

Lyrics: Compare & Contrast

8th Grade ELA and Music

Adapted by Paige Satcher and Rachel Pomeroy

CORE SUBJECT AREA

ELA

ART FORM + ELEMENTS

Music

Rhythm, Melody, Expression, Style

DURATION

4-5 class periods

OBJECTIVES

TSW analyze the lyrics and musical style of Bastille's song "Pompeii."

TSW conduct research about the history of Pompeii and its connection to the modern-day song, evaluating sources for credibility and accuracy.

TSW compose a short research paper with accurate citations.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Computer, screen, and projector, Student computers for research, Book resources on the history of Pompeii, Student writing materials, Bastille's "Pompeii" lyrics printouts (optional)

VOCABULARY

ELA Vocabulary: source, credibility, citation, plagiarism. Music Vocabulary: lyrics, tempo, melody

MSCCR STANDARDS

W.8.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

W.8.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

W.8.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

MSCCR CREATIVE ARTS STANDARDS

MU: Re9.1.H.8 INTERMEDIATE Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

a. Explain the influence of experiences and contexts (personal, social, or cultural) on interest in and the evaluation of a varied repertoire of music.

MU: Cn11.0.H.8 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding. Relate musical ideas and works with varied context to deepen understanding.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

"Pompeii" lyric video: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1ufwjg>

"Pompeii" lyrics: <http://songmeanings.com/songs/view/3530822107859446219/>

History.com: <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/pompeii>

Animated video of Mt. Vesuvius eruption: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dY_3ggKg0Bc

Instrumental song that tells the story of Pompeii: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gJJ_7drO-w

LESSON SEQUENCE

TSW watch the lyrics video of Bastille's "Pompeii."

After watching the video, TSW pose these questions to the students:

- How did the up-tempo music and cheerful melody make you feel?
- Were there any lyrics from the song that resonated with you?
- What do you think the song is about?

After students make their guesses, TSW explain that the song is actually written about a tragic event in history and that it will be their job to find out through research what the songwriter, Dan Smith, is really communicating through his words and music.

Teacher Note: Before continuing with the research portion of the lesson, be sure that students have a basic understanding of how to conduct research and cite those sources. Teach a mini-lesson with modeling if necessary.

Students will also need to already have an understanding of the essay-writing process, including the structure for an informative research essay.

Pre-Writing Research

1. TSW begin their research by finding out the historical significance of the song. (The song is written from the points of view of two people who were killed in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A.D.; the people's bodies from this disaster were "frozen in time" when they were buried underneath the ash and rubble of the volcanic eruption.) Now that students have a background into the history behind the song, TSW revisit the key lyrics, asking students what they mean.

- "The walls kept tumbling down in the city that we love."
- "Great clouds roll over the hills, bringing darkness from above."
- "We were caught up and lost in all of our vices, in your pose as the dust settled around us."
- "If you close your eyes, does it almost feel like nothing's changed at all?" After this portion of the lesson, the teacher may wish to have a discussion to clarify any questions students may have about the event. (The animated Mt. Vesuvius eruption video can be shown at this time.)

Research

2. Based on the Bastille song and their historical findings, TSW conduct research and write a short research paper based on this prompt:

- Dan Smith's lyrics for "Pompeii" are based on an imaginary conversation between two bodies killed in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. Write an informative research essay about the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius and the unique artifacts it left behind. Use credible sources and cite them.

The Writing Process 3. TSW use the following days to compose, edit, revise, and publish their research papers.

Closure

4. After completing the research papers, TSW listen to the song again. How has their perception of the song changed now that they know the historical meaning? Why do you think Dan Smith wrote an upbeat song about such a sad event?

EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Compare/Contrast Music: Have students compare and contrast Bastille’s “Pompeii” and the instrumental version found in resources.

Creative Writing: In the spirit of Dan Smith’s lyrics, have students write a first-person narrative from the point of view of one of the bodies of Pompeii’s disaster.

Visual Art Connection: Have students create an art piece to accompany their research project.

Music Video: Watch the music video for “Pompeii.” Why do you think the video director does not directly reference the history behind the song? Are there details within the video that are historically meaningful?

SOURCES

Paige Satcher

Rachel Pomeroy