining moment of the '60s. WHY? HOW SO?**

VII. The tide turns on LSD

- a. State and fed. govt began making LSD possession and distribution illegal.
- b. In 1965, the manufacturer stopped producing LSD but production continued with underground chemists and dealers. (DANGEROUS)

VIII. Decline of the Psychedelic

- a. The many LSD mental breakdowns & deaths began to change what the public thought about LSD & drugs (Lots of negative news stories & increasing number of overdoses on pills and/or heroin)
- b. **Altamont Free Festival** (Dec. 6, 1969): a 1 day music festival sponsored by the Rolling Stones. It was meant to carry on the legacy of Woodstock but it did NOT go as planned... **LIST 2 things that went wrong at the concert:**
- c. **Manson murders** (August 8-9, 1969): Charles Manson was a cult leader whose followers killed 5 wealthy Hollywood socialites. **How was Manson connected to the counterculture?**

Pop Art

I. What is **pop art**? (DEFINE)

II. What were the goals of the pop art movement?

III. What are the characteristics of pop art? What does it tend to include?



PREVIEW: Pop Art for the 21st Century Assignment

This week you are going to create a modern, 21st century pop art inspired piece. It should be both inspired by pop art & draw on images/themes present in today's world.

- Your piece should be colorful, creative, and thoughtful.
- Your piece should have a title and be accompanied by a 1-paragraph typed explanation of the piece. (What was your inspiration? Why did you select the title that you did? What does the piece mean to you?)

Music With a Message – Protest Music

- I. Music has always been a form of expression.
- II. EXAMPLE: Childish Gambino, “This is America”
 - a. **What are some of the topics Childish Gambino raises in his song/video?** (LIST)

 - b. **What do you think makes this song/video an example of protest?**
- III. **What is a protest song?** (DEFINE)
- IV. **What types of events have inspired protest music?** (LIST)
- V. **Protest songs in the 1960s were inspired by...**
 - a. Examples: “Blowin’ in the Wind,” “War (What is it Good For?),” “Fortunate Son,” “For What It’s Worth.”

****PICK ONE OF THE SONGS ABOVE TO ANALYZE **** Song title: _____

What are the lyrics talking about? (LIST)

Why is this a protest song? What’s the message?

VI. **Protest songs in the 1970s & 1980s focused on...**

- a. Examples: Marvin Gaye, "What's Going On?" and "Inner City Blues," Aretha Franklin, "Respect," Grandmaster Flash, "The Message."

****PICK ONE OF THE SONGS ABOVE TO ANALYZE **** Song title: _____

What are the lyrics talking about? (LIST)

Why is this a protest song? What's the message?

VII. **Protest Music in the 21st Century:**

- a. "Alright," Kendrick Lamar (2015)
i. **Why did the protesters at Ferguson choose NOT to sing the civil rights song, "We Shall Overcome," and instead adopt Kendrick Lamar's song, "Alright"?**

ii. **How do the song/lyrics express the feelings of people protesting the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and others?**

- b. "The Bigger Picture," Lil Baby (2020)
i. **What are the lyrics/video talking about? (List issues)**

ii. **Why is this a protest song? What's the message?**

4. **PUNK:**

- a. How would you describe the audience for punk music?

- b. What was the punk club **CBGBs** like and what were the “rules” for punk performances?

- c. What did record companies think of punk when it started? Why?

5. **POLITICS:**

- a. How was the NYC mayoral election in many ways reflective of the tensions and challenges the city was facing in 1977?

The Rise and Fall of Disco

I. Early Disco Audience & Artists:

- a. Who were the early adopters of disco?

- b. **Donna Summer**
 - i. Referred to as the _____
 - ii. Known for her popular songs

- c. **The Village People**
 - i. Named for what? _____, an area with a large gay population and where the modern Gay Rights Movement had started with the Stonewall Riots.
 - ii. Known for their popular songs, “YMCA,” “Macho Man,” and “In the Navy.”
 - iii. How do they reflect common stereotypes about gay men?

 - iv. What was important about the Village People’s success?

II. Disco moves into the mainstream & became popular with young people & the middle/working classes.

- a. Why were these groups drawn to disco?

- b. **Saturday Night Fever**: How did *Saturday Night Fever* help to make disco popular in mainstream, heterosexual culture?

III. Disco as an Escape

- a. Why did people turn to disco as an escape in the ‘70s? What were they trying to escape from?

- b. **Dancing**
 - i. Dancing was at the heart of the music - “what set disco apart [from [pop music] was that it was not only music *for* dancing, but also music *about* dancing.”

