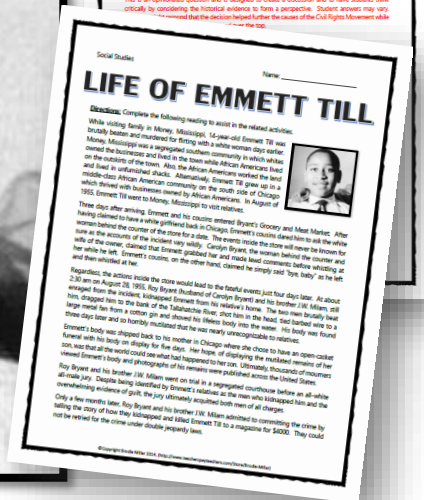
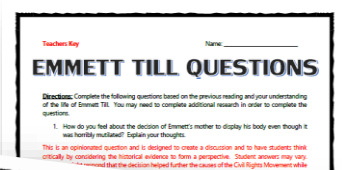
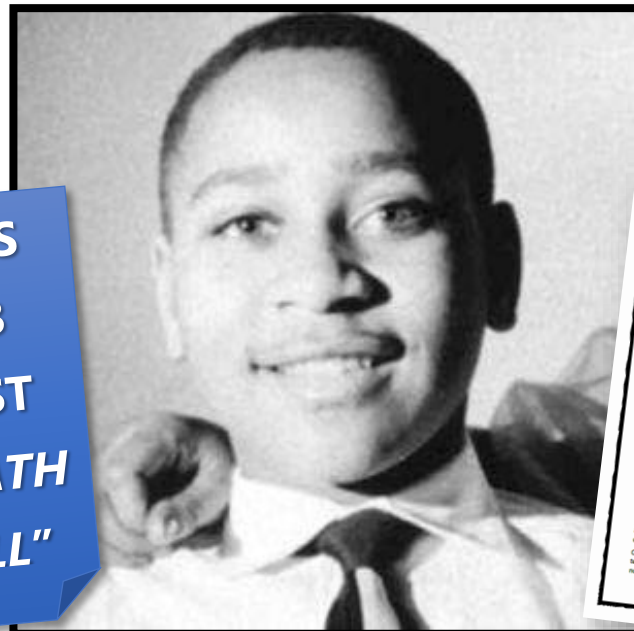


CIVIL RIGHTS DEATH OF EMMETT TILL



**SONG ANALYSIS
OF 1960'S BOB
DYLAN PROTEST
SONG "THE DEATH
OF EMMETT TILL"**



**READING, ANALYSIS
QUESTIONS, SONG ANALYSIS,
WRITING ASSIGNMENT AND
RUBRIC WITH TEACHER KEY**

By: Brodie Millar

LIFE OF EMMETT TILL

Directions: Complete the following reading to assist in the related activities.

While visiting family in Money, Mississippi, 14-year-old Emmett Till was brutally beaten and murdered for flirting with a white woman days earlier. Money, Mississippi was a segregated southern community in which whites owned the businesses and lived in the town while African Americans lived on the outskirts of the town. Also, the African Americans worked the land and lived in unfurnished shacks. Alternatively, Emmett Till grew up in a middle-class African American community on the south side of Chicago which thrived with businesses owned by African Americans. In August of 1955, Emmett Till went to Money, Mississippi to visit relatives.



Three days after arriving, Emmett and his cousins entered Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market. After having claimed to have a white girlfriend back in Chicago, Emmett's cousins dared him to ask the white woman behind the counter of the store for a date. The events inside the store will never be known for sure as the accounts of the incident vary wildly. Carolyn Bryant, the woman behind the counter and wife of the owner, claimed that Emmett grabbed her and made lewd comments before whistling at her while he left. Emmett's cousins, on the other hand, claimed he simply said "bye, baby" as he left and then whistled at her.

Regardless, the actions inside the store would lead to the fateful events just four days later. At about 2:30 am on August 28, 1955, Roy Bryant (husband of Carolyn Bryant) and his brother J.W. Milam, still enraged from the incident, kidnapped Emmett from his relative's home. The two men brutally beat him, dragged him to the bank of the Tallahatchie River, shot him in the head, tied barbed wire to a large metal fan from a cotton gin and shoved his lifeless body into the water. His body was found three days later and so horribly mutilated that he was nearly unrecognizable to relatives.

