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Month long unit plan, for high school juniors or seniors

Rationale: In Rita Felski's book, Uses of Literature, she insists that literature can “expand, enlarge, or reorder our sense of how things are” (83). In thinking about works that helped me to do this, I immediately had to acknowledge the profound impact that rap music played in my re-education. Growing up in Kennesaw, Georgia, which was called the most backwards town in America by *Now This News*, it was rap which gave me my first exposure to the different experiences of black America. This month long unit plan will focus on the contributions of black rappers and hip-hop artists to the American canon, while also asking students to question what it means to be an author and what it means to be a part of the canon, and the ways in which the canon excludes certain writers. In doing so, I hope to foster students' appreciation for the contributions of black authors, to broaden students' understanding of what literature is, and to build students' empathy for those with experiences outside their own.

This lesson was heavily influenced by a line in Fitzpatrick's “Reading (and Writing) Online”, in which she encourages teachers to embrace the important uses that reading and writing online can be put to, if only teachers could “find ways to work with them instead of dismissing them as inherently frivolous and degraded” (46). Though Fitzpatrick is speaking of online texts, I couldn't help but see the connections between her ideas and rap music. I believe that, if used correctly, rap and hip-hop music can be powerful tools for fostering student engagement while teaching them skills that would be easily applicable to other texts. With this as a foundation, I began to think of how I could make a unit plan that relied heavily on rap and hip-hop music while building literacy and giving students skills and heuristics that could be applied

to poetry. By reading rap as poetry, I believe students will not only gain a deeper understanding of rap and hip-hop, but will also improve their overall literacy by learning close reading, the six steps to reading poetry, poetic terms, and how to decipher rhythm and meter.

In researching how I would formulate this unit plan, I was heavily influenced by Brian Mooney's blogpost, "Why I Dropped Everything and Started Teaching Kendrick Lamar's New Album" (<https://bemoons.wordpress.com/2015/03/27/why-i-dropped-everything-and-started-teaching-kendrick-lamars-new-album/>). Mooney's teaching of Kendrick Lamar's album "To Pimp A Butterfly" alongside Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eye" gave me insight into the power of juxtaposition, and the follow-up post, in which he shares some excerpts from his students' essays, gave me hope that this subject matter is not too advanced or too sensitive for high-school students, even those who are white and middle or upper class. In fact, his posts reassured me that teaching students to question the ways in which society privileges certain groups is best done at a young age, and that it is these young students who will be most receptive to these lessons.

For each lesson plan, I've embedded a short rationale for the lesson plan within the procedure for the lesson, but I wish to provide some insight into the larger structuring of the lesson. This unit is grouped into four smaller units, arranged in chronological order of the works to be studied (with two exceptions: one in the pairing of "We Real Cool" with "All Falls Down", and the second in teaching "Formation" before "Alright", though "Alright" was released a year earlier than "Formation"). The first of these smaller units traces the history of African American poetry and music, moving from negro spirituals of slavery to the music of the 1970s. In providing the roots from which hip-hop and rap was formed, I hope to foster an appreciation for

the rich traditions rap and hip-hop draw from, in order to provide students with context that will legitimize reading rap and hip-hop as pieces of literature worthy of analysis and study. Many of the works we read during this unit will serve as a foundation for analysis throughout the semester, as students both see the common themes present in African American literature, as well as the development and evolution of the forms through which these themes are expressed.

In the second part of the unit, we move into the 1980s, largely believed to be the decade in which rap emerged and had its golden era. In this unit, I have two primary aims: one, to push students to read rap in the same way they would poetry, making note especially of meter, rhythm and rhyme, and two, demonstrate that rap has historically been a medium used for social commentary and protest. In this unit, I will also begin to integrate some aspects of theory, which will help students to connect rap to a larger literary context as well as give them the tools to read the lyrics in ways they might not have otherwise. This unit also begins to make connections to cultural context, which I hope will inspire increased empathy for and deeper understanding of the writers of these works in my students.

