



## The Sound of...

“Every generation has its own soundtrack. The Silent Generation (people born in the '20s and '30s) had big band and swing. Baby Boomers (born in the '40s and '50s) had rock and soul. Generation X (born in the '60s and '70s) had grunge and hip-hop. There's plenty of overlap, of course, and these are incredibly broad distinctions that don't take a lot of other genres into consideration. But it's probably fair to say that these were the most defining moments in music for each generation...But I can't for the life of me figure out what the Millennial/Generation Y soundtrack is. Maybe it hasn't been defined yet.” – Robin Hilton (NPR)

**Assignment:** After listening to the 50-minute (yeah, I know—you'll get through it) file, *The Sound of a Generation*, from NPR's All Songs Considered (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=91204851>) and considering different articles about Generations Y and Z, you will compose an essay making an argument for which **genre of music** best defines or represents Generation Y, also known as the Millennial Generation, Generation Me, and Generation Text—typically, people born between 1980 and 2000. If you would like a challenge, you may, instead, choose to write about Generation Z—typically, people born between 2001 and 2020 (people who haven't even been born yet). If you choose to write about Generation Z, be sure to watch the YouTube video about this generation to consider more fully all that they are and might be.

If you absolutely loathe the idea of writing about Generation Y or Z, you may choose to write about another specific group or community of people (e.g., graffiti artists, Starbucks baristas, students of today, people who play *WoW*, etc.). If you choose this option, I would prefer that you write about a specific group of people. The point of this essay is not to poke fun at a group but to think critically about what comprises and best represents a particular generation or group or community.

Your essay will be 4-5 pages (at least 1500 words) and entail further critical and analytical thought. This essay will also require secondary sources to back up your argument about a group's identity. You may use sources included in the materials throughout this class (keeping in mind that some materials in this class are more scholarly than others) as well as scholarly sources that you find in the library or online via the digital library, databases like [googlescholar.com](http://scholar.google.com), and various other sources like *Rolling Stone* or NPR or an artist's official website. Please include at least three *credible* sources, properly cited within your essay and listed in a formal Works Cited or References page.

When beginning your essay, you will need to consider and define several things:

- Who comprises the generation or group or community that you're discussing? Do they have a name? If not, what might it be?
- What genre of music seems most popular to your chosen demographic? Name it. Define it. Explain it.
- What songs and lyrics might emerge from your group as “classics”?
- How do music videos reflect the generation or group that you're discussing?
- How is (and how might) music sound and be created and shared among this group of people?

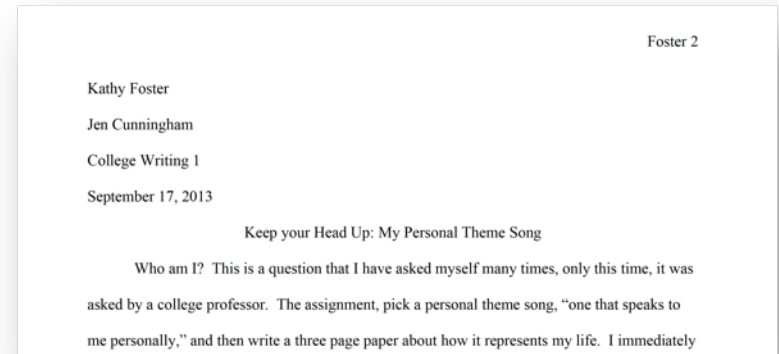
**Your essay should:**

- Include a clear thesis.
- Define your generation or group or community.
- Define your chosen group's musical genre.

- Integrate secondary sources and avoid floating quotes.
- Cite at least three sources (academic essays, newspaper articles, etc.) reinforcing or complicating your thesis.
- Critically consider the implications of defining a group of people by a musical genre.
- Include an introduction, body, and conclusion to structure the essay.
- Demonstrate your ability to use grammar, punctuation, and formatting suitable for college.

**Format:**

- Include a header (i.e., your last name and page number in the upper right corner of every page).
- Include a heading (i.e., your name, my name, the class, and the date on the upper left side of the first page of the essay)
- Use a standard font like Times New Roman in 12pt size.
- Double space your essay.
- Set line spacing at 0pt.
- Cite the sources where you obtained the lyrics (if you include lyrics).



**Cover Letter:** Along with this essay, please include a paragraph or two that will serve as a reflective cover letter. This is a letter to me directing my attention to specific portions of your essay and explaining your composing process. You may want to consider what worked well, what could have been more successful, what you're most proud of, any unforeseen complications that arose while completing your project, or any remaining questions that you may have. This should be the first page of your essay. Your essay (with the heading and title) will begin on page 2. (Please note: the student sample essays provided include cover letters that also discuss Peer Workshops, because those classes met face-to-face. You are required to submit a separate document regarding your Peer Workshops, so you don't need to discuss them in your cover letter.)

**\*\*\*Remember:**

- When saving your essay, please choose .doc or docx.
- Please title your document using your first name. Ex: JenCthemsong.doc
- After revising, please title your document to reflect that it's a revision. Ex: JenCEssay1Revision.doc
- Submit your cover letter and essay as *one* document. Your cover letter should be the first page, with your essay beginning on second page.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Effective Communication (Written/Oral /Reading/Listening)
- Information Literacy
- Critical Thinking
- Global and Diversity Awareness
- Civic, Professional, and Ethical Responsibility
- Rhetorical Knowledge
- Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing
- Knowledge of Composing Processes

Knowledge of Conventions