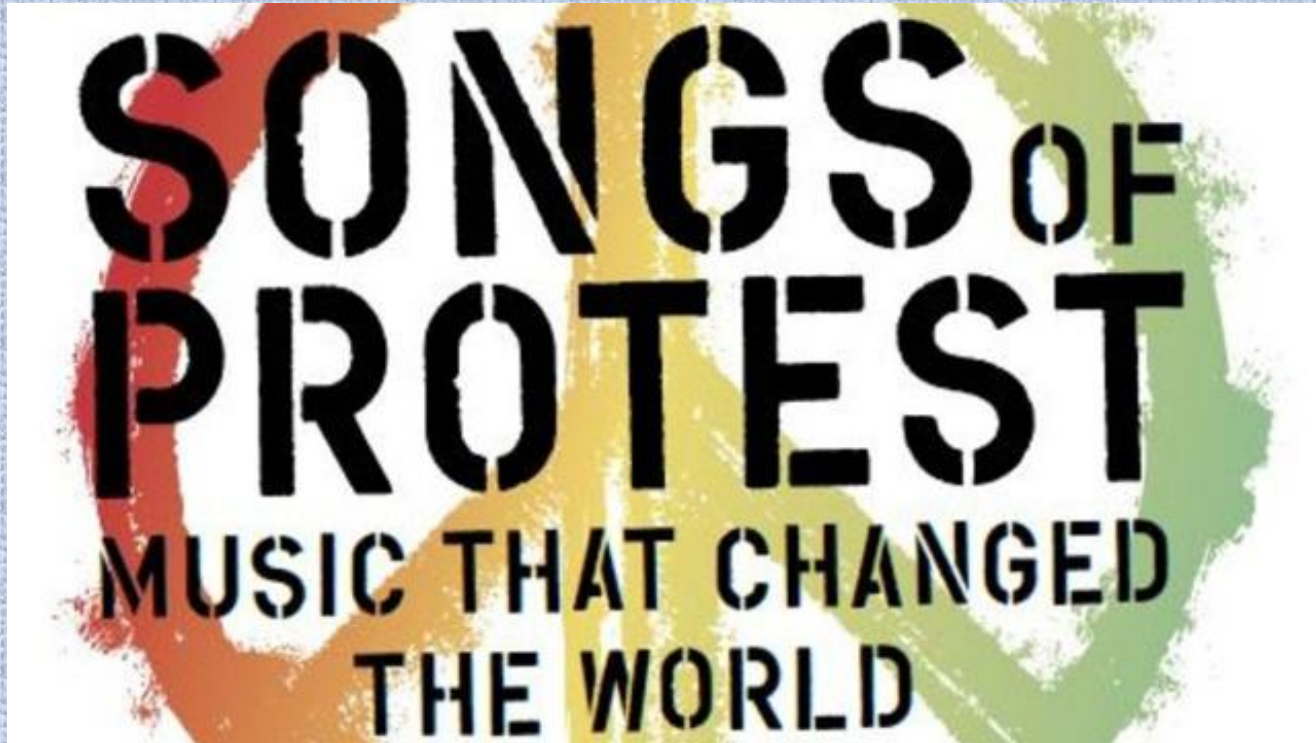




Music With a Message

Protest Music

- Music has always been a form of expression.



