Dear Music Teachers,

For over two decades, Project Look Sharp, a mission-driven not-for-profit **media literacy** organization at Ithaca College, has been collaborating with educators to provide free, inquiry-based, standards-aligned **media analysis lessons** that integrate core subject area content and skills with habits of critical questioning.

Below you will find an overview of our lessons for **music in grades 6-12** followed by an introduction to the purpose and pedagogy of our approach, ending with information about our free professional development resources for Constructivist Media Decoding.

THE LESSONS:

We currently have 42 lessons that use music to teach core curricular content in different subjects. For example, each of the nine units in the kits Media Construction of Peace and Media Construction of Social Justice have collections of songs to teach history and critical thinking. You can search our lessons by grade level, subject area (e.g. *Music*) and keyword, and filter your search by media type (e.g. *Song*). For instance, filtering for *Middle School + Song* gives you 25 hits, entering the keyword *"Justice" + Music* pulls up 10 lessons.

Below are just some our **newest lessons** for teaching **secondary level music.** Click on any title below to get a brief description and to download all the teaching materials.

Miles Davis: Inspiration to a Masterpiece

Youth, Hip Hop & Climate Change

Bob Dylan: Storytelling for Social Justice

Gender & Fear: "It's a Scary Time " but for Whom?

Coming Soon: *Aretha Franklin – Amazing Grace*

Lessons that use **songs to explore social issues**:

Challenging Homophobia

We Will Be Heard (Women's Suffrage)

Life on the Inside (prison)

Immigrant Realities

CONSTRUCTIVIST MEDIA DECODING:

Our [constructivist approach](#) is particularly effective for leading civil and reflective document-based analysis about **potentially polarizing issues**. Our lessons and methodology help students learn to habitually ask key questions about authorship, voice, **perspective** and their own thinking.

We believe that the critical analysis of all media messages - from songs to social media, music to memes - must become habitual for all our students. Students need **continual practice** in asking [critical thinking questions](#) such as:
- *Who produced this and for what purpose?*
- *Is the source and information credible?*
- *What are the biases in this message?*
- *How does my own identity influence how I see this?*

For this kind of self-reflective critical analysis to become ingrained, we need to have students practice this questioning, in age-appropriate ways, from kindergarten through 12th grade, and in diverse subject areas. And we need effective and **efficient methodologies and free materials** to support the integration of media analysis into the core curriculum – helping us to teach what we already teach in ways that **engage more students** more effectively.

Project Look Sharp has published over [500 media analysis lessons](#) on our website and over [70 professional development resources](#) for this purpose. All our lessons – including the lesson plans, media materials, and student handouts – are grant-funded so we can make them available **FREE for educators** through the [Project Look Sharp](#) website. All educators need to do is set up an [account](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES:

Project Look Sharp also has short, annotated [video demonstrations](#) of in-person and online classroom media decoding for different levels and subjects, including a 5-minute video demonstrating classroom decoding of the rap song *Last Words* by Nas.

Our extensive [free PD materials](#) about **curriculum driven media decoding** include:
- [Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages](#) and other handouts and posters
- [Articles and webinars](#) about Constructivist Media Decoding
- A [DIY Guide](#) for creating your own lessons

Please consider signing up for a [free account](#)to fully view our lessons and get added to our [email list](#) so that you will get periodic notices about new lessons and resources. And please pass

on the word about Project Look Sharp. Together we can build a more civil, reflective and just society for all.

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