For the third unit, we move into the 1990s— were I to expand this into a full lesson plan, I would have spent some time talking about the fracturing of hip-hop culture during this era, in order to provide some cultural context to the biographical information they receive about 2Pac. In this lesson, I introduce another form of theory— psychoanalytic theory— to read 2Pac’s “Changes”. In this lesson, we also return to some of the cultural criticism of the Harlem Renaissance in order to situate this work within a larger context, encouraging students to see “Changes” as a continuation of the African American literary legacy in its tone and theme. By utilizing cultural criticism in both the previous lesson and this one, and by integrating

pyschoanalytic analsis in this lesson, I hope to encourage a synthesis of what Bruns refers to “immersive reading” and “critical reading”; through a more critical undertsanding the environments in which these authors existed and how they were affected by these environments, I hope to encourage these students to more fully immerse themselves in the world of the text (Bruns, 78).

For the final unit, we move into contemporary rap and hip-hop, from 2000 to the present day. In this unit, I push students to read more difficult texts, and thus introduce them to a new heuristic for reading poetry that at first appears difficult to them, called the six steps, which draws upon close reading skills that are emphasized in the first lesson of the unit plan. The penultimate lesson uses Beyonce’s “Formation” to teach visual media skills, which I believe to be an important skill for students in a world in which the average American teenager consumes almost nine hours a day using media for entertainment reasons (Wallace).

The unit ends with a discussion of Kendrick Lamar’s “Alright” and the final project asks students to put together a playlist of five songs that work together to produce a clear message, and to create a listening guide for their selections. In doing this, I want students to see how rap and hip-hop are deeply connected to activism and to practice creating their own messages through juxtaposition.

This connection between rap and activism has been a foundational part of my lesson plan, as I’ve intentionally chosen songs that speak to such themes as police brutality, the desire for independence and self-sufficiency, drug problems in urban neighborhoods, the need for freedom, and many others. I’ve tried my best to use songs that will make this connection clear to students; for example, references to The White House or the presidency can be found in Claude McKay’s

“The White House” (1922), Parliament’s “Chocolate City” (1975), and 2Pac’s “Changes” (1998), speaking to the need for political representation and inclusion, while references to “forty acres and a mule” can be found in Kanye West’s “All Falls Down” (2004) Kendrick Lamar’s “Alright” (2015), alluding to slavery and broken promises at the hands of white systems.

I do have some hesitations about this unit plan, which are largely based around a fear of being reductionalist. I do not mean to imply that the only, or the most important, contributions that African Americans have made to American literature lie in rap music. Rather, I want to encourage students to see rap and hip hop as unique and wholly American modes of expression, and valuable contributions to literature in their own right, worthy of examination and discussion. In order to combat this possible implication, I use juxtaposition liberally throughout this unit, including other works of African American literature to demonstrate to students the connections to be made between rap and hip-hop and more traditional poetic forms. Were this unit plan to be a part of a larger semester, I would be sure to include works by African American writers so that students might see the varied contributions of African Americans to American literature. I also would not use this unit as the first unit within a larger semester, but instead, let goodwill and rapport be established between the students before moving into such a charged unit.

WEEK ONE

LESSON PLAN ONE (DAY ONE)

Central Questions: What is an author? What is a text?

Duration: One sixty minute class

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Work collaboratively in forming arguments as to the legitimacy of texts based on author
- Ask questions about why certain authors are considered more legitimate than others
- Form working definition of the terms “author” and “text” to use throughout the semester that go against privilege

Materials: Collected writing samples as well as pre-written “author sheets” as explained below

Procedure:

Prior to class, I will rearrange the room (either by using tables, or by grouping four to five desks into tables) into groups. When the students arrive, they will find several pieces of writing on each of their tables: pieces of novels, grocery lists, lyric books, letters, planners, etc. All of the pieces will be the same, but on each table I will have a different author; for example, “All of these texts were written by Hemingway”, “All of these texts were written by Barack Obama”, “All of these texts were written by Kanye West”, “All of these texts were written by my grandmother”. I will ask students to imagine that they are curating a museum exhibit, and to sort all of the pieces into those they would include in the exhibit, and those they would not include. Once they have done this, I will ask each group to articulate, on a sheet of paper, their rationale for including those they selected for inclusion, and why they chose not to include other pieces. I will then ask groups to switch author papers, and re-sort what they would include and what they would not include. Going around the room, I would ask students to share how their decisions were impacted by which assumed writer they were working with, and how their decisions changed. If, for example, they opted to include Hemingway’s grocery list, but not my grandmother’s, I would ask them to articulate why they privileged one over the other. In doing this, I would hope to move students towards an understanding that what defines something as “literature” or a person as an “author” are socially constructed value judgments, rather than something inherent in the text.