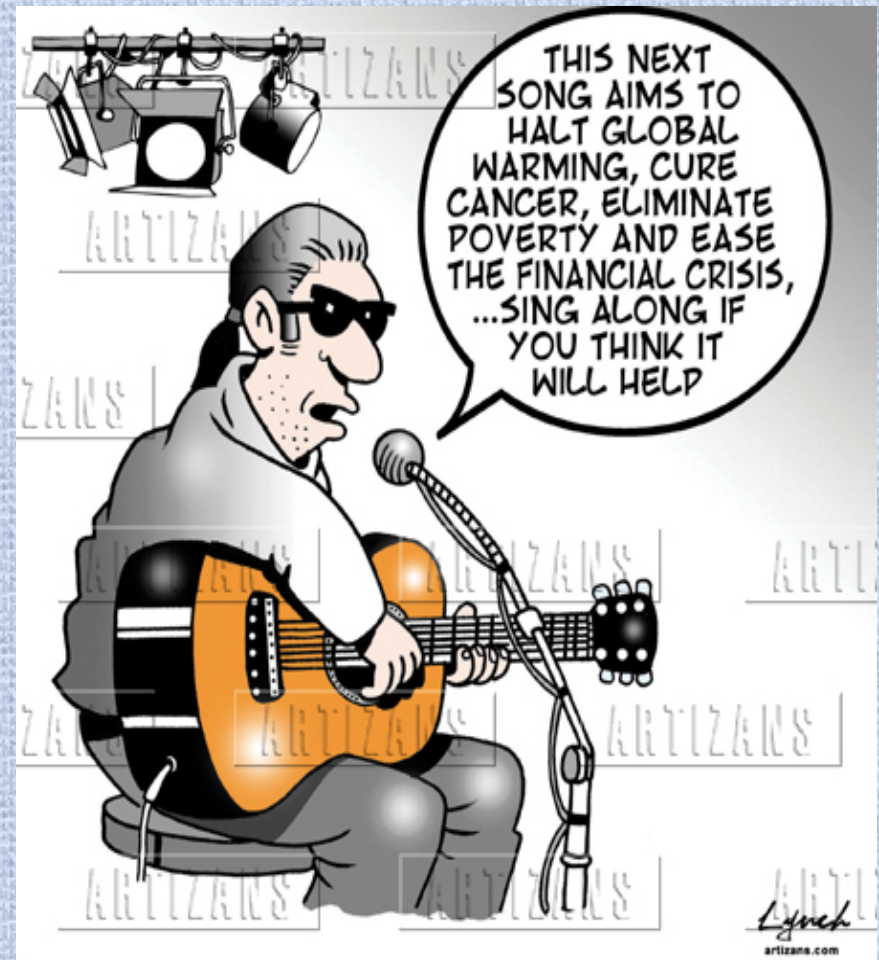
- As we watch the music video that follows, think about how music can be a way to speak out against inequality.



Childish Gambino, "This is America"

What is a protest song?

- A song that is designed to protest economic, political or social problems.
 - Protest music exists in all styles of music, but it's historically been found in folk music.



Events that Inspired Protest (20th Century)



- Racism, sexism, discrimination, etc.
- Wars (Vietnam, Iraq, etc.)
- Economic struggles (The Great Depression, etc.)
- Nuclear weapons



Protest Songs: 1960s



- Protest music in the 1960s was inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, equal rights campaigns, etc.

How many roads most a man walk down
Before you call him a man ?
How many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand ?
Yes, how many times must the cannon balls fly
Before they're forever banned ?
The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

Yes, how many years can a mountain exist
Before it's washed to the sea ?
Yes, how many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free ?
Yes, how many times can a man turn his head
Pretending he just doesn't see ?
The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

Yes, how many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky ?
Yes, how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry ?
Yes, how many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died ?
The answer my friend is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

“Blowin’ in the Wind,” Bob Dylan



What makes this a protest song? Look at the lyrics for help.

Edwin Starr, "War (What is it Good For?)"

What makes this a protest song? Listen to the lyrics for help. What is he protesting?

Oh, war, I despise
'Cause it means destruction of innocent lives
War means tears to thousands of mothers eyes
When their sons go to fight
And lose their lives
I said, war, huh good god, why'all
What is it good for, Absolutely nothing say it again

it ain't nothing but a heart-breaker
(War) friend only to the undertaker
Oh, war it's an enemy to all mankind
The point of war blows my mind
War has caused unrest
Within the younger generation
Induction then destruction
Who wants to die, ah, war-huh, good god why'all
What is it good for, Absolutely nothing

it ain't nothing but a heart breaker
(War) it's got one friend that's the undertaker
Oh, war, has shattered many a young mans dreams
Made him disabled, bitter and mean
Life is much to short and precious
To spend fighting wars these days
War can't give life
It can only take it away



Creedence Clearwater Revival, "Fortunate Son"



Some folks are born made to wave the flag
Ooh, they're red, white and blue
And when the band plays "Hail to the chief"
Ooh, they point the cannon at you, Lord

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no senator's son,
son

It ain't me, it ain't me; I ain't no fortunate one, no

Some folks are born silver spoon in hand
Lord, don't they help themselves, oh
But when the taxman comes to the door
Lord, the house looks like a rummage sale, yes

