

**BUILDING LITERACY
THROUGH MUSIC
INSTRUCTION**

Kenmore Middle School

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BACKGROUND

Students were asked to look at jobs that people do using music. We discussed the following jobs:

- **music teacher**
- **music therapist**
- **performer**

and then we looked at what a **music critic does.**




WHAT IS A MUSIC CRITIC?



CONSUME, CRITIQUE, PRODUCE...

Several years ago, our district participated in a training called “Literacy Cohort.” One of the things I took away from this was: if you want students to create a good product, they must first consume many examples (both good and bad), critique them, and THEN they can produce a good product.



PROCESS:

Students spent time reviewing/learning specific music vocabulary to use when writing about their music artist.

Students read many examples of music reviews from websites and from previous student examples.

They compared the reviews to harvest common information and to evaluate the quality of the reviews themselves to determine the characteristics of a well-written review.



TEENINK.COM IS A WEBSITE THAT HAS REVIEWS WRITTEN BY TEENS FOR A TEEN AUDIENCE

The screenshot shows the TeenInk website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with categories like Poetry, Fiction, Nonfiction, Reviews, Forums, Art/Photo, Video, Summer Programs, and College Guide. A search bar and social media icons are also present. The main content area features a 'Today's Best Reviews' section with filters for 'Today's Best', 'Top Voted', 'Most Discussed', and 'Most Recent'. Below this, there are three featured reviews: 'Tuesdays with Morrie' (voted #1), 'Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich' (voted #2), and 'Let The Circle Be Unbroken' (voted #3). The right sidebar contains promotional banners for TeenInk magazine subscriptions and a search function. The bottom of the page has a 'Launch Teen Ink Chat' button.

Teen reviews on books, colleges, music, movies and more. - Google Chrome
www.teenink.com/reviews/

Teen Ink

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Today's Best Reviews

Today's Best Top Voted Most Discussed Most Recent

View: All Reviews Printed in **MAG** Editor's Choice

★ TODAY'S TOP VOTED REVIEWS

View all >

Tuesdays with Morrie **MAG**
By **Bapalapa2**, Phoenix, AZ
Mitch Albom's Tuesdays with Morrie is alive-changing, inspiring book about how we should value the precious time we have. Albom has a special knack for writing beautifully. It shows the...
voted **#1** by our readers

Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich **MAG**
By Corbin F., Cohasset | 0 comments
voted **#2**

Let The Circle Be Unbroken **MAG**
By **Bapalapa2**, Unknown, Unknown | 2 comments
voted **#3**

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY BE A SUMMER HOYA

Get a head start on college this summer.

Launch Teen Ink Chat

Site Feedback

THEY ALSO READ EXAMPLES FROM PREVIOUS 7TH GRADERS AND COMPARE THOSE, TOO.

TAYLOR SWIFT

I researched Taylor Swift. Taylor Swift is a young talented girl who writes country and pop songs. She has a very good voice. She used to live in Wyomissing PA. She started to write songs when she was 12. She was number 1 on the chart of the best singers. Her inspiration came from this boy that she sat next to and they were talking and after awhile and she decided to write a song.

"Back to December" is a very sad song. At some parts it was fast and some parts it was slow. Her instruments are Guitar, piano, vocals, background singers. I love this song because it is like she is telling a story about her relationship with her ex-boyfriend. It tells me that she wants to go back to before she made that mistake.

"Speak Now" is about this guy that she likes and she does not want him to get married. The instruments are guitar, singing, and drums. The mood of the song is very mad. The speed of the song is fast. I like this song because it is a fast song and I know all the words. She is expressing that this a very hard time for her and she want to rush him out of the church write away.

"Mean" is more of a fast song she used to get bullied when she was younger. The instruments are guitar, drums, and singing. The mood is sad the tempo of the the song is medium fast. I like this song because she talks about her feeling and telling every body it is mean to bully and that is why I like this song.

Interesting things about Taylor Swift is that she started writing songs at 12 years old. She did not graduate from