Having begun with this exercise, I would ask my students as a class to come up with working definitions of “literature” and “author” for us to use for the remainder of the unit. I would hope that because of this beginning exercise, they would steer away from notions that would privilege some authors or some texts over others.

LESSON PLAN TWO (DAY TWO)

Central Questions: What are the origins of rap and hip-hop?

Duration: One sixty minute class

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Learn about African American artistic movements that led up to the development of hip hop and rap, starting with slavery era spirituals and the cultural context that surrounded these movements
- Learn about conventions of poetry and poetic terms, in preparation to read rap as poetry

Materials: Laptop with internet access, projector, handouts, black or whiteboard

Track List/Reading List:

- “Follow the Drinking Gourd”
- “Swing Low Sweet Chariot”

Procedure:

On the first day of this unit, students will watch a short video by PBS called Slave Songbook: Origin of the Negro Spiritual (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zeshN_ummU, **Artifact One**), which will serve as an introduction to the cultural context of spirituals created by African slaves in America. After watching this, students will be presented with handouts of lyric sheets for both “Follow the Drinking Gourd” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”, to aid them as we listen to these two spirituals. Students will be given a handout to fill out as they listen, following the “notice what you notice” principle. After finishing, students will pair up to compare notes, filling in their handouts more completely. We will then go around the class, filling out a class chart together— I will try to guide students to pick up on the theme of freedom found in both songs, as well as poetic elements such as repetition (in the form of call and response in Swing Low Sweet Chariot, as plain repetition in Follow the Drinking Gourd), the simple ABAB rhyme scheme (in Swing Low, Sweet Chariot), and the meter (iambic pentameter in both songs). I do not expect that students will necessarily be familiar with all of these terms, but if they note them, I will supply them with the correct terminology.

Homework:

Listen to one of your favorite songs, and analyze how it utilizes the poetic terms we talked about in class today, such as rhyme scheme, meter, or repetition.

LESSON PLAN THREE (DAYS THREE AND FOUR)

Central Question(s): What are the origins of rap and hip-hop? (Continued)

Duration: Two sixty minute classes

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Continue to learn about African American artistic movements that led up to the development of hip hop and rap, including the post-slavery dialect poetry, Harlem Renaissance, jazz, soul and funk music, and the cultural context that surrounded these movements
- Be introduced to central themes of earlier African American artistic movements, including repairing a damaged group psychology and finding internal metaphors through reading a critical essay
- Continue to develop their knowledge of conventions of poetry and poetic terms

Track List/Reading List:

- “The Party” (1913) by Paul Lawrence Dunbar
- “The White House”(1922) by Claude McKay
- “The Weary Blues” (1925) by Langston Hughes
- “Way Down Yonder in New Orleans” (1940) by Duke Ellington
- “I Got You” (1964) by James Brown
- “Chocolate City” (1975) by Parliament

Materials: Laptop with internet access, handout

Procedure:

On the second day of this lesson, students will learn (briefly) about post-slavery dialect poetry before turning their attention to listening to “The Party” by Paul Lawrence Dunbar as read by Karen Wilson (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfNLIP6vm84>, **Artifact Two**) again with a hand-out of the poem to follow along with. I will draw students’ attention to the use of the vernacular, the integration of music into poetry, the rhyme scheme, and the use of humor in this poem, all of which can be seen in rap and hip hop music.

We will then turn to the Harlem Renaissance, beginning by reading “The White House”. Students will work with a partner and a handout (**Artifact Three, Appendix A**) to locate poetic techniques within the poem, before adding notations to the poem as it is written on the board. For homework, students will read an excerpt from James Weldon Johnson’s preface to *The Book of American Negro Poetry* and an excerpt from Alain Locke’s *The New Negro* (**Artifact Four**), which will be the focus on day three. After discussing the homework from the previous day (see homework section below), I will ask them to work with a partner to follow the same procedure for Langston Hughes’ “The Weary Blues”.