It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no millionaire's son,
no

It ain't me, it ain't me; I ain't no fortunate one, no

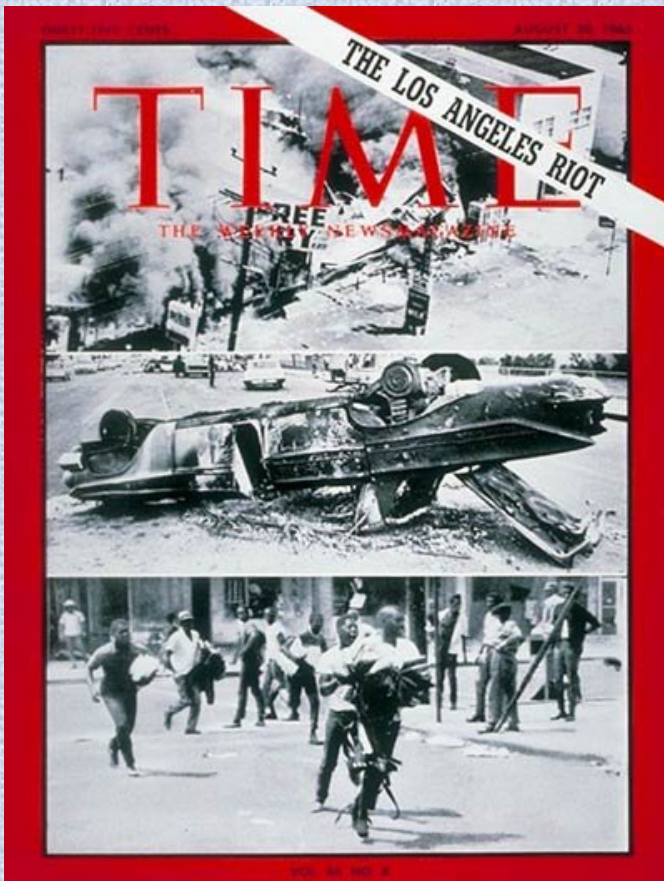
Protest Songs: 1970s & 1980s

- By the end of the 1960s, it was common to express frustration, anger, and a desire for change through the lyrics of music.
- Protest songs in the 1970s & 1980s focused on racial discrimination, economic & gender inequality, and frustration with politicians.



Protest Songs: 1970s

- Marvin Gaye started as a pop star. Things changed for him after the 1965 Watts Riots in LA:



“I remember I was listening to a tune of mine playing on the radio, when the announcer interrupted with news about the Watts riot. My stomach got real tight and my heart started beating like crazy. I wanted to throw the radio down and burn all the songs I’d been singing and get out there with the rest of the brothers. ...I understood anger that builds up over years, and I felt myself exploding. Why didn’t our music have anything to do with this? Wasn’t music supposed to express feelings? I wondered to myself, ‘With the world exploding around me, how am I supposed to keep singing love songs?’”

Marvin Gaye, "What's Going On?"

Picket lines and picket signs
Don't punish me with brutality
Talk to me, so you can see
Oh, what's going on
What's going on
Yeah, what's going on
Ah, what's going on

In the mean time
Right on, baby
Right on brother
Right on babe

Mother, mother, everybody thinks we're
wrong

Oh, but who are they to judge us
Simply 'cause our hair is long
Oh, you know we've got to find a way
To bring some understanding here today
Oh oh oh

Mother, mother
There's too many of you crying
Brother, brother, brother
There's far too many of you dying
You know we've got to find a way
To bring some lovin' here today, eheh

Father, father
We don't need to escalate
You see, war is not the answer
For only love can conquer hate
You know we've got to find a way
To bring some lovin' here today, oh oh oh

Protest Songs: 1970s

Marvin Gaye's "Inner City Blues (Make Me Wanna Holler)"

