**Grade:** 11th

# TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT

***Vietnam War Music Analysis From Kailee Donovan***

**Length of Class:** 1 hour

**Essential Question**: How does war affect individual people?

## **Lesson Objective**: Students will investigate the climate on the home front during the Vietnam War by analyzing Vietnam War protest music.

**Materials**:

-Vietnam War Music lyrics and Worksheet

-Songs: *Eve of Destruction, Ballad of the Green Berets, War, Ohio*

# Activities:

## Initiation: Class Review

* + What was the American people’s response to the Vietnam War in the United States? How do you know? (discuss specifics like Kent State, draft dodgers, televised war, journalism)
  + What can we learn by listening to music (in history or today)?
* Pass out *The Vietnam War: Protest Music*

## Teacher will play Vietnam song while students listen and follow along with the printed lyrics

* When song is finished students will take a few minutes to answer the questions alone or with a partner. Then students will share out their answers/ideas as a class.
  + The first song analysis can be done as a whole class to model the interpretation if students need assistance
* Process will repeat for three more protest songs
* Closure: Discuss the “Sum it all up” questions on the worksheet as a class.
  + Why do you think so much music was written about the Vietnam War?
  + Why is music such an effective and powerful form of protest?
* Collect worksheets for completion grade

**Assessment:** Informal-Student discussion of questions and completion of the worksheet. Formal-Worksheet collected and reviewed for a homework grade

**Performance Standards:** 1.12: Analyze how the arts, architecture, music, and literature of the United States reflect its history and cultural heterogeneity.

**Eve of Destruction-Barry McGuire, 1965** 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.

### Ballad of The Green Berets, SSgt Barry Sadler, 1966

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 we'll 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 deep, from the Green Beret

Silver wings upon their chest These are men, America's best One hundred men we'll 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 this 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

### Ohio by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, 1970

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. 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?

Tin soldiers and Nixon's comin'. We're finally on our own.

This summer I hear the drummin'. Four dead in Ohio.

### War, Edwin Starr, 1970

War...huh...yeah What is it good for? Absolutely nothing Uh ha haa ha War...huh...yeah What is it good for?

Absolutley nothing...say it again y'all War..huh...look out...

What is it good for?

Absolutely nothing...listen to me ohhhhh

WAR! I despise,

'cos it means destruction of innocent lives,

War means tears to thousands of mother's eyes,

When their sons gone 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! Huh...What is it good for (Edwin

sings 'Wohh oh Lord' over the top) Absolutely nothing...listen to me

WAR! It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker,

War. Friend only to the undertaker. Ohhh! War is an enemy to all mankind, The thought of war blows my mind.

War has caused unrest within the younger generation

Induction then destruction...who wants to die? Ohhh

WAR! good God y'all huh What is it good for?

Absolutely nothing...say it say it SAY IT!

WAR!...uh huh yeah hu! 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.

Ohhhh! War has shattered many a young man's dream,

Made him disabled, bitter and mean, Life is much too short and precious to spend fighting wars these days.

War can't give life, it can only take it away!

Ohhh WAR! huh...good God y'all What is it good for?

Absolutely nothing...say it again War!...huh...woh oh oh 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...woo

Peace lovin' understand then 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.

Ohhhhhhh WAR! huh...good God y'all... What is it good for?...you tell me!

Say it say it say it saaaay it! War! good God now...huh

What is it good for?

Stand up and shout it...NOTHING [END]

American Studies: Vietnam War Name:

### The Vietnam War: Protest Music

Eve of Destruction:

1. What does Barry McGuire mean when he says:
   1. “You’re old enough to kill, but not for votin’”
   2. “If the button is pushed there’s no runnin away”
2. What is the overall message of this song?

Ballad of the Green Berets:

1. How does this song make you feel?
2. How does the song portray soldiers?
3. Does this song support or condemn American Involvement of the Vietnam War? How do you know (give two specific examples from the song)?

Ohio:

1. Who are the soldiers Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young are referring to? What do you think the artists mean by “tin soldiers”? (Hint: Tin is a cheap metal.)
2. What event is this song written for? How do you know? (Use specific examples from the lyrics.)

War:

1. What is the overall message of this song? Think about the tone as well as the lyrics.
2. Choose 1-2 lines in the song that you feel send the strongest message. Record them here:

Why did you choose those lines? What message do they send? What is especially powerful about the lines you chose?

Sum it all up:

1. Why do you think so much music was written about the Vietnam War?
2. Why is music such an effective and powerful form of protest?