

We Didn't Start the Fire



Introduction

Billy Joel became engrossed with history in his early teenage years and decided that one day he would become a history teacher. Unfortunately, a career in rock 'n roll sidetracked his youthful ambition. Joel's hit song "We Didn't Start the Fire" is homage to the career that never was for the international music superstar. The song spans about forty years of U.S and can be a wonderful teaching tool for an introduction modern American history. The goal is to use all the wonderful history tools in the song "We Didn't Start the Fire" and write a two page essay to explain the relationship of each topic you select from each decade.

Questions comments or concern email [Mrs. Turzanski](mailto:Mrs.Turzanski)

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Process



The Process

1. Open the "We Didn't Start The Fire" [lyrics page](#).
2. Choose one of the topics in the song that is most interesting to you, this will be your "project topic."
3. Click on the topic you have chosen in the links section and thoroughly research the topic on which you wish to write.
4. Go back to the [lyrics page](#) and choose at least four other topics that you wish to relate to your project topic.
5. Research all five of the topics you have selected and write a two-page essay explaining the relationship between the events that you have chosen and why those events are significant in modern American history.
6. This paper must be at least two pages, typed or word processed, double-spaced, and must contain a coherent thesis linking the five events that you have chosen. Use the [APA format](#) to cite your sources and include a complete works cited.

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Task



The Task

There are 113 individual topics discussed in the song, but many of them are intertwined. Your assignment is take five of these topics and show how they are related. You will write a two-page essay explaining the relationship between the events that you have chosen and why those events are significant in modern American history. In making your selections you must span the entire timespan of the song. Each of 100 plus topics are related in some way. It is your task to determine which of the events are closest related or which of the events lead to the other. Creativity is always a plus. Try to find issues, events or topics with little relationship and show how they have a a major impact on American history.

- Students will use the World Wide Web to access information related to the topic.
- Students can use video player to view "We Didn't Start the Fire" video.

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Evaluation



Evaluation

	Poor 0-5	Developing 6-10	Accomplished 11-15	Exemplary 16-20
Use of research topics	Student uses one research topics.	Student uses two to four research topics.	Student uses five research topics.	Student uses six or more research topics.
Relates research topics and shows relaitvity to American History	Student does not relate any research topics to show the relationship to American History	Student relates two to four research topics and shows relationship to American History.	Student relates five research topics and shows relationship to American History.	Student relates six or more research topics and shows relationship to American History.
Grammar content of paper	Student demonstrates no skills in grammar and punctuation.	Student demonstrates skills below grade level in grammar	Student demonstrates skills on grade level in grammar and punctuation.	Student demonstrates skills above grade level in grammar

		and punctuation.		and punctuation.
Citations and Works Cited	Student does not have citations and works cited or uses incorrect format	Student does not complete citations and works cited or uses incorrect format	Student completes citations and works cited page with few errors and minor mistakes in format.	Student completes works cited and citations in perfect or near perfect manner.
Quality of work demonstrated	Students demonstrate extremely poor quality of work.	Students demonstrate an overall below average quality of work.	Students demonstrate an overall average quality of work.	Students demonstrate an overall above average or superior quality of work.

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Conclusion



Conclusion

Participation in this lesson should teach students the intertwined nature of American History. Relating different events in history is crucial to the understanding of why these events occur. Students will gain a better understanding of the 50 years included in the song through individual research, web use, and writing.

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