

Vietnam War Songs Activity

Analyze each verse from your assigned song. Use YouTube to listen to and the Internet to research the meaning behind each song. Be sure to note the meaning for each song, as your group will have to give a short presentation to the class about the song. Once the analysis of your song is finished, complete the worksheet on counterculture.

Group 1. Goodnight, Saigon by Billy Joel

*We met as soul-mates
On Parris Island
We left as inmates
From an asylum.
And we were sharp
As sharp as knives
And we were so gung ho to lay down our lives.*

*We came in spastic
Like tame-less horses
We left in plastic
As numbered corpses
And we learned fast
To travel light
Our arms were heavy but our bellies were tight*

*We had no home-front
We had no soft soap
They sent us Playboy
They gave us Bob Hope
We dug in deep
And shot on sight
And prayed to Jesus Christ with all of our might*

*We had no cameras
To shoot the landscape
We passed the hash pipe
And played our Doors tapes
And it was dark...
So dark at night
And we held on to each other
Like brother to brother
We promised our mothers we'd write*

*And we would all go down together
We said we'd all go down together
Yes we would all go down together*

*Remember Charlie?
Remember Baker?
They left their childhood
On every acre
And who was wrong?
And who was right?
It didn't matter in the thick of the fight...*

*We, held the day,...
In the palm of our hands
They, ruled the night
And the night, seemed to last as long as six weeks
On Parris Island
We held the coastline
They held the highland
And they were sharp
As sharp as knives
They heard the hum of the motors
They counted the rotors
And waited for us to arrive*

*And we would all go down together
We said we'd all go down together
Yes we would all go down together*

Vietnam War Songs Activity

Analyze each verse from your assigned song. Use YouTube to listen to and the Internet to research the meaning behind each song. Be sure to note the meaning for each song, as your group will have to give a short presentation to the class about the song. Once the analysis of your song is finished, complete the worksheet on counterculture.

Group 2. Ohio by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

*Tin soldiers and Nixon's comin'.
We're finally on our own.
This summer I hear the drummin'.
Four dead in Ohio.*

*Gotta get down to it.
Soldiers are gunning us down.
Should have been done long ago.
What if you knew her and
Found her dead on the ground?
How can you run when you know?*

Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na.
Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na.
Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na.
Na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na.

*Gotta get down to it.
Soldiers are cutting us down.
Should have been done long ago.
What if you knew her and
Found her dead on the ground?
How can you run when you know?*

[illegible]

Vietnam War Songs Activity

Analyze each verse from your assigned song. Use YouTube to listen to and the Internet to research the meaning behind each song. Be sure to note the meaning for each song, as your group will have to give a short presentation to the class about the song. Once the analysis of your song is finished, complete the worksheet on counterculture.

Group 3. Fortunate Son by Creedence Clearwater Revival

*Some folks are born 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,
Yeah!*

*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.*

*Some folks inherit star spangled eyes,
Ooh, they send you down to war, Lord,
And when you ask them, "How much should we give?"
Ooh, they only answer More! more! more! yoh,*

*It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no military son, son.
It ain't me, it ain't me; I ain't no fortunate one, one.
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one, no no no,
It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate son, no no no.*

Vietnam War Songs Activity

Analyze each verse from your assigned song. Use YouTube to listen to and the Internet to research the meaning behind each song. Be sure to note the meaning for each song, as your group will have to give a short presentation to the class about the song. Once the analysis of your song is finished, complete the worksheet on counterculture.

Group 4. For What It's Worth by Buffalo Springfield

*There's somethin' happenin' here
What it is ain't exactly clear
There's a man with a gun over there
A tellin' me, I got to beware*

*I think it's time we stop, children, what's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down*

*There's battle lines being drawn
Nobody's right if everybody's wrong
Young people speakin' their minds
A gettin' so much resistance from behind*

*Time we stop, hey, what's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down*

*What a field day for the heat
(Hmm, hmm, hmm)
A thousand people in the street
(Hmm, hmm, hmm)
Singing songs and they carrying signs
(Hmm, hmm, hmm)
Mostly say, hooray for our side
(Hmm, hmm, hmm)*

*It's time we stop, hey, what's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down*

*Paranoia strikes deep
Into your life it will creep
It starts when you're always afraid
Step out of line, the man come and take you away*

*We better stop, hey, what's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down
We better stop, hey, what's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down*

*We better stop, now, what's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down*

*We better stop, children, what's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down*

Vietnam War Songs Activity

Analyze each verse from your assigned song. Use YouTube to listen to and the Internet to research the meaning behind each song. Be sure to note the meaning for each song, as your group will have to give a short presentation to the class about the song. Once the analysis of your song is finished, complete the worksheet on counterculture.