The final day of this unit will focus on the meter and rhythm patterns found in jazz, funk, and soul music.

Homework:

After reading the Locke and Johnson pieces, mark the ideas in either piece that you see being expressed in “The White House”

WEEK TWO: THE 1980s
LESSON PLAN FOUR (DAY NINE)

Central Question(s): How does meter and rhythm produce or reinforce meaning?

Duration: One sixty minute class

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Utilize poetic elements learned previously to analyze rap songs
- Connect themes in early eighties rap songs to the traditions of earlier African American music and poetry
- Strengthen students' ability to read meter and rhythm using rap music

Materials: Laptop with internet access

Track List/Reading List:

- “How We Gonna Make the Black Nation Rise?” (1980) by Brother D
- “The Message” (1982) by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five

Procedure:

This lesson will be primarily concerned with rhythm and meter, foundational units of rap music. I would begin with doing some work on the blackboard, teaching students how to decipher the meter of poems, beginning with “How We Gonna Make the The Black Nation Rise?”, since it is writtern in iambic pentameter, the meter students are most likely to be familiar with. After working out the stress patterns of “How We Gonna Make the Black Nation Rise?”, I would play the song, encouraging students to clap along with the claps in the song (which come on every other stress). Then, I would split students into two groups, one to clap the stress patterns of the lyrics while the other students claps the rhythm of the track. If done correctly, the groups clapping along to the rhythm would hit every other clap from the other group. We would then move onto “The Message”, which has a more complex stress pattern and less uniformity in the length of the lines, but a simple, easy rhythm. I would have the students perform the same clapping activity as in “How We Gonna Make the Black Nation Rise?”, though I think for this song, the activity is much more difficult— but through that I think students would see the dissonance and unevenness of the meter and the rhythm when combined. I would ask students to call out how they would characterize the rhythm and meter of the two songs, which I would write on the board, and then work in pairs to read the songs' lyrics more carefully and discuss how the rhythm and meter of each song relates to the songs' meaning.

LESSON PLAN FIVE (DAY FIFTEEN)

Central Question(s): How do social or political events impact the writing of an era?

Duration: One sixty minute class

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Practice reading literature through the lens of cultural criticism
- Gain background knowledge of the 1980s
- Develop independent research skills

Materials: Laptop with internet access, copies of the Warrell article

Track List/Reading List:

- Fight the Power (1989) by Public Enemy

Procedure:

It would be difficult to teach Public Enemy without having them watch at least a part of Do the Right Thing; however, it did earn an R rating and is two hours long, and so I have opted instead to show a few clips that capture the tone and basic plot of the film, especially the ending riot scene. After doing that, I will have them read the lyrics to Fight the Power as I play the song, and then pass out print-outs of “Fight the Power” by Laura K. Warrell, from Salon Magazine. Using the article as a starting point, students will research, the socio-political context of the late 1980s. Each student will be asked to find at least three events, either social, or cultural, or political, that Public Enemy and Spike Lee might have been in some way responding to. They will then closely read the lyrics and find quotes that support the idea that Public Enemy was influenced by these events. Students will then go around the room and share out an event, as well a quote that they found to support the idea that the event influenced Public Enemy.

Homework:

Look up the soundtrack for a movie you’ve watched recently. Select one song that you think particularly sums up the central themes or conflicts within the movie, and explain how it does this. Discuss when the song plays during the movie in your analysis.

WEEK THREE: THE 1990s

LESSON PLAN SIX (DAY NINETEEN)

Central Question(s): How we apply psychoanalytic criticism to texts?

