

SOCIAL JUSTICE: PROTEST MUSIC ANALYZE A PROTEST SONG

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SUMMARY

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Students will listen to and read the lyrics to a protest song from the 1980s and write what they think the message is behind the song. They will meet with their partner and write a new verse to the song that could be relevant today.

GOALS

- Students can analyze a protest song and discover the meaning behind it.
- Students can make connections between the song and the time period when it was written.
- Students can write a new verse to the song that is relevant today.

LANGUAGE GOALS

- Students can read the lyrics and analyze the author's meaning.
- Students can write a new song verse.

DURATION

2-3 classes

LANGUAGE

English

MATERIALS

Lesson Worksheet:
ANALYZE A PROTEST SONG

MEDIA

The students use the established communication channel for the exchange with their partner.

DIFFICULTY



DESCRIPTION

Students will listen to the song “99 Luftballons” from 1983 by the German band Nena in English or in German. They will analyze lyrics from the song with a series of questions based on specific lines. Students will then watch a short video about the 40th anniversary of the song which discusses the relevance of the lyrics to the time period in which it came out. Students will then meet with their exchange partner to discuss “99 Luftballons” and write a new verse for the song that could be relevant to today’s world.

TEACHER PREPARATION

- Decide on student pairings for exchange partners.
- Print and make copies of the student worksheet for each student or provide students with a digital copy.
- Prepare red balloons for the class introduction.

CLASS INTRODUCTION

Have one or more red balloons in the classroom (with helium if possible). As students notice the balloons and ask questions, tell them they will listen to a song about red balloons and discover that it actually has nothing to do with balloons. Provide students information about the procedure, duration, and contents of the project. Explain the task to students, give them the contact information for their partners.

EXCHANGE

Students listen to the song “99 Luftballons” and use the lesson worksheet to analyze specific lyrics from the song. They will then watch a short video that explains more about the time period when the song was written (1983) and they will take notes on how the lyrics relate to world events. When students meet with their exchange partner, they will share what they have learned and make connections between the song’s message and world events today. Partners will use suggestions and questions from the lesson worksheet to then write a new verse of the song that would fit the song’s theme and connect it to events happening in the world today.

REFLECTION

Students will reflect on how protest song themes from the past can still be relevant today.

