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“America, It’s Up to You”

Lesson Introduction



Songs filled with nationalism and pro-war patriotism have been part of the history of the United States of America. This particular lesson focuses on one song called, “America, It’s Up to You,”¹ written in 1917 as the United States is preparing to enter the conflict in Europe.

¹ <http://www.memories.ne.gov/u/?Polley,1828>

GRADE LEVEL:

9-12

SUBJECT:

Social Studies

TIME:

50-110 Minutes

Desired Results

Nebraska Twelfth Grade Social Studies STAR Standards

12.1.13: Students will develop skills for historical analysis.

Example indicators

- Analyze documents, records, and data, e.g., artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, and historical accounts
- Formulate historical questions and defend findings based on inquiry and interpretations

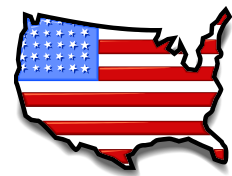
Nebraska State Social Studies Standards: Same as the STAR standard

Understandings

Students will understand that music can, and has been used as propaganda to inspire the citizens of the United States to support a government policy of engaging in war.

Essential Questions

1. What is propaganda?
2. What are the purposes of propaganda?
3. Do we internalize music as a response to some political event?
4. In what ways do the rhythm, tempo, and score of a patriotic song affect the listener?
5. Can patriotic songs be in opposition to government policy?





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Students Will Know

1. Students will know that patriotic songs can inspire patriotism.
2. Students will know that patriotic songs can inspire compliance with government policy.
3. Students will know that patriotic songs manipulate the listener.
4. Students will know that patriotic songs can be in favor of or opposed to official government policy.

Students Will be able to

1. Students will be able to analyze and critically interpret the song in this lesson.
2. Students will be able to engage in critical dialogue about the various purposes of patriotic songs.
3. Students will be able to identify more recent patriotic songs and how they compare to the song in this lesson.



Assessment Evidence

Assessment of this lesson is entirely up to the discretion of the individual instructor. It is recommended that a variety of assessment tools be used in order to allow students to demonstrate understanding. For example, have students (individually or in small groups) write a song that has a patriotic (in favor of or opposed to policy) theme and perform it in class.

Learning Plan

1. Have students read the lyrics to Toby Keith’s song “Courtesy Of The Red, White And Blue (The Angry American)”. If you have a copy of the actual song, play it while students read the lyrics. The song is from the Unleashed album. The lyrics can be found on his website: http://tobykeith.musiccitynetworks.com/index.htm?id=1341&inc=7&album_id=67
2. Ask students if they know the historical context of this song.
3. What emotional response of the listener is the songwriter attempting to create? Why?



"America, It's Up to You"

4. After a brief discussion, hand out the song, "America, It's Up to You". It might be interesting to have given the song to a music student beforehand and have her/him play it in class while the students read the lyrics.
5. Have them identify the historical context of the song and the message of the songwriter.
6. Ask students to compare the two songs and decide if they are examples of musical propaganda.
7. Ask students if they can identify other songs that are either pro-war or anti-war and how they may be examples of musical propaganda. More historical musical scores can be found searching Nebraska Memories for patriotic music: <http://memories.ne.gov>
8. For information on how to preserve musical scores, have students check out resources at "Saving Your Treasures: Paper": <http://www.netnebraska.org/extras/treasures/paper.htm>

Sources

<http://parlorsongs.com/issues/2004-4/thismonth/feature.asp>



Funding for this lesson plan was provided in part by a grant from the Partnership for a Nation of Learners program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, in collaboration with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Library Commission.

<http://www.netnebraska.org/extras/treasures>