Emmett's body was shipped back to his mother in Chicago where she chose to have an open-casket funeral with his body on display for five days. Her hope, of displaying the mutilated remains of her son, was that all the world could see what had happened to her son. Ultimately, thousands of mourners viewed Emmett's body and photographs of his remains were published across the United States.

Roy Bryant and his brother J.W. Milam went on trial in a segregated courthouse before an all-white all-male jury. Despite being identified by Emmett's relatives as the men who kidnapped him and the overwhelming evidence of guilt, the jury ultimately acquitted both men of all charges.

Only a few months later, Roy Bryant and his brother J.W. Milam admitted to committing the crime by telling the story of how they kidnapped and killed Emmett Till to a magazine for \$4000. They could not be retried for the crime under double jeopardy laws.

EMMETT TILL QUESTIONS

Directions: Complete the following questions based on the previous reading and your understanding of the life of Emmett Till. You may need to complete additional research in order to complete the questions.

1. How do you feel about the decision of Emmett's mother to display his body even though it was horribly mutilated? Explain your thoughts.
2. What impact, if any, do you think the death of Emmett Till had on the overall Civil Rights Movement? Explain.
3. What does the Emmett Till death and resulting trial show about the American Justice system at the time? Explain.

4. Based on the information provided to you by your teacher, or your own research, what role did "Jim Crow Laws" play in the death of Emmett Till? Explain your reasoning.
5. Why do you suppose Emmett Till decided to "flirt" with the woman even though "Jim Crow Laws" existed and were the tradition of the time?

EMMETT TILL SONG ANALYSIS

The life of Emmett Till has been referenced in several different mediums, such as: music, film and art. One such reference was the 1963 song *The Death of Emmett Till* by Bob Dylan. The song details the main events of Emmett Till's death and its significance as a historical event.

For this assignment, students will read the lyrics of Bob Dylan's song and analyze its message. Students will participate in a class discussion related to the lyrics and will need to consider the questions below in order to be able to fully participate.

1. Does Bob Dylan think that the men who killed till had a good reason for doing so? Explain your reasoning.
2. What do you think Bob Dylan means by the lyric "screaming sounds inside the barn, laughing sounds out on the street"?
3. What does Bob Dylan mean by "on the jury there were men who helped the brothers commit this awful crime"?
4. What thoughts or ideas are being expressed by the lyric: "while Emmett's body floats the foam of a Jim Crow southern sea"?

5. What message(s) is Bob Dylan conveying in the final two stanzas of the song? Explain your ideas.

6. *The Death of Emmett Till* by Bob Dylan was considered a “protest song” in that it provided a perspective on a topical/political issue.
 - a. What is Bob Dylan “protesting” in the song?

 - b. To what extent do you think discussing or addressing political or controversial issues in popular culture (such as a song) is important?

1955 Killing Sparked Civil Rights Revolution: Emmett Till: South's Legend and Legacy

October 07, 1985 | ALLAN JALON | Times Staff Writer

MONEY, Miss. — He only whistled. But the woman he whistled at was white. He was black. A few days later, her angry husband roused him from bed, told him to hurry up and dress. Three days later, his terribly battered body surfaced in the muddy Tallahatchie River where it straightens out for a stretch through the cotton-rich flatlands of the delta.

His name was Emmett Till. He was 14 years old.

An all-white jury acquitted the husband, Roy Bryant, and his half-brother, J. W. Milam, of killing the boy, even though the pair had admitted to the kidnaping. But in that fall of 1955, with the civil rights movement just emerging, headlines carried the trial's result around the world and prompted a harsher verdict against a South where racial injustice seemed like an accepted way of life.

Today, while most of the world may have forgotten him, Emmett Till is remembered in this region of the delta. His memory has grown strong roots here, both as a legend and a legacy: Grandparents pass his grim tale on to their descendants, and black politicians say it still goads them in their fight to share local power. Even now, his name seems to haunt local whites.

Rosa Parks, a seamstress who started the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott on Dec. 1, 1955, by refusing to yield her bus seat to a white man, has become far more famous. The boycott is widely considered the start of the modern black movement.

But some historians, political figures from the time and veterans of the movement now say the Till case had an impact on the nation far beyond today's faded memory. They contend that it and the bus boycott belong to the same progression of events. If Rosa Parks showed the potential of defiance, they say, Emmett Till's death warned of a bleak future without it.