Duration: One sixty minute class

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Learn about psychoanalytic criticism and how it differs from cultural criticism Practice applying psychoanalytic theory to texts
- Connect themes from previously read works to what they read
- Use biographical information in applying psychoanalytic criticism

Materials: Laptop with internet access, copies of the Delahoye introduction

Track List/Reading List:

- Changes (1998) by 2Pac

Procedure:

Having studied cultural criticism in the previous class, today I would like to turn to using psychoanalytic criticism to analyze texts. I think 2Pac's "Changes" will work particularly well for this lesson, dealing as it does with an internal conflict as well as what Locke calls "the desire to repair a damaged group psychology". I would begin this lesson by providing students some background information about 2Pac, perhaps by watching a short biographical documentary. I would then introduce them to psychological criticism (<http://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/psycho.crit.html> Michael Delahoye provides an accessible and succinct summary). I would then ask students to split into groups and assign them one of three prompts: 1. What unresolved emotions does it seem 2Pac is grappling with? 2. What conflicts is 2Pac trying to resolve? 3. Do you see any guilt being expressed in this song? If so, over what? After giving students time to discuss these prompts within their groups, we would come back as a group to discuss their prompts and discussions, as well as answer any questions that came up in the course of discussion.

Homework:

Return to one of the poems we read during the Harlem Renaissance unit, either "The Weary Blues" or "The White House", and in a short (500-750 word) reading response paper, compare and contrast your selected poem with 2Pac's "Changes". Do you see any of the ideas of Johnson or Locke in 2Pac's "Changes"?

WEEK FOUR: CONTEMPORARY RAP AND HIP HOP (2000-present)

LESSON PLAN SEVEN (DAY TWENTY TWO)

Central Question(s): How does the theme of ‘coolness’ function in “We Real Cool” and “All Falls Down”? How does tone work in our understanding of theme?

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Juxtapose pieces with similar themes
- Utilize close-reading skills in order to determine tone
- Apply lessons from literature to the media that surrounds them in day to day life

Materials: Laptop with internet access, black or whiteboard

Track List/ Reading List:

- **We Real Cool (1960) by Gwendolyn Brooks**
- **All Falls Down (2004) by Kanye West**

Procedure:

For homework, students would be asked to bring in a picture of something that reads as “cool” to them, taken from social media (such as a picture from Instagram), and upon coming to class we would put them on the board. Students will begin with a free-write, in which they reflect upon what “coolness” means. The prompt will ask students to consider questions such as: “How would you define ‘cool’?” “Who or what is ‘cool’ right now?” “If given an object (such as a piece of clothing) how would you know if it was cool or not?” “How do things become ‘cool’?” This work would prepare them to read Gwendolyn Brooks’ piece “We Real Cool”, and listen to two readings of it, one by Gwendolyn Brooks herself and one by Morgan Freeman (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBpxJb24O8A>, **Artifact Five**). Working with a partner, they would fill out a hand-out together (**Artifact Six, Appendix B**). Still in those pairs, students would then move onto Kanye West’s “All Falls Down”, completing the second part of the hand-out. Students would then share out their opinions of what each author thinks about ‘coolness’ and what it requires, hopefully reaching a concensus that both ultimately see coolness as damaging in some ways— these would be written on the board to one side of the pictures they brought in for homework. Students would be given time to look at the pictures their classmates have brought in, and we would then have a group discussion of what they think coolness requires, and how to achieve coolness. In what ways is this similar to what Gwendolyn Brooks and Kanye West are saying about coolness, and in what ways is it different?

Homework: In both “We Real Cool” and “All Falls Down”, the authors use the word “we” liberally, while also expressing opinions of ‘coolness’ that are fairly cynical. In a short (250-500 word) paper, explain who you think the “we” is in both poems, and how that might affect each author’s opinion on ‘coolness’.

LESSON PLAN EIGHT (DAY TWENTY THREE)

Central Questions: How can we improve our understanding of a work that at first seems intimidating?

Duration: One sixty minute class

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Develop skills for reading poetry through the six steps
- Learn the important role that outside research can play in understanding poetry
- Work collaboratively to improve their research skills

Materials: Laptop with internet access, handout

Track List/Reading List:

- Murder to Excellence (2011) by Jay Z and Kanye West

Procedure:

