**M0 – M12: UE “Interkulturelles Lernen mit Songs“ (Schwerpunkt USA / Oberstufe) komplett**

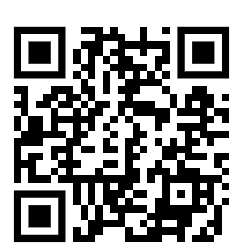
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Title (+ Singer)** | **(Thematic) Focus** |
| **M1** | **The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Fiqo> (with pictures)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ_iuBPCs> (long version) | National anthem  (critical) analysis: contrast patriotism, historical meaning, content / expressions, USA as a role model? |
| **M2** | **The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem):**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Fiqo> (with pictures)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ_iuBPCs> (long version)  **America the Beautiful (“unofficial” national anthem):**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLYAyuf1I1Q> (with patriotic pictures)  **God Bless America (“unofficial” national anthem):**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kGAN-rl-OI> (with lyrics) | Patriotic songs: national anthem, unofficial national “anthems” |
| **M3** | **America © Michael Patrick Kelly, 2021**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nIsMTXdHDo> | Modern: © 2021; ambivalent fee lings towards the US: historical references / criticism / hope |
| **M4** | **American Idiot, © Green Day, 2004**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee_uujKuJMI> | Post 9/11 song; it accuses the media of propaganda and creating xenophobia and fear |
| **M5** | **American Oxygen, © Rihanna, 2015**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao8cGLIMtvg> | Modern: © 2015; song about the American Dream; very ambiguous (especially in combination with the video clip which shows many landmarks of American history (moon landing, Martin Luther King, Obama, Statue of Liberty, immigration, police violence, …) |
| **M6** | **God Bless the U.S.A.**  **Original version: © Lee Greenwood, 1984**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KoXt9pZLGM> | Very patriotic song, praising America, video: many American clichés; American Dream |
| **M7** | **God Bless the U.S.A., © Beyoncé, 2011**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnCNHFg9y1Q> | Very patriotic song, praising America; Beyoncé: well-known version, video rather pathetic (4th of July / Liberty Island) |
| **M8** | **White America, © Eminem, 2002**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZIzD0ZfTFg> | Very critical, autobiographical song; naming and shaming the dichotomy black vs. white “underprivilegedness” |
| **M9** | **In America © John Legend, 2017**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA29HXDHW9Y>   * This song could be used in the same way as M3b or as a contrast to any of the other songs in M2 or M7. | Anti-American Dream song; John Legend = famous R&B singer and activist against racial injustice and the continuing fight for civil rights. |
| **M10** | **American Dreams © Papa Roach, 2017**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6KX2mB7LHI> (video 1)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CXq51iC4yk> (video 2) | Punk, Anti-American Dream; very explicit criticism of many different issues. |
| **M11** | **American Dream © will.i.am, 2021**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NjH_pVai2M> | Contrast: statistics + words question equality, but general (hopeful) message: anyone can make it;  Suitable as an introduction or “wrap up” for the topic // pop |
| **M12** | **I love the USA © Weezer, 2016**  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amy-4jDlYgo> | Patriotic song? Cynical song?  “Choose Your Own Adventure” |

“Classics” such as “Born in the USA” (Bruce Springsteen, 1984), “Living in America” (James Brown, 1985), “This Land is Your Land” (Woody Guthrie, 1940) etc. are not included here.

“Local” songs like “New York, New York”; “West Virginia”, “California Dreaming”, “Go West”, “Empire State of Mind” etc. are not listed here either.

You might get further inspiration via Google, Bing or other search engines.

**M1: THE NATIONAL ANTHEM OF THE USA: THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER**



video (1): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Fiqo> (with pictures)

video (2): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ_iuBPCs> (long version)

**Step 1:**

Watch the first version of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and explain to what extent the musical arrangement (voice, instruments, speed, …) and the pictures influence your impressions of the American national anthem.

These expressions might help you:

**dawn** = the first light or beginning of the day; **twilight** = the last light of the day; **perilous** = dangerous; **rampart** = barricade;

**Step 2:**

Now focus on the text (ll. 1-8). Compare your first impressions to how you feel about these lyrics. Give evidence (quotes, lines) to explain your considerations.