Sabrina Lee

6/17/15

Period 2 AM

Taylor Swift

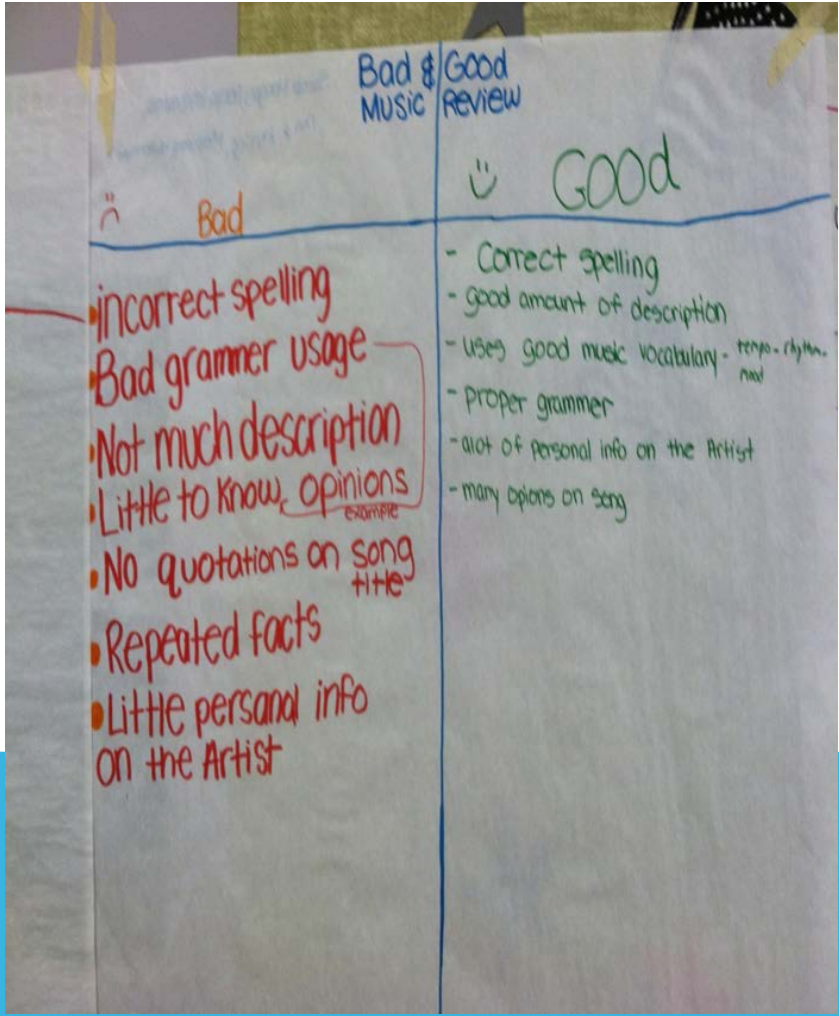
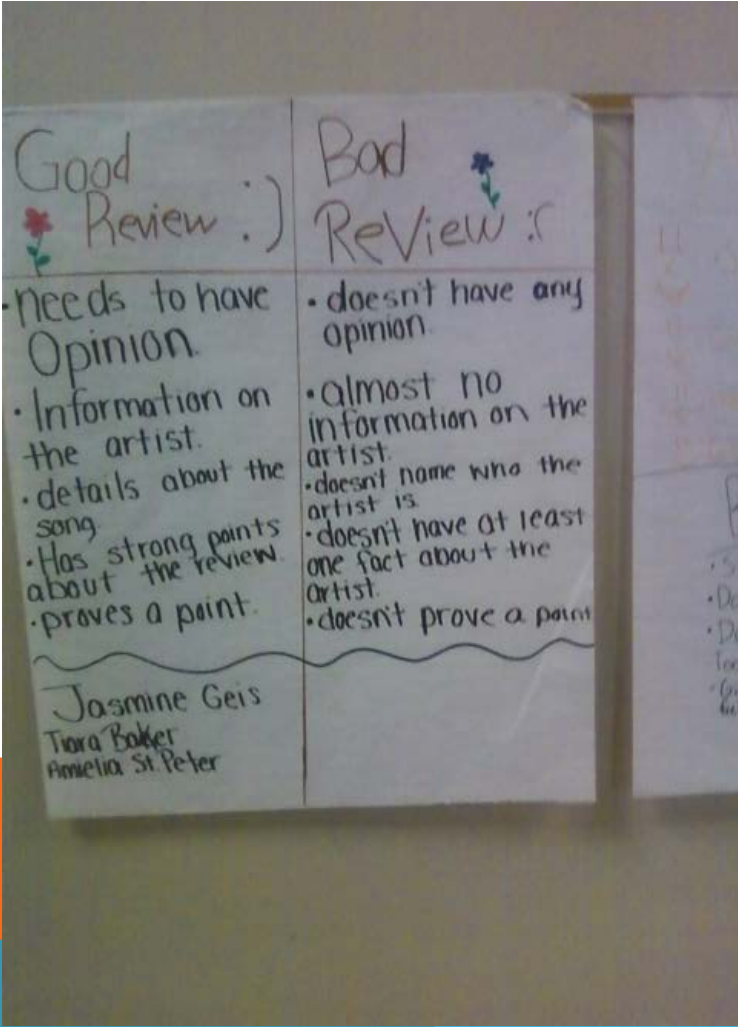
On December 13, 1989 In the city of Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, a great singer and songwriter was born. Taylor Swift started singing at the age of 14 and has continued performing ever since. She was signed with the independent label, Big Machines Records. Swift became the youngest songwriter for Sony/ATV Music Publishing House. She plays many instruments such as the guitar, banjo, ukulele, piano, as well as her vocals. She loved listening to her grandmother sing at church. She was introduced to country music by the Dixie Chicks. This got her into her first genre of music, country. Her biggest musical influence was Shania Twain, also a songwriter and performer. Just last year, Taylor switched from country to pop/ pop rock. This was one reason why her music is very interesting. Swift is also out-going and dated a lot of guys and writes narrative songs about her break ups and her own personal life. Swift created her first pop album called 1989 and was the bestselling album of 2014. Her other albums include Red and Fearless. Taylor Swift has progressed in the world of social media. She's received 7 Grammy Awards, 16 American Music Awards, and her first Brit Award in the Best International Female Solo Artist category.

