

Song Analysis Prompt

Worth 10%

Buffalo State College

English CWP 101

Fall 2020

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DUE DATES:

First Draft: Oct. 15th, 2020

Final Draft: Oct. 22nd, 2020

A song analysis of this type is similar to a literary analysis. Basically, it is an interpretation and **NOT** a summary. Instead, it is what that work is about---what it does, and/or its meaning in your interpretation. This could be from parts of the song or as a whole. The purpose of an analysis essay is to carefully examine and sometimes evaluate a work or an aspect of that work. As with any analysis, this requires you to break the subject down into its component parts. Examining the different elements is not an end in itself, but rather processes to help you better appreciate and understand the work as a whole. For instance, an analysis of a poem might deal with the different types of images in a poem or with the relationship between the form and content of the work. A song is much like a poem yet has music set to it. If you were to analyze (discuss and explain) a play, you might analyze the relationship between a subplot and the main plot, or you might analyze the character flaw of the tragic hero by tracing how it is revealed through the acts of the play. Analyzing a short story might include identifying a particular theme (like the difficulty of making the transition from adolescence to adulthood) and showing how the writer suggests that theme through the point of view from which the story is told; or you might also explain how the main character's attitude toward women is revealed through his dialogue and/or actions, for example.

For this essay, you should choose one topic to specifically focus on. In addition to analysis, you need to move towards interpretation in your paper. This means that once we, your readers, understand your analysis, you need to show us how your ideas help us to understand the song as a whole.

Please remember that you are to focus on the song and nothing else. This essay is to be your own analysis of the song. You should NOT cite or even consult outside sources. Rather, I am interested in reading your own argument for a particular interpretation supported by your listening to the song.

Requirements:

- **At least 2-3 full pages double-spaced.**

- A proper MLA Works Cited page with only **one** source, the song you decide to write about.

This means that you should have a Works Cited page with only **one** source: The song you choose to write your essay on.

- Your essay should be written in either 1st or 3rd person. This means you should not use words such as “I” and “me” for 1st person point-of-view and “you,” “we,” “I,” or “me” for 3rd person point-of-view. Choose one point-of-view and stay with it throughout your whole essay. If you find these words in your essay, you’re using 2nd person and that is wrong for this essay: “you,” “you’re,” and “your.”

NOTE: I will not accept late work unless you have a doctor’s, coach, or similar note, and/or you have spoken to me beforehand. Assignments are still due on the stated assignment due date whether you are absent or not. It is in your best interest to either get the assignment to me before the due date, or have a conversation with me about your particular situation.

Guideline Specifics

Choose a song whose lyrics mean something to you. The topics you **must** discuss in your essay are as follows:

1.What is the song about?

- a. Summarize in a couple sentences what the song is about, in general.
- b. Then, explain the song and quote lines from the song to support your ideas about the song’s meaning.

2.What is the theme of the song?

- a. Explain why you think the writer wrote this song. What message is he/she trying to send to people who listen to this song? Quote lines from the song as evidence for your opinion.

3. Why is this song meaningful to you/What are your thoughts about the song?
 - a. What made you choose this song? What makes you relate to this song?
 - b. Quote lines which really resonate with you, or strike you in some way.
 - c. Reactions? Comments?

The topics you **may** consider to discuss in your essay, but **do not have to** are as follows:

1. Comment on the structure.
 - a. Is repetition used? Rhyme? Are there changes in the tempo at any points? Is it structured to tell a story/build a picture?
 - b. What effect does the structure have on the song?
2. Identify poetic devices used
 - a. Symbolism, similes, metaphors, imagery, alliteration, etc.
 - b. What effect do they have on the song?

Guiding Rubric

Use this as a guide only. To receive 10 full points:

1. Make sure your essay's format is proper for college level. This includes how you set up your Essay. Check that you've:
 - used 11 or 12 point font.
 - Provided a clear introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs

- A clear and consistent thesis
- A single, specific focus that guides the entire paper

2. Your essay should be a strong analysis. Remember, you should NOT summarize the song. This is NOT a book report. Rather, I expect an analytical essay appropriate to your audience. You

need to include your interpretation: in part, it is your job to show why your analysis is significant in some larger sense.

Use this below as a guide. Remember, you don't have to write about the poetic devices and structure. You should study the other 4 here though.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
Synopsis	Analysis includes a detailed synopsis of the song.	Analysis includes a complete synopsis of the song.	Analysis includes a brief or partial synopsis of the song.	Analysis includes an incomplete or inaccurate synopsis of the song.	Analysis may not include a synopsis of the song.	No synopsis of the song is included.
Song's Theme	The analysis shows a deep understanding of the song's theme.	The analysis shows a good understanding of the song's theme.	The analysis shows some understanding of the song's theme.	The analysis shows an incomplete or sometimes inaccurate understanding of the song's theme.	The analysis shows little or an inaccurate understanding of the song's theme.	The analysis shows no understanding of the song's theme.
Poetic Devices and Structure	The analysis shows a deep understanding of the effect of poetic devices and structure on the song's meaning.	The analysis shows a good understanding of the effect of poetic devices and structure on the song's meaning.	The analysis shows some understanding of the effect of poetic devices and structure on the song's meaning.	The analysis shows an incomplete or sometimes inaccurate understanding of the effect of poetic devices and structure on the song's meaning.	The analysis shows little or an inaccurate understanding of the effect of poetic devices and structure on the song's meaning.	The analysis shows no understanding of the effect of poetic devices and structure on the song's meaning.
Personal Interaction	The student demonstrates a high degree of personal interaction with the song.	The student demonstrates a good degree of personal interaction with the song.	The student demonstrates some degree of personal interaction with the song.	The student demonstrates limited personal interaction with the song.	The student demonstrates little personal interaction with the song.	The student does not interact personally with the song.
Textual Support	Highly appropriate examples from the song are quoted to support the analysis.	Examples from the song are quoted to support the analysis.	Examples from the song are quoted without a clear connection to the focus of the analysis.	Examples from the song are cited infrequently or inaccurately.	Examples from the song are not cited.	Examples from the song are not cited.