Group 5. Ballad of the Green Berets by Barry Sadler

*Fighting soldiers from the sky
Fearless men who jump and die
Men who mean just what they say
The brave men of the Green Beret*

*Silver wings upon their chest
These are men, America's best
One hundred men will test today
But only three win the Green Beret*

*Trained to live off nature's land
Trained in combat, hand-to-hand
Men who fight by night and day
Courage peak from the Green Berets*

*Silver wings upon their chest
These are men, America's best
One hundred men will test today
But only three win the Green Beret*

*Back at home a young wife waits
Her Green Beret has met his fate
He has died for those oppressed
Leaving her his last request*

*Put silver wings on my son's chest
Make him one of America's best
He'll be a man they'll test one day
Have him win the Green Beret.*

Vietnam War Songs Activity

Analyze each verse from your assigned song. Use YouTube to listen to and the Internet to research the meaning behind each song. Be sure to note the meaning for each song, as your group will have to give a short presentation to the class about the song. Once the analysis of your song is finished, complete the worksheet on counterculture.

Group 6. War by Edwin Starr

*War, huh, yeah
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Uh-huh*

*War, huh, yeah
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Say it again, y'all*

*War, huh, good God
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Listen to me*

*Ohhh, war, I despise
Because 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, y'all
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Say it again*

*War, whoa, Lord
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Listen to me*

*War, it ain't nothing
But a heartbreaker
War, friend only to the undertaker
Ooooh, 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
Aaaaah, war-huh
Good God y'all
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Say it, say it, say it
War, huh
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Listen to me*

*War, huh, yeah
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Uh-huh
War, huh, yeah
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Say it again y'all
War, huh, good God
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Listen to me*

*War, it ain't nothing but a heartbreaker
War, it's got one friend
That's the undertaker
Ooooh, 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*

*Ooooh, war, huh
Good God y'all
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Say it again
War, whoa, Lord
What is it good for
Absolutely nothing
Listen to me*

*War, it ain't nothing but a heartbreaker
War, friend only to the undertaker
Peace, love and understanding
Tell me, is there no place for them today
They say we must fight to keep our freedom
But Lord knows there's got to be a better way*

*Ooooooh, war, huh
Good God y'all
What is it good for
You tell me
Say it, say it, say it, say it*

*War, huh
Good God y'all
What is it good for
Stand up and shout it
Nothing*

Vietnam War Songs Activity

Analyze each verse from your assigned song. Use YouTube to listen to and the Internet to research the meaning behind each song. Be sure to note the meaning for each song, as your group will have to give a short presentation to the class about the song. Once the analysis of your song is finished, complete the worksheet on counterculture.

Group 7. Eve of Destruction by Barry McGuire

*The eastern world, it is exploding
Violence flarin', bullets loadin'
You're old enough to kill, but not for votin'
You don't believe in war, but what's that gun you're totin'
And even the Jordan River has bodies floatin'*

*But you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve
of destruction.*

*Don't you understand what I'm tryin' to say
Can't you feel the fears I'm feelin' today?
If the button is pushed, there's no runnin' away
There'll be no one to save, with the world in a grave
[Take a look around ya boy, it's bound to scare ya boy]*

*And you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve
of destruction.*

*Yeah, my blood's so mad feels like coagulatin'
I'm sitting here just contemplatin'
I can't twist the truth, it knows no regulation.
Handful of senators don't pass legislation
And marches alone can't bring integration
When human respect is disintegratin'
This whole crazy world is just too frustratin'*

*And you tell me
Over and over and over again, my friend
Ah, you don't believe
We're on the eve
of destruction.*

*Think of all the hate there is in Red China
Then take a look around to Selma, Alabama
You may leave here for 4 days in space
But when you return, it's the same old place
The poundin' of the drums, the pride and disgrace
You can bury your dead, but don't leave a trace
Hate your next-door neighbor, but don't forget to say grace
And, tell me over and over and over and over again, my friend
You don't believe
We're on the eve
Of destruction
Mm, no no, you don't believe
We're on the eve
Of destruction.*

The Counterculture of the 1960s

1. What is a “counterculture”?

2. What was this counterculture of the 1960s critical of?

3. Describe how some of these people lived their lives:

4. How did each of the following relate to the counterculture movement?

A. Bob Dylan

B. Haight & Ashbury

C. Andy Warhol

D. The Beatles

E. Woodstock

5. Why did this movement begin to fade in the 1970s?