"I think it was a major incident when it came to showing one part of America the ugly side of another part," said Robert Fredrick Burk, who wrote a 1984 book entitled "The Eisenhower Administration and Black Civil Rights."

Burk and others say the case gave civil rights advocates a martyr and ambivalent politicians an impetus to push through the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which created the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and laid the foundation for a series of historic voting rights laws.

"It certainly strengthened my hand in the day-to-day effort to get the Administration to speak out and do something on civil rights," said E. Frederic Morrow, who advised President Dwight D. Eisenhower on black affairs. "I can still see the sacks and sacks of mail the White House received about Emmett Till."

This is an excerpt from an article taken from: http://articles.latimes.com/print/1985-10-07/news/mn-16511_1_emmett-till-s-name

All copyright of the article remains with the author and copyright holder and is only used here for educational purposes. To see the full story please visit the website above for the LA Times.

The Civil Rights Movement as a time period was significant and the death of Emmett Till played a significant role in its development. For this assignment, students will write a paragraph response in which they identify the extent to which the death of Emmett Till advanced the overall Civil Rights Movement. Students will need to write a persuasive response in which they explain the events of the death of Emmett Till and how it helped push forward the overall Civil Rights Movement. In the response, students will need to provide details about the historical event and how it impacted the overall Civil Rights Movement. Students will need to consider the question below in their response.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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Social Studies**Name:** _____**Written Response Evaluation**

		EXPLANATIONS AND SUPPORT (8 marks)		COMMUNICATION (2 marks)
Excellent E	8	Explanations are deliberate and comprehensive, revealing a perceptive understanding. Support is specific and accurate, and errors, if present, do not detract from the response. A thorough understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	2	The writing is fluent and purposefully organized. Vocabulary is precise. The writing demonstrates confident control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. Errors, if present, are inconsequential.
Proficient Pf	6.4	Explanations are appropriate and purposeful, revealing a clear understanding. Support is relevant and appropriate, but may contain some minor errors. A clear understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	1.6	The writing is straightforward and clearly organized. Vocabulary is specific. The writing frequently demonstrates effective control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. Errors do not detract from communication.
Satisfactory S	4.8	Explanations are general and straightforward, revealing an acceptable understanding. Support is relevant but general, may be incompletely developed, and/or contains errors. An acceptable understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	1.2	The writing is generally clear and functionally organized. Vocabulary is adequate. The writing demonstrates basic control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. Errors do not seriously interfere with communication.
Limited L	3.2	Explanations are overgeneralized and/or redundant, revealing a confused, though discernible, understanding. Support is superficial, may not be always relevant, and may contain significant errors. An incomplete understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	0.8	The writing is uneven and incomplete, but is discernibly organized. Vocabulary is imprecise and/or inappropriate. The writing demonstrates a faltering control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics. Errors hinder communication.
Poor P	1.6	Explanations are tangential or minimal, revealing a negligible understanding. Support, if present, is incomplete, may be marginally relevant, and contains significant and/or frequent errors. A minimal understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	0.4	The writing is unclear and disorganized. Vocabulary is ineffective and frequently incorrect. A lack of control of sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics is demonstrated. Errors impede communication.
Insufficient INS				

Mark: _____ /10

EMMETT TILL QUESTIONS

Directions: Complete the following questions based on the previous reading and your understanding of the life of Emmett Till. You may need to complete additional research in order to complete the questions.

1. How do you feel about the decision of Emmett's mother to display his body even though it was horribly mutilated? Explain your thoughts.

This is an opinionated question and is designed to create a discussion and to have students think critically by considering the historical evidence to form a perspective. Student answers may vary. Students might respond that the decision helped further the causes of the Civil Rights Movement while others might argue it was grotesque and over the top.

2. What impact, if any, do you think the death of Emmett Till had on the overall Civil Rights Movement? Explain.

This is an opinionated question and is designed to create a discussion and to have students think critically by considering the historical evidence to form a perspective. Student answers may vary. Students may need to complete further research in order to answer this question. The included news story titled "1955 Killing Sparked Civil Rights Revolution: Emmett Till: South's Legend and Legacy" can be used to help facilitate student responses, or the teacher could guide students to the website to complete their own research. Student responses should center on the fact that the death of Emmett Till sparked a controversy that helped further the cause of the Civil Rights Movement.