In this lesson, I want to give students a heuristic for reading and responding to rap and poetry that they find difficult to comprehend at first. Though it may at first seem that this lesson comes fairly late into the lesson plan, I have chosen to situate it here for two reasons: first, because I believe that without that emotional response, rap and poetry lose their power, and I wanted to give students the space and freedom to explore these emotional responses, and second, because the works we've read so far are fairly straight-forward in their meaning, without needing extensive outside research. Jay-Z's and Kanye West's Murder to Excellence, however, is lyrically and structurally fairly complicated, and requires extensive knowledge in order for its message to be fully communicated. With this in mind, I want to introduce the "six steps" heuristic of reading poems (slightly modified from the method found here, though I think this is a fairly well known heuristic: <http://teacherpop.org/2016/04/analyze-poem-6-steps/>). First, students will be given a handout of the lyrics (without any titling, i.e., chorus, interlude, section titles) and listen to the song. I will then pass-out a hand-out of the six steps (**Artifact Seven, Appendix C**) and ask students to fill them out independently. I will then divide students into four groups, each of which will be assigned a verse. The students will then work in these groups to research any questions they have about the verses, which will then be shared out with the class.

Homework:

Choose one of your favorite songs and apply the six steps of reading poetry to it. Afterwards, right a short paper explaining if using the six steps to read the lyrics affected your understanding of the song.

LESSON PLAN NINE (DAY TWENTY-FOUR)

Central Questions: How can we read visual texts? How do visual texts produce meaning?

Duration: One sixty minute class

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Practice close-reading visual texts
- Discuss how rap and hip hop is in conversation with today's social climate

Track List/Reading List:

- Formation (2016) by Beyonce

Materials: Laptop with internet access, projector, handout

Procedure:

For this lesson, I want to introduce students to the concept of reading visual media. This is especially pertinent in a unit about hip-hop, since graffiti is widely acknowledged as a central component of hip-hop culture. Further, I believe in the value of teaching visual media in the classroom, as the world has increasingly media saturated, and I believe that it is necessary to give students the tools and skills to analyze the media they are constantly surrounded by. To this end, I want to begin with an introduction to the importance of graffiti in hip-hop culture and what function it served, as well as introduce terms that might be beneficial to students in discussing visual media through a slideshow (probably an abbreviated version of the term list found at http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1102/terms.pdf **Artifact Eight**). We would then practice these skills through looking at various pieces of street art or graffiti as a class and analyzing them as pieces of visual media. After this introductory lesson, I would pass out a handout (**Artifact Nine, Appendix D**) and ask students to watch the music video for Beyonce's "Formation", jotting down their initial responses to the video in the first section of the the handout. After splitting them into groups, I would play the video again and then give the students time to discuss their group's prompt, and then allow for a class discussion of the prompts and responses.

Homework:

Take any work we've read so far, and imagine it was released as a single (if you choose a poem, imagine it as the lyrics to a song), and design an album cover for it. You may draw the cover, make a collage, or render it using technology. Provide a short explanation for the symbols/images/text you've chosen as well as an explanation for how you've positioned these symbols/images/text.

LESSON PLAN TEN (DAY TWENTY FIVE AND TWENTY SIX)

Central Questions: In what ways in hip-hop aligned with activism?

Duration: Two sixty minute classes

Objectives:

Through this lesson, students will:

- Practice close reading to determine tone and theme
- Make connections between readings and real-world situations

Materials: Laptop with internet access, handout

Track List/Reading List:

- “Alright” (2015) by Kendrick Lamar

Procedure:

Throughout my selection of songs and poems, I’ve tried to keep the works in a chronological order. I feel, however, that this lesson should be the ultimate one, though Kendrick Lamar’s “Alright” predates Beyonce’s “Lemonade” by a year. Much of this unit had an implicit theme of rap as a means of protest, or as a means of social commentary, and I believe I’ve chosen pieces that reflect this. In this lesson, however, I want to make that implicit theme explicit, in preparation for their final project (**Artifact Ten, Appendix E**).

In the first day of the lesson, students will listen to Kendrick Lamar’s “Alright”, and will follow the six steps explained in Lesson Plan Eight. In small groups of three or four, I will ask students to discuss their answers to step three, five and six and then share them out with the class. We will try to answer any remaining questions as a class, and then I will have students try to pick up on the broad themes of the song.

For the second day of the lesson, we will start by watching a group of Black Lives Matter protesters chant “Alright” in a protest in response to police harrassment. I will ask students to have a class discussion about why the BLM protesters would have chosen this song specifically. What do they see as the central message being conveyed here? What is the rhetoric the protestors and Kendrick Lamar are employing?