"Style" is a heart aching song about two people who are trying to forget each other. Taylor's clear, meaningful words are accompanied by the drums, bass, electric guitar, and piano. Her singing is soft in the beginning and gradually gets louder. In the chorus/ refrain Swift sings, "And when we go crashing down, we come back every time." This shows that the couple can't grow apart from each other because they keep coming back. "Style" also shows the young reckless relationships we all seem to get in, as said in the verse, "I should just tell you to leave 'cause I know exactly where it leads." The moderate, steady speed gives a catchy beat and keeps you listening. This song is a great and sweet song that is worth listening to.

"Blank Space" is a song that shows jealousy and craziness about a guy, who is dating Swift, cheating on her. Taylor's high, jealous voice corresponds with the fast beat of the drums and the loud chords from the guitar and bass. This song starts off as mezzo-forte and gets louder with a crescendo into the chorus/ refrain. Swift's jealousy and craziness is shown in the chorus, "So it's gonna be forever or it's gonna go down in flames." And the verse, "I get drunk on jealousy. But you'll come back each time you leave. 'Cause, darling, I'm a nightmare dressed as a daydream." This catchy, amazing song puts you into an energetic mood.

"Shake It Off" is a happy song about forgetting all the haters and just "shake it off." This song has the jazzy tune of the saxophone and trumpet. "Shake It Off" is a loud, fast song that makes you want to dance. You can tell that Swift really doesn't care

STUDENTS WORKED IN GROUPS TO IDENTIFY CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD REVIEWS AND BAD REVIEWS



WHEN THE STUDENTS ARE READY TO BEGIN THEIR RESEARCH. WE SPEND THE NEXT FOUR DAYS IN THE COMPUTER LAB.

I _____
Name _____ AM or PM _____

Song #1: _____

Dynamics: _____
Do they change? How? _____

Instrumentation: _____

Voice(s): _____
Male or Female? _____
Solo or Group? _____
Back-up Group? _____
Describe how the voice sounds: _____

Do you like it? Why/Why not? _____

Lyrics: What is this song about? _____
What is the mood of the song? _____ How do you know? _____
Quote two memorable lines:
1. _____
2. _____

Do you like this song? Yes or No. Why? _____

Outline the form here: Circle what you hear

Intro	Verse	Chorus/Refrain		
Verse	Chorus/Refrain	Break	Bridge	
Verse	Chorus/Refrain	Break	Bridge	
Verse	Chorus/Refrain	Break	Bridge	
Verse	Chorus/Refrain	Break	Bridge	
Verse	Chorus/Refrain	Break	Bridge	
Verse	Chorus/Refrain	Outro		

Tempo: _____
Does it change? How? _____

Students are given templates for collecting their research notes.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS ARTIST?



SOME OF THE WEBSITES I HAVE STUDENTS USE:

Wikipedia

Songfacts.com

A-Z Lyrics

Metrolyrics

**Official Webpage for the
artist or band.**



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia page for the band Imagine Dragons. The browser address bar displays the URL https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imagine_Dragons. The page features the Wikipedia logo and navigation options like 'Main page', 'Contents', and 'Tools'. The main content area includes the title 'Imagine Dragons', a sub-header 'From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia', and a detailed paragraph about the band's history and achievements. A right-hand sidebar provides background information, including the band's origin (Las Vegas, Nevada), genres (Rock), and members (Dan Reynolds and Daniel Wayne Sermon).

