Name: _____

Date: _____

Cohort: _____

Expedition Project: Protest Song Analysis
Project Deadline: May 20

"A protest song is a song that's so specific that you cannot mistake it for bullshit."
- Phil Ochs, Protest Singer-Songwriter

Musicians have sometimes taken stands for and against particular social causes. They have changed the minds of many people, inspired revolutions, influenced elections, and raised money for social causes. Sometimes, however, their songs have no effect at all (except to make money for the musician!). ***What makes a protest song effective?***

In this project, you will **critically analyze** whether the song you have chosen is an effective protest song. To be critical, **you must be open** to changing your beliefs about the song you picked. Remember: just because a song is not an effective protest song does not mean it is a bad song. It can be a great song—but a bad *protest* song.

Note Catcher

Song Artist: _____

Song Title: _____

I. Lyrics – Are the lyrics effective?
- Does the musician use powerful language that makes people think differently?
- Is it clear what the lyrics are about? Or if it is not clear, is there a good reason?

a) List 3 lines that are powerful (if there are any). They can be powerful because of how beautiful and poetic they are, because of how daring they are, or because of the way they rhyme.

b) Are there "punchlines" that surprise the listener? List 1 or 2.

c) How do the lyrics develop as the song goes forward? (Is there a story? What function does each verse and chorus serve?)

d) In your own words, what are the lyrics about? (Is this clear?)

II. Music – Is the music effective?
- Does the music enhance the lyrics?
- Is the music powerful?

a) How are the words performed? (Can you understand every word the singer sings?) How does this affect the impression of the song?

b) Discuss the music overall in terms of the mood. How does this work with the lyrics?

c) What sort of instruments/voices/sounds are used to create the *texture* (sound world) of the song?

d) How does the music develop? (Does it change? Does it repeat? How does this affect the song?)

e) Is this song singable? Could a group sing it together? (Is it a good song for a protest or rally?)

III. Artist(s) – How can the artist(s) make change?
- Do people take the artist(s) seriously?
- Who is the audience?

a) Who wrote the song? Who performed the song?

b) Does this artist have a history of speaking publicly about social issues? What has this artist done for others?

c) What kinds of people listen to this artist's music? What can they do about the issues the song advocates?

IV. Song History – Has the song become a part of a movement?
- Is the song relevant to what was happening when it was written?
- How has the song been distributed and used?

a) What year was the song written? _____

b) Why was the song written? Or, if you can't find out: what was happening during that time that is relevant to the song?

c) How was the song distributed? (How did people hear the song? Was it performed in concerts or recordings? Who can get access to it? How many people heard it?)

d) Has the song become part of a social movement? What movement?

e) Has the song been used for anything – Protests? Raising money? Raising awareness? TV? Movies?

V. Personal Effect – Did anyone do anything differently because of this song?
- Did this song affect you?
- Did this song affect anyone else?

a) Did this song have a personal effect on you? If so, what?

b) If you picked a song before 2004, did this song have a personal effect on the people listening to it when it first came out? (Feel free to interview parents or relatives!)

VI. Conclusion -
- Is this an effective protest song? Yes, no, or "in some ways" . . .

VII. Major References
- What books, articles, or websites did you use?

Project Rubric

4	3	2	1
Completeness All seven sections are included, and are fully developed (usually 1-2 paragraphs).	One of the sections is not fully developed.	2-3 of the sections are not fully developed, or 1-2 sections are missing.	There are 3 or more missing sections.
Criticality - The author selects important, relevant facts. - The author makes good inferences about the song's effectiveness, and defends these opinions.	- The author's facts are well-selected but not always important. - The author only makes one or two strong inferences.	- There is too much irrelevant information or not enough information. - There are no strong inferences, or the author does not support his or her opinion.	- The information shows little evidence of thoughtful selection. - There are no inferences.
Writing - Sentences are organized well so ideas develop clearly. - There are very few or no grammar or spelling mistakes.	- There are a few times ideas do not follow logically. - There are a few mistakes, but they do not get in the way of reading.	- The organization of the analysis makes it difficult to read. - Mistakes get in the way of reading the analysis.	- The analysis shows no evidence of organization. - There is no evidence of proofreading.
Research The notecatcher shows effective use of research time, and includes information from at least 3 different references.	- The notecatcher lacks details in some areas. There are at least 3 different references consulted.	- Sections of the notecatcher have not been completed, or there are less than 3 references.	- The notecatcher is more than 50% incomplete, or the references are missing.