Appendix

A: Artifact Three

Tone: The poet's attitude toward the poem's speaker, reader, and subject matter, as interpreted by the reader **DRAW A STAR NEXT TO THE LINE THAT YOU THINK BEST INDICATES THE TONE OF THE POEM**

Metaphor and Simile: When two things are compared. Simile uses the words "like" or "as"; "Her rose-red lips" is a metaphor. "Her hair was white as snow" is a simile. **CIRCLE ANY METAPHORS OR SIMILES YOU FIND**

Rhyme: The repetition of syllables. *End rhyme* occurs when the syllable comes at the end of a line. *Eye rhyme* occurs when words look like they should rhyme, but when said, don't, as in "through" and "rough". *Internal rhyme* is when a word from the middle of a line is rhymed with a word at the end of the line. *Slant rhyme* rhyming of the ending consonant sounds in a word, but not the entire syllable such as in "tell" and "toll" **DRAW A BOX AROUND WORDS THAT RHYME**

Alliteration: The repetition of initial stressed, consonant sounds in a series of words within a phrase or verse line. **DRAW A LINE UNDER ANY CONSONANT SOUNDS THAT REPEAT**

Assonance: The repetition of vowel sounds without repeating consonants; sometimes called vowel rhyme **DRAW A LINE ABOVE ANY VOWEL SOUNDS THAT REPEAT**

Your door is shut against my tightened face,
And I am sharp as steel with discontent;
But I possess the courage and the grace
To bear my anger proudly and unbent.
The pavement slabs burn loose beneath my feet,
And passion rends my vitals as I pass,
A chafing savage, down the decent street;
Where boldly shines your shuttered door of glass.
Oh, I must search for wisdom every hour,
Deep in my wrathful bosom sore and raw,
And find in it the superhuman power
To hold me to the letter of your law!
Oh, I must keep my heart inviolate
Against the potent poison of your hate.

B: Artifact Six

Working with a partner, they would fill out a hand-out together (**Artifact Six, Appendix B**). Still in those pairs, students would then move onto Kanye West's "All Falls Down", completing the second part of the hand-out. Students would then share out their opinions of what each author thinks about 'coolness' and what it requires, hopefully reaching a consensus that both ultimately see coolness as damaging in some ways

Part One: Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool"

Circle what Gwendolyn Brooks seems to be saying is cool, and then summarize what she defines as the tenets of coolness off to the side. Would you characterize her tone as ironic or sincere?

Underline the parts of the poems that help you to determine tone.

The Pool Players.

Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

Part Two: Kanye West, "All Falls Down"

Circle what Kanye West seems to be saying is cool, and then summarize what he defines as the tenets of coolness off to the side. Would you characterize his tone as ironic or sincere? Underline the parts of the poems that help you to determine tone.

Man I promise, she's so self conscious
She has no idea what she's doing in college
That major that she majored in don't make no money
But she won't drop out, her parents will look at her funny
Now, tell me that ain't insecure
The concept of school seems so secure
Sophomore three years aint picked a career
She like fuck it, I'll just stay down here and do hair
Cause that's enough money to buy her a few pairs of new Airs
Cause her baby daddy don't really care
She's so precious with the peer pressure
Couldn't afford a car so she named her daughter Alexis
She had hair so long that it looked like weave

Then she cut it all off now she look like Eve
And she be dealing with some issues that you can't believe
Single black female addicted to retail and well

Man I promise, I'm so self conscious
That's why you always see me with at least one of my watches
Rollies and Pasha's done drove me crazy
I can't even pronounce nothing, pass that versace!
Then I spent 400 bucks on this
Just to be like nigga you ain't up on this!
And I can't even go to the grocery store
Without some ones thats clean and a shirt with a team
It seems we living the american dream
But the people highest up got the lowest self esteem
The prettiest people do the ugliest things
For the road to riches and diamond rings
We shine because they hate us, floss cause they degrade us
We trying to buy back our 40 acres
And for that paper, look how low we a'stoop
Even if you in a Benz, you still a nigga in a coop/coupe