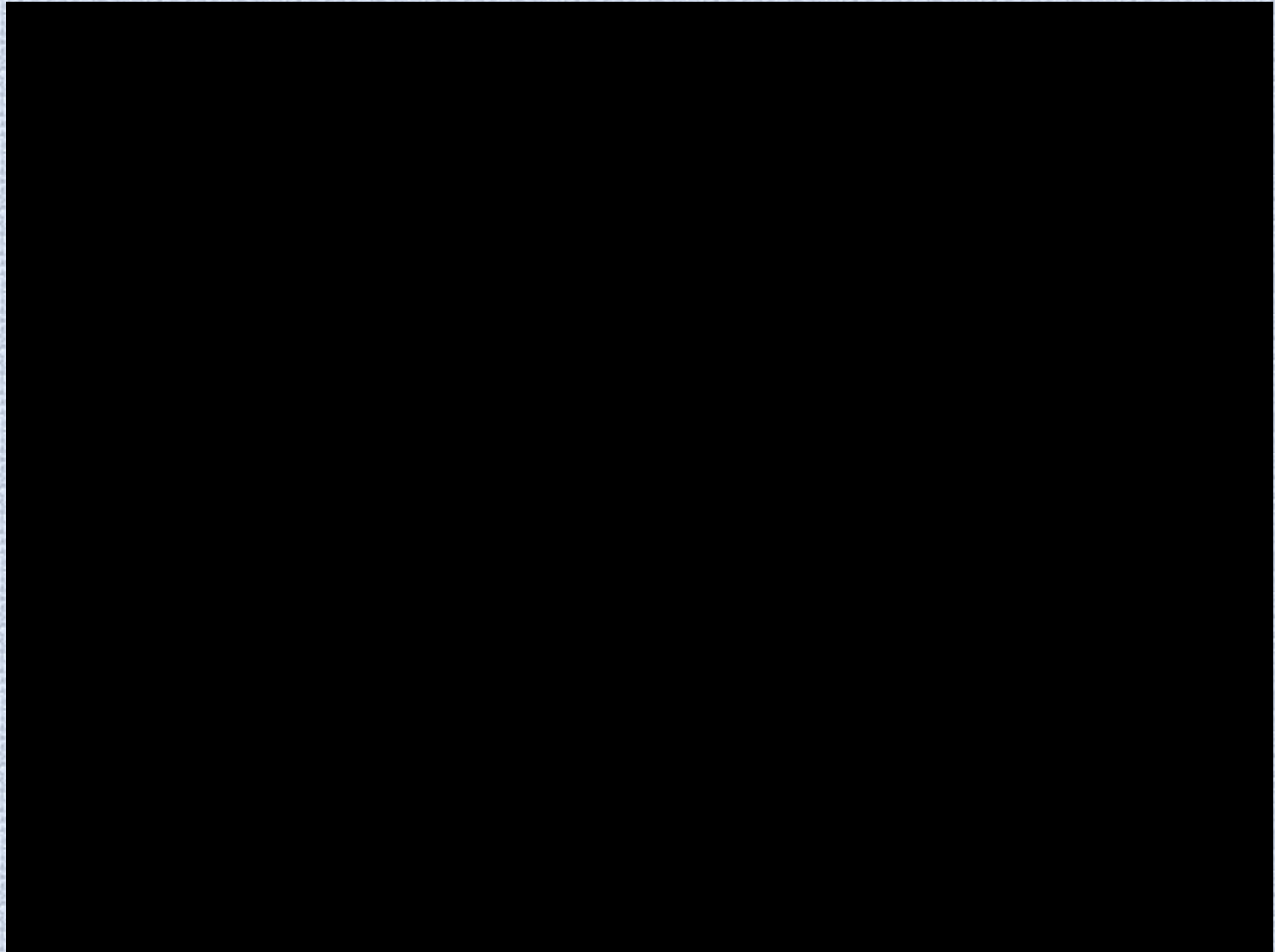
Rockets, moon shots
Spend it on the have nots
Money, we make it
Fore we see it you take it
Oh, make you wanna holler
The way they do my life
Make me wanna holler
The way they do my life
This ain't livin', This ain't livin'
No, no baby, this ain't livin'
No, no, no

Inflation no chance
To increase finance
Bills pile up sky high
Send that boy off to die
Make me wanna holler
The way they do my life
Make me wanna holler
The way they do my life
Hang ups, let downs
Bad breaks, set backs
Natural fact is

I can't pay my taxes
Oh, make me wanna holler
And throw up both my hands
Yea, it makes me wanna holler
And throw up both my hands
Crime is increasing
Trigger happy policing
Panic is spreading
God know where we're heading
Oh, make me wanna holler
They don't understand

Protest Songs: 1970s

Aretha Franklin, "Respect"



Grandmaster Flash's "The Message"

It's like a jungle sometimes
It makes me wonder how I keep
from goin' under

Broken glass everywhere
People pissin' on the stairs, you
know they just don't care

I can't take the smell, can't take the noise
Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
Rats in the front room, roaches in the back
Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat
I tried to get away but I couldn't get far
'Cause a man with a tow truck repossessed my car

Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge

I'm trying not to lose my head

It's like a jungle sometimes

It makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under...

My brother's doin' bad, stole my mother's TV
Says she watches too much, it's just not healthy
All My Children in the daytime, *Dallas* at night
Can't even see the game or the Sugar Ray fight
The bill collectors, they ring my phone
And scare my wife when I'm not home
Got a bum education, double-digit inflation
Can't take the train to the job, there's a strike at the station
Neon King Kong standin' on my back
Can't stop to turn around, broke my sacroiliac
A mid-range migraine, cancered membrane
Sometimes I think I'm goin' insane
I swear I might hijack a plane!

Protest Music in the 21st Century



When you know, we been hurt, been down before, n***a
When my pride was low, lookin' at the world like, where do
we go, n***a?
And we hate Popo,
wanna kill us dead in the street for sure, n***a
I'm at the preacher's door
My knees gettin' weak & my gun might blow but we gon' be
alright

N***a, we gon' be alright
N***a, we gon' be alright
We gon' be alright
Do you hear me, do you feel me, we gon' be alright
N***a, we gon' be alright
Huh, we gon' be alright
N***a, we gon' be alright
Do you hear me, do you feel me, we gon' be alright