3. What does the Emmett Till death and resulting trial show about the American Justice system at the time? Explain.

It shows the failure of the system and its limitations based on the traditions and feelings of a given community. The resulting trial of Emmett Till's life shows the failure of the system to recognize the rights of all citizens.

4. Based on the information provided to you by your teacher, or your own research, what role did "Jim Crow Laws" play in the death of Emmett Till? Explain your reasoning.

Students will need to complete research on Jim Crow Laws to complete this questions. The following link can be used either by the students to learn more: <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what.htm>

Ultimately students should find that the tradition of Jim Crow Laws determined that the actions of Emmett Till in the store (whatever they were) were disrespectful because he was African American and he was saying them to a white woman.

5. Why do you suppose Emmett Till decided to "flirt" with the woman even though "Jim Crow Laws" existed and were the tradition of the time?

He was likely unaware of the unwritten rules of Jim Crow because he was from Chicago and was not accustomed to the traditions of the South.

EMMETT TILL

SONG ANALYSIS

The life of Emmett Till has been referenced in several different mediums, such as: music, film and art. One such reference was the 1963 song *The Death of Emmett Till* by Bob Dylan. The song details the main events of Emmett Till's death and its significance as a historical event.

For this assignment, students will read the lyrics of Bob Dylan's song and analyze its message. Students will participate in a class discussion related to the lyrics and will need to consider the questions below in order to be able to fully participate.

1. Does Bob Dylan think that the men who killed till had a good reason for doing so? Explain your reasoning.

No, because he suggests that he doesn't know why they killed him, or that they had no reason.

2. What do you think Bob Dylan means by the lyric "screaming sounds inside the barn, laughing sounds out on the street"?

The idea that the beating suffered by Emmett Till took place in the barn, but the outer society is laughing because they don't value him or other African Americans. It is making a statement about American society and culture at the time.

3. What does Bob Dylan mean by "on the jury there were men who helped the brothers commit this awful crime"?

He does not mean that the men helped carry out the actual death but by acquitting the brothers, the jury "helped" the men get away with the crime.

4. What thoughts or ideas are being expressed by the lyric: "while Emmett's body floats the foam of a Jim Crow southern sea"?

Imagery that Emmett Till's death was a result of the laws and traditions of the Jim Crow Laws.

5. What message(s) is Bob Dylan conveying in the final two stanzas of the song? Explain your ideas.

The idea that we have a responsibility to respond to injustices like the death of Emmett Till.

6. *The Death of Emmett Till* by Bob Dylan was considered a “protest song” in that it provided a perspective on a topical/political issue.
- a. What is Bob Dylan “protesting” in the song?

The segregation and inequality of African Americans in society and the injustices of the American justice system in dealing with major inequalities.

- b. To what extent do you think discussing or addressing political or controversial issues in popular culture (such as a song) is important?

This is an opinionated question and is designed to create a discussion and to have students think critically by considering the historical evidence to form a perspective. Student answers may vary. Student responses could focus on the idea that popular music is a fantastic avenue for getting a message out about an important or controversial topic.

***This task is designed to be a discussion activity. Students should be given ample opportunity to review the lyrics and consider the questions before participating in the discussion. First, students should be given a copy of the lyrics (<http://www.bobdylan.com/ca/node/27031>) and/or playing a copy of the song (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVKTx9YIKIs>) for students. The questions are meant to be open-ended such that it will foster student’s discussion and debate. Allow students to discuss and build on the ideas of others or to bring the ideas of others into question.

EMMETT TILL WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The Civil Rights Movement as a time period was significant and the death of Emmett Till played a significant role in its development. For this assignment, students will write a paragraph response in which they identify the extent to which the death of Emmett Till advanced the overall Civil Rights Movement. Students will need to write a persuasive response in which they explain the events of the death of Emmett Till and how it helped push forward the overall Civil Rights Movement. In the response, students will need to provide details about the historical event and how it impacted the overall Civil Rights Movement. Students will need to consider the question below in their response.

To what extent did the death of Emmett Till help the development of the Civil Rights Movement?

The intention of this assignment is for students to consider the larger impact of the death of Emmett Till to the overall Civil Rights Movement. For this writing assignment, students are to consider the historical event of the death of Emmett Till and explain the ways in which it advanced the Civil Rights Movement. Students will need to explain their ideas and use historical evidence to back up and support their response. A marking rubric has been included for ease of assessment.