Pop Culture Research Paper - Topic Ideas

If you are interested in...

Music

Elvis Presley

Frank Sinatra & the Rat Pack

Joan Jett

Folk music (Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, etc.)

Protest music (Vietnam, civil rights, Black Lives Matter, etc.)

Music and drugs, mental health, etc.

The Beatles

James Brown and soul/funk

Michael Jackson and/or the Jackson 5

Freddie Mercury & Queen

Tracy Chapman & social consciousness

Motown Records

27 Club (musicians' influence, cultural impact, etc.)

Civil rights & rock 'n' roll

Disco (music, dance, culture)

LA riots in song (NWA, Dr. Dre, etc.)

Hip hop (pioneers, East v. West coast rap wars, etc.)

Bruce Springsteen

Grunge music, culture (Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, Nirvana, etc.)

Jimi Hendrix

Music festivals (Altamont, Woodstock, Monterey Pop,

Newport Folk, Lollapalooza, Coachella)

Punk music & culture (The Ramones, Green Day, etc.)

Madonna & reinvention

Jazz (L. Armstrong, E. Fitzgerald, etc.)

MTV

Beyonce (Beychella, Beyhive, Lemonade, cultural impact, etc.)

Kanye (music, business, cultural influence)

Grateful Dead (music distribution, culture, fan base, etc.)

Movies

Dr. Strangelove and atomic culture

Indie films/culture

How the Grinch Stole Christmas & American commercialism

James Bond & spy culture

Atomic scare films

Saturday Night Fever (disco culture)

Marx Brothers

Sherlock Holmes (detective stories in print, media, film, etc.)

Spike Lee & film

War in film (WWII, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.)

Space/sci-fi obsession (I Married a Monster from Outerspace,

Roswell)

Hitchcock thrillers

Wizard of Oz(1930s)

Streetcar Named Desire ('50s sexual repression)

Shaft or Blaxploitation films (changing racial perception)

Easy Rider ('60s youth)

Gone with the Wind

2001: Space Odyssey (1968)

'80s teen movies (Breakfast Club, Sixteen Candles, Pretty in Pink,

etc.

Rebel Without a Cause, James Dean

D.W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation

John Ford westerns

Wall Street and the culture of excess

Marvel films (making of, franchise, representation of comics on

screen, influence, etc.)

Teen culture in films

Print & Digital Media

Judy Blume novels tackle controversial pre-teen topics

Magazines (Life, Ms., Mad Magazine)

Beatnik writers (Kerouac, Ginsberg, etc.)

Barbara Walters

The Crucible (Cold War hysteria)

Man in the Grey Flannel Suit (Advertising and 1950s life)

To Kill a Mockingbird (race, legal system)

Lord of the Flies (1954)

Racism in literature (Anne Moody, Ralph Ellison, Wright)

Dick and Jane books and suburban culture

Tabloidization of news coverage (paparazzi, TMZ, etc.)

Podcasting as storytelling, access, etc.

Social media (development, influence, access, entertainment,

celeb use of, group organization, regulation, etc.)

The impact of technology (cell phones, internet, social media on body image, interaction, society, culture, privacy, etc.)

Art / Comics

Comic books as a representation of... (Cold War fears, teen

life, civil rights turmoil, gender/sexual changes, etc.)

Wonder Woman & the evolution of women in comics

Political cartooning (choose a decade/event)

Dr. Seuss as a political/social commentator

Art in the age of Instagram

Pop Art (Andy Warhol, Jackson Pollock, etc.)

Diego Rivera

Jacob Lawrence

John Muir (photography)

Norman Rockwell & The Saturday Evening Post

Rube Goldberg cartoons

Graffiti art (Jean-Michel Basquiat, etc.)

Blondie or Archie comics

Print & Digital Media (cont.)

Video gaming (origins, realism, gaming culture/community, addiction, Twitch, etc.)

YouTube (origins/influence, rise of influencers, conspiracy theorists, organization, regulation, etc.)