Imagine Dragons is an American rock band from Las Vegas, Nevada. Imagine Dragons' lineup consists of lead vocalist Dan Reynolds, guitarist Wayne "Wing" Sermon, bassist Ben McKee and drummer Daniel Platzman.^[2] The band gained exposure following the release of their debut studio album, *Night Visions* (2012) and first single "It's Time". The band's second studio album *Smoke + Mirrors* reached number one on the *Billboard* 200, *Canadian Albums Chart*, and *UK Albums Chart*.^{[3][4]} *Night Visions* peaked at number two on the weekly *Billboard* 200 and *UK Albums Chart*. According to *Billboard*, Imagine Dragons topped the year-end rock rankings for 2013;^[5] *Billboard* named them "The Breakthrough Band of 2013", and *Rolling Stone* named their single "Radioactive" "the biggest rock hit of the year".^{[2][6][7]} MTV called them "the year's biggest breakout band".^[8]

Imagine Dragons won an American Music Award for Favorite Alternative Artist, a Grammy Award for Best Rock Performance, five *Billboard* Music Awards, and a World Music Award. In May 2014, the band was nominated for a total of fourteen different *Billboard* Music Awards, including Top Artist of the Year and a Milestone Award, recognizing innovation and creativity of different artists across different genres.

Background information	
Origin	Las Vegas, Nevada, United States
Genres	Rock
Years active	2008–present
Labels	KIDinaKORNER · Interscope
Associated acts	Egyptian · The Moth & The Flame
Website	imagedragonsmusic.com
Members	Dan Reynolds Daniel Wayne Sermon

THE FINAL STEP...



By Claire ~~Sosaolo~~

From Sydney, Australia, 5 Seconds of Summer has stolen the hearts of girls all over the world. The band consists of Luke Hemmings (lead vocals and guitar), Michael Clifford (vocals and guitar), Calum Hood (vocals and bass guitar) and Ashton Irwin (vocals and percussion). This Punk-rock band uploaded covers of them, singing and soon went on One Direction's *Where We Are* tour in 2014, as the opening act. The amazing band members have many inspirations including Queen, Day, Boys Like Girls, All Time Low, Blink-182, and Mötley. Their talent and great music have won them many awards such as Best Breakthrough at the Music Video Honors, and New Artist of the Year at the American Music Awards. Their newest album, *5 Seconds of Summer* features a variety of songs, including favorites including "Good Girls" and "Amnesia".

"Everything I Didn't Say" is a heartfelt song about how bad choices can lead to lost love. Its relaxed, moderate tempo fits the sad mood of the song. The intro features vocals and drums. Then, the guitar is added during the verses, the chorus and the break. The refrain features a much louder dynamic than the verses, and instead of a solo, the entire group sings. The meaningful voice adds to words like "holding onto a broken and empty heart, all the flowers I bought, all the hours I lost, wish I could bring it back to the start." Luke's strained voice brings out the meaning in beautiful lyrics, such as, "I wish I could rewind all the times that I didn't show you what you're really worth." This song brings out the mature side of 5 Seconds of Summer, and many will find they can relate to this song.

One of the other flawless songs on *5 Seconds of Summer* (5SOS) is "Don't Stop". It has a similar form to many of their other songs, with low, clear voices during both the chorus and refrain. The upbeat tempo and loud dynamics bring out the fun, bubbly mood to this piece of music. This incredible song features a compilation of instruments including electric guitar, bass guitar and drums. Its music video, where the boys are superheroes saving an endangered girl, which enhances the mood of this song. The song also ties in anti-bullying, for Ashton's sister, who was bullied. The song says, "You're like perfection, some kind of holiday. You've got me thinking that we could run away." And other lyrics saying, "Don't Stop! Doing what you're doing! Every time you walk in the room you got all eyes on you and you know it!" This fantastic song tells every fangirl around the world that they are perfect!

"Mrs. All American" is a sparkling addition to 5 Seconds of Summer's long list of terrific songs. It tells the story of falling in love with an American girl, saying, "Walk my way, Mrs. All American, say my name, no need to pretend." The cocky, loud ~~upbeat~~ mood for the song: happy and

intoxicating. This piece of music features a common form, with a solo during the verses and all four mates singing during the refrain and break. "Mrs. All American" has words saying "No one understands the chemistry we have, and it came out of nowhere." These lyrics will catch the ears of fangirls, who will find themselves singing out loud, and rocking to this extraordinary song. This fantastic song features instruments including drums, electric guitar, bass guitar and perfect vocals.

