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Making Meaning of May 4 **K-12 Teaching Plan**

Name of Educator: Colette Berard

Educator's Teaching Plan Number & Title: Project 44, "Nothing But Our Voices: Speaking Out Through Song"

Level of Students for Educator's Teaching Plan: Grades 7-12

Subject Area for Educator's Teaching Plan: History

Educator's State: Massachusetts

Description of Educator's Teaching Plan: Students understand social change and May 4 through study and their own creation of protest songs. Students react to/analyze music of Civil Rights, Black Student, and Antiwar Movements, including "Ohio," written in response to May 4.

This educational teaching plan was developed during Kent State University's Summer 2021 workshop titled Making Meaning of May 4: The 1970 Kent State Shootings in US History. The workshop was supported by Kent State and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant program titled *Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for School Teachers*.

This teaching plan is shared to promote understanding of the Kent State shootings on May 4, 1970; enhance humanities education across the disciplines; and illustrate the meaning of May 4 for today.

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“NOTHING BUT OUR VOICES: SPEAKING OUT THROUGH SONG”

OVERVIEW: Students will listen to, and analyze, examples of protest music, within the context of the Kent State shootings of May 4, 1970.

GRADE LEVEL: 7-12

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Identify the purposes of a protest song
- Identify the elements of an effective protest song
- Summarize the events of May 4, 1970 at Kent State University, and their impact
- Integrate the elements of an effective protest song into an original protest song

MA STATE FRAMEWORKS

Reading Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas: History and Social Science

2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

7. Integrate visual information (e.g. charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and visual texts.

United States History II Content Standards

Topic 4: Defending Democracy: the Cold War and Civil Rights at Home

8. Using primary and secondary sources, analyze the causes and course of **one** of the following social and political movements, including the consideration of the role of protest, advocacy organizations, and active citizen participation.

MATERIALS:

- Projector
- Devices with internet access
- Recordings of the following songs:
 - “Ohio,” by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young
 - “Feel Like I’m Fixing to Die Rag,” by Country Joe and the Fish

- “Say it Loud: I’m Black and I’m Proud,” by James Brown
- Print Copies or editable digital copies of lyrics to each of the above songs
- Digital access to or print copies of the Al-Jazeera article “The Day the War Came Home.”

INSTRUCTIONS

Day 1:

- Display the following reflection question for students to answer. Students may answer in an online discussion platform, or on paper. If available, teachers may use an app such as “Mentimeter” or Wordle” to create word clouds from student responses.
 - *Why do you listen to music?*
 - *What do you feel when you listen to music?*
- Debrief student responses with class, asking students to note recurring words/themes in their responses.
- Display the following prompt for students to use in a “Think-Pair-Share” format:
 - *Name a song that makes you feel a strong emotion (happiness, sadness, anger, energy), and/or which makes you think differently about something. What is it about the lyrics or music that makes you feel this way?*
- Following the “Think-Pair-Share,” display and read the following quote from chic Canfora: *We were in a war, but we didn’t have any weapons, except our voices...*
 - Ask students to share what they think this quote means. How can a voice be a weapon? What’s the purpose of using your voice when you are in a difficult or dangerous situation?
- Share that protest music is one way in which people use their voices to speak out against injustice and inspire change. An effective protest song:
 - a. Inspires strong emotions about the topic/event described
 - b. Is memorable
 - c. Makes the listener think about the topic and want to learn more

- Provide each student a copy of the lyrics to “Ohio,” by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, while you play the song.
 - Ask students to highlight, underline, or otherwise note at least one part of the song which stands out to them or which prompts any questions. Note that you will repeat the song and ask for additional feedback after the second play.
 - After the 1st play of the song, ask students to share what they noted about the song, without providing further information about its context.
 - Before the 2nd play, display the following questions, noting that you will be asking students to share their thoughts about these at the end of the 2nd play:
 - *How do you feel when you hear this song?*
 - *What do you think this song is about?*
 - Have students do a “Think-Pair-Share” with the above prompts.
- Explain that the song “Ohio” is about an incident called the Kent State Shootings, and that the class will be learning more about this.
- Have students watch “The Day the War Came Home.” This can be done as a whole class, with the teacher projecting the film, or students can watch this on their laptops, if 1-1 devices are available. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdCpI2qdsd8&t=753s>
 - Alternatively, students may read “The Day the War Came Home,” available here: <https://www.aljazeera.com/videos/2010/5/5/the-day-the-war-came-home>
- While watching/reading, ask students to complete a “5W’s” table about the Kent State shootings, noting that they may use bullet points and do not need to write complete sentences.

When? (When did this event take place?)	
Where? (Where did this event take place?)	

Who (Who was shot? Who did the shooting?)	
Why (What prompted the shootings?)	
What (What was the impact of the shootings?)	

- In pairs or small groups, have students review their completion of the table; then, debrief with the whole class.
- **Wrap-Up:** Ask students to share their thoughts on the following:
 - *Do you think “Ohio” is an effective protest song? Why or why not?* (Remind students of the elements of an effective protest song).