Advertising (evolution, techniques, use of social science, body positivity, etc.)

History of memes

Tik Tok's influence on... (celebs, fashion, dance, etc.)

Celebrities' use of social media (brand building, activism, etc.)

Racial community through online spaces (Black Twitter, Black Tumblr, etc.)

Influencer culture (Inst, YouTube, Fyre festival, etc.)

Miscellaneous

Gender stereotypes in toys (Barbie, GI Joe)

Evolution of food education (Food Network, Tasty, etc.)

Dating & courtship in the age of online/apps

Coney Island & mass culture

Cartoons' influence on perceptions of race, class, gender Miss America pageant

Fashion (fast fashion, sneakers, blue jeans, the "little black dress", etc.)

Broadway theater

Impact/infl. of a production (i.e., Rent, Hair, Hamilton, Dear Evan Hansen)

Comedy (Netflix specials, evolution of, SNL/Daily Show and political satire, stand-up, etc.)

Dance (step dancing, B-boys, swing, Alvin Ailey, etc.)

Sports

J. Robinson, integration of MLB, Negro baseball leagues

The ABA/NBA merger, Harlem Globetrotters

Super Bowl, advertising/origins

Merchandising, endorsements, prof. sports attire

All-American Girls' baseball league

Michael Jordan, athlete & businessman

Sports and political protest (Kaepernick, M. Ali, Kareem

Abdul-Jabbar, Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, Lebron, Rapinoe, etc.)

Opioid use in sports

Sports in the age of Coronavirus

Women in sports (Kerrigan/Harding, Williams' sisters, Babe

Didrickson, Billie Jean King, gender repr. in media, etc.)

Sports journalism & impact of tv/streaming/social media

1968 Black Power Olympics

Fantasy Football and gambling culture

Sports marketing (Gatorade, Nike, Jordan, athleisure, etc.)

Rise of Esports

Evolution of football (regulations, marketing, social class, emergence as America's sport, tailgating culture, relationship to Armed Forces, etc.)

Emergence of extreme sports

Role of technology in sport (imaging, stats, predictive modeling, etc.)

Historical/Cultural Figures & Icons

Dick Tracy in comics, radio, film

Al Capone

PT Barnum (circus)

Walt Disney & the Magic Kingdom

Julia Child (cooking)

John Wayne & the Wild West

The Marlboro Man

Davy Crockett

Marilyn Monroe

Doris Day and 1950s women

Coco Channel

Hugh Hefner & Playboy

James Dean

Audrey Hepburn

Katherine Hepburn

John Dillinger

Dolly Parton

Charlie Chaplin - comedy & social commentary

Timothy Leary & early LSD

Charles Manson murders

Alfred Kinsey, Kinsey Report

Paul Harvey (radio commentator)

Stan Lee

Richard Simmons (fitness personality)

Television

The Cosby Show
Yo! MTV Raps
In Living Color
Buffy the Vampire Slayer
The Fresh Prince of Bel Air
Saturday Night Live
A Different World

Mary Tyler Moore Show Star Trek
Political satire & modern tv (SNL, Daily Show, etc.)

Lucille Ball & I Love Lucy

Hillbilly or working class culture on tv

Policing on TV (Law & Order, COPS, Brooklyn 99, etc.)

Teen culture on television (Riverdale, Gossip Girl, 90210, etc.)

Sports culture & tv (Friday Night Lights, All American, All or Nothing, The U, etc.)

Reboots/remakes of shows (Roseanne, One Day at a Time, etc.)

Children's tv (Sesame Street, Mr. Rogers, Nick Jr., Disney)

Role of modern tv in politics (Fox, CNN, Maddow, etc.)

The impact of cable or streaming on television/film

Evolution of late night tv (Johnny Carson, Letterman, Craig

Ferguson, Fallon, gender, etc.)

Cops (reality tv meets the militarization of police)

Carol Burnett to Amy Schumer - women in comedy

Dystopian tv (Handmaid's Tale, etc.)