I say fuck the police, that's how I treat em
We buy our way out of jail, but we can't buy freedom
We'll buy a lot of clothes when we don't really need em
Things we buy to cover up what's inside
Cause they make us hate ourself and love they wealth
That's why shortys hollering "where the ballas' at?"
Drug dealer buy Jordans, crackhead buy crack
And a white man get paid off of all of that
But I ain't even goin' act holier than thou
Cause fuck it, I went to Jacob with 25 thou
Before I had a house and I'd do it again
Cause I wanna be on 106 and Park pushing a Benz
I wanna act ballerific like it's all terrific
I got a couple past due bills, I won't get specific
I got a problem with spending before I get it
We all self conscious I'm just the first to admit it

Oh when it all, it all falls down
I'm telling you oh, it all falls down
Oh when it all, it all falls down
I'm telling you oh, it all falls down

C: Artifact Seven

The Six (Easy!) Steps for Reading Poetry

1. Read the title, and explain your expectations for the poem based on the title

2. Read the poem, and then paraphrase it in your own words

3. Use a dictionary to define any words you don't understand, write down any questions you have about the poem

4. Identify the four W's in the poem
 - **Who** seems to be speaking? Is it possible to say to whom?

 - **Where** does the poem seem to be set? Can you tell? Are there any clues?

 - **When** does the action or setting seem to take place? Can you place the poem in time?

 - **What** is the situation or plot? Does anything happen?

5. Offer a tentative interpretation of the poem's meaning or purpose

6. Describe any aspects of form, language use, and sound that contribute to the meaning

D: Artifact Nine (with credit to Kayli's hand-out from her demonstration lesson, off of which this was based, with modifications)

What are some of your immediate reactions to this music video?

Group one: How do you interpret the term 'formation'? What is Beyonce's purpose in making this video?

Group Three: Who is the target audience of this video? How are you positioned by this video? How would someone of a different race or gender be positioned by this video?

Group Three: How does this video speak to race relations today? How does her message differ from the principles of the Civil Rights movement (nonviolence, peaceful protest)? In what ways is it similar?

E: Artifact Ten

For your final project, you must:

1. Select five songs that could be characterized as rap or hip-hop that you feel work together to produce a thematic narrative and
2. Produce a short podcast or youtube video (no longer than fifteen minutes in either case) that will serve as a listening guide, explaining why you chose each songs, analyzing what they have in common and how they differ, how you chose to order the songs, and what coherent message you feel they send.

You will be evaluated using this scale:

	Exemplary (4 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Needs Work (2 pts)	Incomplete (1 pt)
Introduction	Provides relevant information and establishes a clear, specific purpose while being engaging	Describes the topic, engages the audience, with some relevant information	Somewhat engaging, provides a vague or overly general purpose	Irrelevant or inappropriate topic. Purpose is not stated.
Song Choice	Song choice demonstrates careful thinking and research. Each song is analyzed carefully, making use of the poetic terms we've talked about in class Poetic terms related to the message or theme of the song.	Song choice demonstrates some thinking or research. Each song is addressed with analysis. Poetic terms are used appropriately.	Song choice shows minimal research. Little analysis. Poetic terms are employed, but not utilized to discuss larger themes.	Analysis fails to produce any coherent meaning. Poetic terms are not employed in discussion.

	Exemplary (4 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Needs Work (2 pts)	Incomplete (1 pt)
Song Order	<p>The order of the songs shows thoughtful analysis and contributes to a coherent thematic narrative.</p> <p>The rationale behind the order is made clear in the listening guide.</p>	<p>The order of the songs contributes a thematic narrative.</p> <p>The rationale is stated in the listening guide.</p>	<p>The order of the songs contributes somewhat to a thematic narrative.</p> <p>The rationale is inadequately explained.</p>	<p>There is no rationale to the song choice, and no rationale can be determined through the song order.</p>
Song Cohesion	<p>The songs work together to produce a strong, clear, message.</p> <p>Message is stated and explained in the listening guide.</p>	<p>The songs work together to produce a message.</p> <p>The message is stated in the listening guide.</p>	<p>The message produced is left unclear, or is overly general</p>	<p>No coherent message was produced.</p>
Delivery	<p>Well rehearsed delivery in a conversational style.</p>	<p>Rehearsed delivery.</p>	<p>Appears unrehearsed with uneven delivery</p>	<p>Delivery is hesitant and choppy or sounds like the presenter is reading off of a paper</p>

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