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# CIVIL RIGHTS SONG ANALYSIS PROJECT



## Overview

Popular music in the 1960's reflected the message of the Civil Rights Movement. In particular, the song "Blowin' in the Wind" by Bob Dylan is often considered to be an anthem of the decade and the overall Civil Rights Movement. For this project, students will analyze the lyrics of the song "Blowin' in the Wind" by Bob Dylan and create a display using historical photos from the era of the Civil Rights Movement to show the links between the song and the major events or themes of the Civil Rights Movement. Students will need to create a display (poster, PowerPoint, video, photo essay, etc.) that contains all of the required elements below and displays how the song links to the events of the Civil Rights Movement.

## Required Elements

Each project must contain an analysis of the lyrics of the song "Blowin' in the Wind" by using:

- At least 5 historical photos with each photo representing a different major event of the Civil Rights Movement or the overall advancement of the Civil Rights Movement itself.
- Captions for each photo that:
  - Explain the historical event being shown related to the Civil Rights Movement with information about what occurred during the event.
  - An explanation of how the photo and related event of the Civil Rights Movement links with a lyric from the song "Blowin' in the Wind"
- A final statement on the overall message of the song with an emphasis on the student's interpretation of the meaning of the title "Blowin' in the Wind".

## Resources

Students may need to reference the following in order to complete this project:

- Lyrics: <http://www.bobdylan.com/ca/node/25835>
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWwgrjIMXA>

# FOR EXAMPLE...

The following is an example of how students may choose to present their project. Students may not use this picture or analysis as part of their overall project. Notice that a Civil Rights era photo has been included and that the caption details the historical significance of the photo AND how it relates to the lyrics of the song.

*How many roads must a man walk down  
Before you call him a man?*



The above image is a sign from the era of the Civil Rights Movement or Jim Crow Era and represents the policies of segregation that was popular in the southern United States. These signs were posted at the entrances, exits, and water fountains of the meeting areas, waiting rooms, halls, auditoriums, salesrooms, and restrooms of institutions and accommodations, both public and private. The sign above appears to be from for restaurants in the state of Texas based on the information present. The Civil Rights Movement sought to end these policies of segregation.

The lyric "How many roads must a man walk down before you call him a man?" relates to the photo because the photo is detailing a part of American history in which certain people (African Americans) were not treated with the same rights as other people (whites). Therefore, African Americans were not being treated equally and were considered less than human, or at least lesser than whites. This is shown in that the sign is comparing African Americans and Mexicans with dogs and treating all of them as equally unwanted in society. Therefore, these people are not be treated as "men" or equal people.

**Social Studies**  
**Song Analysis Evaluation**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

		<b>CAPTIONS (5 marks)</b>		<b>IMAGES (2.5 marks)</b>		<b>FORMAT (2.5 marks)</b>
<b>Excellent E</b>	5	Explanations and interpretations are deliberate and comprehensive, revealing a perceptive understanding. A thorough understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	2.5	The images are excellent at representing the chosen impacts and content of the task. The project contains at least 5 images.	2.5	The project is formatted and organized in an excellent fashion.
<b>Proficient Pf</b>	4	Explanations and interpretations are appropriate and purposeful, revealing a clear understanding. A clear understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	2	The images are appropriate at representing the chosen impacts and content of the task. The project contains at least 5 images.	2	The project is formatted and organized in an appropriate fashion.
<b>Satisfactory S</b>	3	Explanations and interpretations are general and straightforward, revealing an acceptable understanding. An acceptable understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	1.5	The images are satisfactory at representing the chosen impacts and content of the task. The project could contain less than 5 images.	1.5	The project is formatted and organized in a satisfactory fashion.
<b>Limited L</b>	2	Explanations and interpretations are overgeneralized and/or redundant, revealing a confused, though discernible, understanding. An incomplete understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	1	The images are poor at representing the chosen impacts and content of the task. The project contains less than 5 images.	1	The project is formatted and organized in general fashion.
<b>Poor P</b>	1	Explanations and interpretations are minimal, revealing a negligible understanding. A minimal understanding of the assigned task is demonstrated.	0.5	The images do not adequately representing the chosen impacts and content of the task. The project contains less than 5 images.	0.5	The project is formatted and organized in poor fashion.
<b>Insufficient INS</b>						

**Mark:** \_\_\_\_\_ /10

# TEACHER GUIDE

The intention of this project is for students to analyze a source ("Blowin' in the Wind") from the era of the Civil Rights Movement (1960's) and show their understanding of how the song came to be an anthem and represent the overall message of the Civil Rights Movement. This project is best used as a concluding activity for a Civil Rights unit of study, as the students will require previous knowledge of Civil Rights related events in order to link historical evidence with the lyrics from the song. It is strongly suggested that the teacher review the lyrics of the song with the class beforehand and perhaps even show students a video of the song to engage and begin student thinking on the project. Web links have been included on the student handout for this purpose.

The project can be done in either groups or individually, based on the needs to the teacher and students. Students will require access to the internet and an image database such as Google Images in order to be able to search for Civil Rights related photos. The heart of the project is the captions that accompany the photos and students should be encouraged to give detailed and expanded explanations. An example of how to complete the assignment has been included. The project requires students to choose at least 5 photos and link them with at least 5 lyrics from the song. This should be a very easy task as the song is very open to interpretation and usually students can be very creative and insightful in their interpretations of the lyrics. The teacher should encourage students to be creative in the creation of their projects. In the past I have even had students create a sort of music video to accompany the song with Civil Rights related images and a written piece handed in to explain the interpretations. The teacher could also lower the required number of images to make the task easier or increase the number to make it more challenging. In the past I have sometimes required students to create a representations for every line in the song.

The teacher could require students to present their final projects to the rest of the class in order to showcase the differing interpretations of the song and as a way of reviewing the major content of a Civil Rights related unit of study.

A rubric has been included for ease of assessment with a focus on the written portion of the project.