**Step 3:**

Discuss whether a text like this is still appropriate today – especially for a country like the US.

Extra task: You may take the “long version” (ll.1-32) into account as well.

**M1: The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Fiqo> (with pictures) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ_iuBPCs> (long version)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 5  10  15  20  25  30 | Oh, say can you see, by the dawn’s1 early light,  What so proudly we hailed2 at the twilight3’s last gleaming4?  Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous5 fight,  O’er the ramparts6 we watched were so gallantly7 streaming?  And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.  Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?  On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  Where the foe’s8 haughty host in dread silence reposes9,  What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep10,  As it fitfully blows, half conceals11, half discloses12?  Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam13,  In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:  ‘Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave  O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!  And where is that band who so vauntingly14 swore  That the havoc15 of war and the battle’s confusion,  A home and a country should leave us no more!  Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps’ pollution.  No refuge could save the hireling and slave  From the terror of flight, or the gloom16 of the grave:  And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!  Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  Between their loved home and the war’s desolation.17  Blest with victory and peace, may the heav’n rescued land  Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.  Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.”  And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave! | 1 first light of the day  2 to greet 3 opposite of “dawn”  4 to shine 5 dangerous  6 barricade 7 brave    8 enemy 9 to rest  10 steil  11 to cover 12 to uncover  13 light  14 in an arrogant way  15 chaos  16 misery  17 greyness |

**M1: The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem):**

**Background information:**

* Official national anthem since 1931; usually only the first part (ll.1-8) is sung.
* Originally a poem entitled "The Defense of Fort McHenry".
* Written by Francis Scott Key in 1814 during the War of 1812.
* The verses tell of the Battle of Baltimore, a days-long siege between British and American forces
* Message: celebration of patriotism; America = land of the free and the brave
* However: controversial for various reasons
  + Francis Scott Key used to be a slaveholder
  + Lyrics very martial: for example l. 5, l. 10, ll.20ff., ll.28f. ( reference to the War of 1812, references to slavery; l. 5 can be misunderstood as an acceptance of rockets etc., also compare ll.28f.)
* There are very specific rules (the “Flag Code”):
  + Everyone is expected to stand and face the flag; military personnel or veterans have to salute, all other people have to stand with the right hand over heart.
  + Singing is not obligatory, but it is highly encouraged.
  + In the past, changing (even embellishing) the anthem in a performance could be punished.
  + In most schools, students do not have to sing the national anthem every day, but are required to say the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of every day
  + The anthem has to be played before all important sports events, some associations like the NFL or NBA explicitly require certain forms of “respect” (In 2016, Colin Kaepernik was the first (NFL) player who was expelled for kneeling down as a form of protest (BLM) while the anthem was played.

Sources:

<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2018/07/us/national-anthem-annotated/> (19/02/2023); <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37208404> (19/02/2023)

<https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/2148/national-anthem-government-regulation#:~:text=Most%20controversies%20centering%20on%20%E2%80%9CThe,anthem%20in%20silent%20protest%20against> (19/02/2023); <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/sports/football/anthem-kneeling-sports.html> (19/02/2023); <https://www.republicworld.com/sports-news/other-sports/was-colin-kaepernick-fired-from-the-49ers-nfl-star-cut-ties-with-team.html> (19/02/2023)

**M2: Patriotic Songs: The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyGseT2Fiqo> (with pictures) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqxJ_iuBPCs> (long version)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 5  10  15  20  25  30 | Oh, say can you see, by the dawn’s1 early light,  What so proudly we hailed2 at the twilight3’s last gleaming4?  Whose broad stripes and bright stars thru the perilous5 fight,  O’er the ramparts6 we watched were so gallantly7 streaming?  And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.  Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?  On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,  Where the foe’s8 haughty host in dread silence reposes9,  What is that which the breeze, o’er the towering steep10,  As it fitfully blows, half conceals11, half discloses12?  Now it catches the gleam of the morning’s first beam13,  In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:  ‘Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh long may it wave  O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!  And where is that band who so vauntingly14 swore  That the havoc15 of war and the battle’s confusion,  A home and a country should leave us no more!  Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps’ pollution.  No refuge could save the hireling and slave  From the terror of flight, or the gloom16 of the grave:  And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave  O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!  Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  Between their loved home and the war’s desolation.17  Blest with victory and peace, may the heav’n rescued land  Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.  Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  And this be our motto: “In God is our trust.”  And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave! | 1 first light of the day  2 to greet 3 opposite of “dawn”  4 to shine 5 dangerous  6 barricade 7 brave  8 enemy 9 to rest  10 steil  11 to cover 12 to uncover  13 light  14 in an arrogant way  15 chaos  16 misery  17 greyness |

