

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Counter-Culture: The Movement and the Conflict in Vietnam

We are going to listen to the lyrics of a few songs that reflect the feelings of many (young) people from the '60s-early '70s in the U.S. Artists from Motown to Folk to Elvis all joined in the Anti-Vietnam music-theme.

Attached are the lyrics to these songs. You are going to read these lyrics with a partner and answer the questions for each song. I have given some background for most of the songs so you can put them in context in regards to the artist.

We are going to come back together as a group to go over what points you took away from the music, how it reflects what was going on at the time and what you thought about it in general. We will do this for each song.

The Counter-culture was about going against the “status quo” – the culture at large. The '50s were a time of prosperity, white flight, and suburban ideals. The children of these suburbs were rebelling against the conservative “sameness” of the world they were raised in. How does the Anti-Vietnam Conflict movement coincide with the other movements going on in the country?

Purpose: Music reflects the feelings of a time period. Music was a big part of the Counter-culture since artists were not writing “pop” songs to sell a lot of records, but were trying to get across a message. Music during this time was a common thread that tied a number of different movements together and bound them together.



- 6) Who isn't?
- 7) How does this apply to what we have talked about with Civil Rights and "institutionalized racism"? Who would be more likely to not be in college?
- 8) What is the "cost" of the war?

"Ohio" – Neil Young (Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young) (1970)

The Kent State (OH) shootings occurred in 1970 and Young wrote and released this song shortly afterwards. Students were protesting the War and National Guardsmen opened fire on the crowd. 60 rounds were shot in 13 seconds resulting in 4 students being killed and 8 wounded. The students who were killed were innocent bystanders going to class. The country was outraged.

- 9) What is the general feeling of the song? ("We're finally on our own...")
- 10) What does Young mean about "her"? Who is "she"?
- 11) This song is linked to the Kent State shootings, but what is it "really" speaking about? (Think about WHY the students were protesting)
- 12) Young seems to be predicting the future of this war – what does he think will happen? CCR had the same kind of message in their song.

"Imagine" – John Lennon (1971)

Lennon wrote this song when he was starting his solo career. He felt that words could unite people. We all could live in harmony if we cast aside our quest for material goods, religious and political differences.

13) What are we supposed to “Imagine”?

14) How does this apply to the war in Vietnam? (think about the ideology on each side)

15) What “big picture” concept does Lennon seem to support? Would this have been popular with the conservative people in power in the US?

16) Do you agree with him? Or think he was just idealistic (unrealistic)? Why?

“War” (What is it good for) – Edwin Starr (1969)

Motown was also taking part of the anti-war movement. This song was supposed to be sung by the Temptations, but it was ultimately decided that Starr would sing it.

17) Why would Motown artists take on this subject matter?

18) What is war good for (not good for) according to the song?

19) What do you think war is good for or do you agree with the song?

20) What happens to someone who goes to war?

“What’s Going On” – Marvin Gaye (1971)

Marvin Gaye had a personal stake in the war because his brother was a soldier over there. He heard the stories about what was happening on the front lines and wrote this song about it.

21) What is “going on”?

22) What is “Father” like? How does this reflect the general mood of those involved in the Counter-culture?

23) Is Gaye a supporter of the Counter-culture movement? What gives you that indication?

24) What is Gaye saying about what is happening with the war? Think about CCR and Young.

“Big Question”:

What do you think was the underlying feeling of these songs? Hope? Hopelessness? Write a paragraph about what you took away from these artists and what how you think they reflect this anti-war aspect of the Counter-Culture.