

Note: All essays are 5 Word Processed double-spaced pages. Your sixth page is your Works Cited Page. Please use 12PT New Roman font and MLA all throughout your essay. You should use at 3 sources, with one of these coming from the Dean College Databases. You find an Essay Template under Zero Block.

UNIT 1: “Bet You Think This Song is About You, Don’t You”: Uncovering the Meaning of a Song Through Argumentative Analysis and Research

The words to the right of the colon come from the song, “You’re So Vain”. While the song’s speaker clearly suggests that the subjects are so caught up on themselves that they think the song is about them, I am using the words differently. I want to start the semester off by pushing you beyond your personal connection to a song. Instead, this course and this assignment is engaging you in critical reads and interpretations of the song based on research. Please follow the steps below for your essay.

- 1.) Choose a song
- 2.) Read the song and do a deep read of what the song is about.
- 3.) Research what the song is about.
- 4.) Look for articles from music magazines, newspapers, and (if you are looking at behavior or emotions) journals as well as interviews, shows like *Behind the Music* and books written about or by the song writer(s), artist(s).
- 5.) Write an argumentative essay that interprets selected song as either biographical to the life of the songwriter/artist, as an account of a historical event, or psychological representation(s) of human behaviors and emotions to an event.

Below there is a summary of what your introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion should include.

Introduction

Provide general information about the song. You may want to include when the song was released and the album, mixtape or other medium in which it appeared as well as its artist and/or performer. Give any important information about the song such as its genre and how it has been received inside and outside of its genre and fans. If the song was a hit, please say so and say why. If the song stayed largely unknown in relation to the song writer’s or performer’s other songs, please state this and say why. Tell your audience why this song is important and what it appears to be about and what you have learned about the song’s meaning. Write a two-part thesis. The first part of your thesis states your interpretation of the song. The second part tells your reader the topics you will be looking at your essay to prove your interpretation in the order in which the topics appears in your essay.

Body Paragraphs:

Each one of your body paragraphs should start with a clear topic sentence that introduces the main topic you’ll be discussing. Because you are moving in between and from source it is important that you decide on a pattern of organization you will use throughout. For example, you may want to start with what the voice or speaker of the song says and cite and document that information and move onto explain what that means and how it relates to the person’s life, the event, or human emotion or behavior. Make sure that you give specific examples. Then, present information from the source that evidences what you have discussed. Remember that you may quote, paraphrase or summarize from your source. After that, you can transition by telling your reader what else you have found in the song that really happened. Repeat this for each body paragraph.

Conclusion:

A conclusion should go beyond stating what you have just covered. Avoid saying that you are concluding your essay. Instead, offer a realization that may not have been apparent before you presented your information or something you want the reader to think about or learn about after all the information you have presented in terms of how we often think about songs or even researching a song.