 - ii. Popular dances: _____

c. Fashion

- i. In what ways was disco fashion an expression of differences and diversity in the '70s?

d. Clubs – the Discotheque

- i. How would you describe Studio 54?

IV. Backlash – Criticism of Disco

- a. What criticisms did people have of disco? (LIST)

- b. Decline of disco - in 1979, disco dominated the airwaves but by 1981, the disco boom was a bust.

- i. How could you make the case that while disco disappeared from the radio, it wasn't totally dead?

“Pretty in Pink” Film Questions

“The teen films of the Eighties were not all about getting slashed or laid. By the mid-’80s, ... Hollywood started to take teenagers and their problems and pressures they faced at school and at home more seriously in a host of teen dramas and comedy-dramas that focused on contemporary teen life. What separates the “teen angst” films of the Eighties from the teen films from all three decades that preceded them is they don’t trivialize the issues that are important to teens. In other words, teen problems were now being treated as real problems.” - *Rebels and Chicks: A History of the Hollywood Teen Movie* (p. 177)

1. Unlike the teen films of previous decades, this film is given credit for also addressing real world complications and pressures. What are some of those pressures?
2. Describe the “richies” and then describe the underclass/sub-culture of the school.

The Richies	The Under-class

3. How does each social group feel about the other? Support with a few examples from the film.
4. Support the following statement with evidence from the film: “Throughout *Pretty in Pink*, characters dismantle the expectations and perceptions associated with class.”
5. John Hughes wanted Andie to get together with Duckie and that was how it was originally filmed. Test audiences, however, said they wanted to see Andie wind up with Blaine so the studio forced him to reshoot the ending and have Andie wind up with Blaine. Why do you think this was the case? How does the reshot ending fit with what we know about Americans’ values in the ‘80s?

Hip Hop in the 1980s-1990s

FILM: "The Hip Hop Years"

1. What impact did MTV have on hip hop in the mid-1980s?
2. What set Public Enemy apart from rappers before them?
3. What made West Coast rap different from the East Coast?
4. What made the album *Straight Outta Compton* groundbreaking?
5. Provide 2 pieces of evidence that show that rap became popular with a wider range of people:
6. What were some of the criticisms made of hip hop in the early '90s?

SLIDESHOW: Hip Hop in the 1980s-1990s (East Coast vs. West Coast Rap)

<p align="center">What impact Reagan have on the lives of urban, non-white &/or poor Americans? (Support with 2 specific examples.)</p>	<p align="center">What were 2 of the challenges being faced in the nation's cities?</p>

MUSIC VIDEOS: "Straight Outta Compton" and "Fight the Power"

Public Enemy, "Fight the Power (East Coast rap)

Yet our best trained, best educated,
best equipped, Best prepared troops
refuse to fight. As a matter of fact,
it's safe to say that they would
rather
Switch than fight

1989 the number another summer
(get down)
Sound of the funky drummer
Music hitting your heart 'cause I
know you got soul
(Brothers and sisters, hey)
Listen if you're missing y'all
Swinging while I'm singing
Giving whatcha getting
Knowing what I know
While the Black bands sweating
And the rhythm rhymes rolling
Got to give us what we want
Gotta give us what we need
Our freedom of speech is freedom
or death
We got to fight the powers that be
Lemme hear you say
Fight the power

[Hook]
Fight the power
We've got to fight the powers that
be

As the rhythm designed to bounce
What counts is that the rhymes
Designed to fill your mind
Now that you've realized the pride's
arrived
We got to pump the stuff to make
us tough
From the heart
It's a start, a work of art
To revolutionize make a change
nothing's strange
People, people we are the same
No we're not the same
'Cause we don't know the game
What we need is awareness, we
can't get careless
You say what is this?
My beloved lets get down to
business
Mental self defensive fitness
Don't rush the show
You gotta go for what you know
Make everybody see, in order to
fight the powers that be
Lemme hear you say
Fight the power
[Hook]

Elvis was a hero to most
Elvis was a hero to most

Elvis was a hero to most
But he never meant s- to me you see
Straight up racist that sucker was
Simple and plain
Mother f- him and John Wayne
'Cause I'm Black and I'm proud
I'm ready and hyped plus I'm amped
Most of my heroes don't appear on
no stamps
Sample a look back you look and
find
Nothing but rednecks for 400 years
if you check
Don't worry be happy
Was a number one jam
Damn if I say it you can slap me
right here
(Get it) lets get this party started
right
Right on, c'mon
What we got to say?
Power to the people no delay
Make everybody see
In order to fight the powers that be
[Hook]
We've got to fight the powers that
be
What we got to say?
Fight the power

1. What references does the song (in the lyrics or the video) make to black history/culture?
2. What is the message/tone of the song?