5 Seconds of Summer has an extremely bright future. Their wonderful talent and sound will continue to win awards for their music, and they will top the charts with best-selling albums. They are currently working on a live album, and are on a tour. The young voices in their music will keep you dancing and soon you'll be buying their album! The four mates will continue to prosper in the music industry with their fun bubbly personalities and great music!



TYPE AND HAND IN...

Adelina Metz
3-10-15

Music/ Ms. Grant
Paramore Music Review

Paramore

By Adelina Metz

Paramore is a rock and punk pop band from Franklin, Tennessee. It is made up of Hayley Williams, the lead vocalist, pianist, and keyboard player; Jeremy Davis, the bass guitarist; and Taylor York, the percussionist, backing vocalist, and lead guitarist. Hayley started voice lessons at the age of fourteen and was signed to Atlantic records as a solo artist in 2003. Before Paramore, she and Jeremy Davis were part of a cover band called The Factory. Paramore was formed when Hayley met former bandmates and founding members Josh and Zac Farro at a homeschooling program after moving to Franklin from Meridian, Mississippi. Their inspirations include Jimmy Eat World, Death Cab for Cutie, and New Found Glory. The name Paramore came from the maiden name of one of the original member's mother. They decided to keep the name after finding out that the word "paramour" means "secret lover." The band was originally signed to Atlantic Records, but decided that a minor label would be better for them. They are currently signed to Fueled by Ramen. Paramore has won multiple Teen Choice Awards, People's Choice Awards, and Kerrang! Awards among others. Albums by them are *Brand New Eyes*, *RIOT!*, *All we Know is Falling* and a self-titled album, *Paramore*.

"Don't it Fun" is an upbeat song about realizing that not everything is about you. The dynamics are medium slow throughout the song, but speed up slightly during the chorus. The form is average, with a short intro like most other Paramore songs, and a gospel choir sings in the background during the vocal break and outro. Other than vocals, the instrumentation of the song includes the xylophone, keyboard, bass and electric guitars, and drums. The mood is carefree, yet the lyrics are scolding, as is shown when Hayley sings, "what are you gonna do / when the world don't orbit around you," and "you see, it's easy to ignore a trouble / when you're livin' in a bubble." With its relatable and well written lyrics, it's no surprise that it won the band their first Grammy Award, "Best Rock Song."

"Ignorance" is a loud song with a fast tempo and average form. The mood is angry, and Hayley is almost yelling during the chorus and end of each verse, like when she sings, "I'm just a person but you can't take it." The song is about two people that used to be really close, but now barely talk, as is shown in the lyrics, "you treat me just like another stranger," and "the friends that stuck together / we wrote our names in blood." Hayley's powerful voice

Adelina Metz
3-10-15

Music/ Ms. Grant
Paramore Music Review

communicates her feelings amazingly and the well-thought-out lyrics, along with the skillfully played electric and bass guitars and drums, really add to this amazing song.

Another great song by Paramore is "Playing God," a song with an angry mood, medium tempo, and average form. This song has medium soft dynamics that get louder during the chorus, and a back-up group sings softly near the end of the chorus and bridge. It is about people who blame others when they should be blaming themselves. "Next time you point a finger / I'll point you to the mirror" is a lyric that shows this. The instrumentation is electric and bass guitar, drums, and vocals. Hayley's voice is amazing: clear, high, and full of feeling. This fantastic song is relatable and catchy.

Paramore's *Writing the Future* tour starts April twenty-seventh, 2015. This talented band is constantly creating outstanding songs, so it is almost certain that they can only grow in popularity. Their song "Decode" was featured in the *Twilight* movie and "Monster" was part of the *Transformers: Dark of the Moon* soundtrack. They have gained and lost members multiple times, but they continue to make great music, which ensures that they will be part of the music business for years to come.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

Responding

Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.

Anchor Standards:

Re7. Perceive and analyze artistic work

Re8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work

Re9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

Connecting


Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context

Anchor Standards:

Cn11. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding


COMMON CORE—COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS

Reading:

1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
 2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
 4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
 9. Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts. a. Use their experience and their knowledge of language and logic, as well as culture, to think analytically, address problems creatively, and advocate persuasively.
- 

COMMON CORE—COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS

Writing:

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
 2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
 5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
 6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
 8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- 

WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS PROJECT?



WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THIS PROJECT?



IN CONCLUSION...

This is a favorite project, both for the students and for me.

The students learn how to listen to music and how to back up their opinions. They begin to learn how to do research and how to evaluate a source. They learn how to articulate their opinions in an intelligent way.

Students practice common core skills without sacrificing music content.

I learn more about the students through their music—about who they are as people.

It's a win-win.