Days 2/3:

- Summarize the previous day’s class with students, reviewing the intent of a protest song; the elements of an effective protest song; and the events of Kent State on May 4, 1970.
- Share that the class will analyze other protest songs about topics that relate to the Kent State shootings.
- Give each student a copy of the lyrics to “Feel Like I’m Fixin’ to Die Rag” by Country Joe and the Fish.
 - Ask students to highlight, underline, or otherwise note at least one part of the song which stands out to them or which prompts any questions. Note that you will repeat the song and ask for additional feedback after the second play.
 - After the 1st play of the song, ask students to share what they noted about the song, without providing further information about its context.
 - Before the 2nd play, display the following questions, noting that you will be asking students to share their thoughts about these at the end of the 2nd play:

- *How do you feel when you hear this song? Which words and/or musical parts make you feel this way?*
 - *What do you think this song is about? Why do you think this?*
- Have students do a “Think-Pair-Share” with the above prompts.
- Repeat the steps for “Feel Like I’m Fixin to Die Rag” with “Say it Loud: I’m Black and I’m Proud.”
- Place students in groups of 3-4. In these groups, students will watch the following clips from “Fire in the Heartland,” (see “Resources”) and answer the prompt for each:

“FIRE IN THE HEARTLAND”

Clip	Prompt
“SDS”	<i>Which issues did many activists see as being connected to each other?</i>
“Vietnam”	<i>According to Martin Luther King Jr., which people “bore the heaviest burden” in Vietnam?</i>
“Freedom Now”	<i>What were some of the specific rights fought for in the Civil Rights movement?</i>
“B.U.S.”	<i>How was the Black United Students different from other Black student organizations at Kent State?</i>

- **Wrap-Up:** Students will discuss the following prompts with their groups, and then the class will debrief them:
 - *How do “I Feel Like I’m Fixin to Die Rag” and “Say it Loud: I’m Black and I’m Proud” relate to the information you just reviewed?*
 - *Are these effective protest songs? Why or why not?*

Days 4/5

- Instruct students that they will be creating their own protest songs.
- Provide students with instructions, a checklist for an effective protest song, and the rubric for an effective protest song (See “Educator Handouts”)
- Tell students that they will be given class time to work on their songs, although they will also be able to work at home, if they choose.
- Inform students that they will have the option of recording their song or sharing it live.

EDUCATOR HANDOUTS

ORIGINAL PROTEST SONG INSTRUCTIONS

Overview: You will create an original protest song, incorporating the elements of an effective protest song into a current issue or event of your choice.

Basic Elements:

- Slogan/Title
- Verse
- Chorus

Instructions:

1. Choose a current issue or event that is meaningful to you.
2. Reflect on the following questions:
 - a. What do you want people to understand about this issue/event?
 - i. What I want people to understand
about _____ is _____
 - b. What kind of response do you hope to inspire?
 - i. When people listen to my song, I want them to
feel _____
 - ii. When people listen to my song, I want them to be inspired
to _____.
3. Choose a slogan for your song title.

4. Build your first verse around your slogan. The lyrics of your first verse should provide some information and detail about your issue/event. (*What do you want people to know and understand about this event?*) Your first verse should be at least 20 seconds long.
5. For your chorus, use simple, direct phrases. This should be something that is catchy and with which people can easily sing along! The chorus should be at least 20 seconds long.
6. Choose music to accompany your verse and lyrics. You may create an original melody, or you may use the melody of another song, as long as it is appropriate to the intent of your song.
7. You may record your song, or you may choose to perform it live.

PROTEST SONG CHECKLIST

Topic: My song...

- ☐ Is about a current issue/event
- ☐ Is a topic about which I want more people to know and care

Slogan/Title: My slogan/title...

- ☐ Directly relates to the topic
- ☐ Is direct and memorable

Verse: My verse...

- ☐ Provides detail about my topic
- ☐ Includes my slogan
- ☐ Uses vivid and sensory-oriented words and imagery
- ☐ Is at least 20 seconds long

Chorus: My chorus...

- ☐ Uses direct and catchy phrasing
- ☐ Is easy to memorize and sing
- ☐ Is at least 20 seconds long

Music: My music...

- ☐ Is appropriate to the mood I want to convey

PROTEST SONG RUBRIC

Use of Class Time	4 All class time	3 Most class time	2 Some class	1 Little to no
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	was used thoughtfully and purposefully to create the song	was used thoughtfully and purposefully to create the song	time was used thoughtfully and purposefully to create the song	class time was used thoughtfully or purposefully to create the song
Basic Requirements	All the basic requirements of the song are present and complete	All of the basic requirements of the song are present and are mostly complete	The song is missing one of the basic requirements and/or more than one of the requirements are incomplete	The song is missing more than 1 of the basic requirements
Content	Song has a clear theme; lyrics include multiple details that explain the topic in the verse	Song has a clear theme; lyrics include with some details that explain the topic in the verse	Song's theme is somewhat unclear, and/or the lyrics that have few details about the topic	Song's theme and lyrics are very unclear or are only briefly mentioned
Word Choice	Rich and varied word choice; Vivid and sensory-oriented words are used throughout	Multiple examples of vivid and sensory-oriented words used	A few examples of vivid and sensory-oriented words	Very few vivid and sensory-oriented words used
Music	Music is audible, and enhances the content and mood of the song	Music is audible and is appropriate to the content and mood of the song	Music is audible and mostly appropriate to the content and mood of the song	Music is largely inaudible and/or is inappropriate to the content and mood of the song

PRINT RESOURCES

ALJAZEERA. (2010, May 5). *The Day the War Came Home*. ALJAZEERA.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/videos/2010/5/5/the-day-the-war-came-home>

AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES

Fire River Pictures. (2021). *Fire in the Heartland*. <https://www.fireintheheartland.tv/videos>.

DISCOGRAPHY

Country Joe and the Fish, 'Feel Like I'm Fixing to Die Rag,' *I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die*.

Vanguard VSD 79266 (1967)

Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, 'Ohio,' *4 Way Street*. Atlantic (1971)

James Brown, 'Say it Loud: I'm Black and I'm Proud,' *A Soulful Christmas*. King Records (1968)