N.W.A., "Straight Outta Compton"

You are now about to witness the strength
of street knowledge

Straight outta Compton,
crazy motherfucker named Ice Cube
From the gang called Niggaz With Attitudes
When I'm called off, I got a sawed off
Squeeze the trigger, and bodies are hauled off
You too, boy, if ya fuck with me
The police are gonna hafta come and get me
Off yo ass, that's how I'm goin out
For the punk motherfuckers that's showin out
Niggaz start to mumble, they wanna rumble
Mix em and cook em in a pot like gumbo
Goin off on a motherfucker like that
With a gat that's pointed at yo ass
So give it up smooth
Ain't no tellin when I'm down for a jack move
Here's a murder rap to keep yo dancin
With a crime record like Charles Manson
AK-47 is the tool
Don't make me act the motherfuckin fool
Me you can go toe to toe, no maybe
I'm knockin niggaz out tha box, daily
Yo weekly, monthly and yearly
Until them dumb motherfuckers see clearly
That I'm down with the capital C-P-I
Boy you can't fuck with me
So when I'm in your neighborhood, you better duck
Coz Ice Cube is crazy as fuck
As I leave, believe I'm stompin
But when I come back, boy,
I'm comin straight outta Compton

Yo Ren
Whassup?
Tell em where you from!

Straight outta Compton, another crazy ass nigga
More punks I smoke, yo, my rep gets bigger
I'm a bad motherfucker and you know this
But the pussy ass niggaz don't show this
But I don't give a fuck, I'ma make my snaps
If not from the records, from jackin the crops
Just like burglary, the definition is 'jackin'
And when illegally armed it's called 'packin'
Shoot a motherfucker in a minute
I find a good piece o' pussy, I go up in it

So if you're at a show in the front row
I'm a call you a bitch or dirty-ass ho
You'll probably get mad like a bitch is supposed to
But that shows me, slut, you're composed to
A crazy muthafucker from tha street
Attitude legit cause I'm tearin up shit
MC Ren controls the automatic
For any dumb muthafucker that starts static
Not the right hand cause I'm the hand itself
Every time I pull a AK off the shelf
The security is maximum and that's a law
R-E-N spells Ren but I'm raw
See, coz I'm the motherfuckin villain
The definition is clear, you're the witness of a killin
That's takin place without a clue
And once you're on the scope, your ass is through
Look, you might take it as a trip
But a nigga like Ren is on a gangsta tip
Straight outta Compton...

Eazy is his name and the boy is comin...

Straight outta Compton
Is a brotha that'll smother yo' mother
And make ya sister think I love her
Dangerous motherfucker raises hell
And if I ever get caught I make bail
See, I don't give a fuck, that's the problem
I see a motherfuckin cop I don't dodge him
But I'm smart, lay low, creep a while
And when I see a punk pass, I smile
To me it's kinda funny, the attitude showin a nigga drivin
But don't know where the fuck he's going, just rollin
Lookin for the one they call Eazy
But here's a flash, they never seize me
Ruthless! Never seen like a shadow in the dark
Except when I unload, see I'll get over the hesitation
And hear the scream of the one who got the last penetration
Give a little gust of wind and I'm jettin
But leave a memory no one'll be forgettin
So what about the bitch who got shot? Fuck her!
You think I give a damn about a bitch? I ain't a sucker!
This is the autobiography of the E, and if you ever fuck with me
You'll get taken by a stupid dope brotha who will smother
Word to the motherfucker, straight outta Compton

Damn that shit was dope!

1. How does the song (in the lyrics or the video) reflect what was going on in Compton at the time?

2. What is the message/tone of the song?

2 new styles of rap emerged in the early 1990s, gangsta rap & socially-conscious hip hop.

Gangsta Rap	Socially Conscious Hip Hop
DEFINE:	DEFINE:
<u>VIDEO EXAMPLES:</u> “Nuthin’ But a G Thang,” Dr. Dre feat. Snoop Dogg (1992) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is this video/song an example of gangsta rap?	<u>VIDEO EXAMPLE:</u> Tupac’s “Changes” (1992) and “Doo Wop (That Thing),” Lauryn Hill (1998) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Choose ONE) How is this video/song an example of socially conscious hip hop?