**M2: Patriotic Songs: The Star-Spangled Banner (official national anthem):**

**Background information:**

* Official national anthem since 1931; usually only the first part (ll.1-8) is sung.
* Originally a poem entitled "The Defense of Fort McHenry".
* Written by Francis Scott Key in 1814 during the War of 1812.
* The verses tell of the Battle of Baltimore, a days-long siege between British and American forces
* Message: celebration of patriotism; America = land of the free and the brave
* However: controversial for various reasons
  + Francis Scott Key used to be a slaveholder
  + Lyrics very martial: for example l. 5, l. 10, ll.20ff., ll.28f. ( reference to the War of 1812, references to slavery; l. 5 can be misunderstood as an acceptance of rockets etc., also compare ll.28f.)
* There are very specific rules (the “Flag Code”):
  + Everyone is expected to stand and face the flag; military personnel or veterans have to salute, all other people have to stand with the right hand over heart.
  + Singing is not obligatory, but it is highly encouraged.
  + In the past, changing (even embellishing) the anthem in a performance could be punished.
  + In most schools, students do not have to sing the national anthem every day, but are required to say the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of every day
  + The anthem has to be played before all important sports events, some associations like the NFL or NBA explicitly require certain forms of “respect” (In 2016, Colin Kaepernik was the first (NFL) player who was expelled for kneeling down as a form of protest (BLM) while the anthem was played.

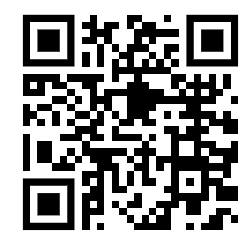
Sources:

<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2018/07/us/national-anthem-annotated/> (19/02/2023); <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-37208404> (19/02/2023)

<https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/2148/national-anthem-government-regulation#:~:text=Most%20controversies%20centering%20on%20%E2%80%9CThe,anthem%20in%20silent%20protest%20against> (19/02/2023); <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/sports/football/anthem-kneeling-sports.html> (19/02/2023); <https://www.republicworld.com/sports-news/other-sports/was-colin-kaepernick-fired-from-the-49ers-nfl-star-cut-ties-with-team.html> (19/02/2023)

**M2: Patriotic Songs: America the Beautiful (“unofficial” national anthem):**

* Very patriotic song, praising the beauty of America; many people consider it the unofficial anthem
* It was first a poem written in 1893 by Lee Bates.
* At least 70 tunes had been composed until Samuel A. Ward’s music was chosen in 1910.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLYAyuf1I1Q> (with patriotic pictures)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 5  10  15  20  25 | Oh beautiful for heroes proved  In liberating strife1  Who more than self, their country loved  And mercy more than life  America, America may God thy gold refine  'Til all success be nobleness  And every gain divined  And you know when I was in school  We used to sing it something like this, listen here  Oh beautiful, for spacious skies  For amber waves of grain  For purple mountain majesties  Above the fruited plain  But now wait a minute, I'm talking about  America, sweet America  You know, God done shed his grace on thee  He crowned thy good, yes he did, in brotherhood  From sea to shining sea  You know, I wish I had somebody to help me sing this  (America, America, God shed his grace on thee)  America, I love you America, you see  My God he done shed his grace on thee  And you oughta love him for it  'Cause he, he, he, he crowned thy good  He told me he would, with brotherhood  (From sea to shining Sea)  Oh Lord, oh Lord, I thank you Lord  (Shining sea) | 1 conflict |



**M2: Patriotic Songs: God Bless America (“unofficial” national anthem):**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kGAN-rl-OI> (with lyrics)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 5  10  15 | God bless America, land that I love  Stand beside her and guide her  Through the night with the light from above  From the mountains to the prairies  To the oceans white with foam  God bless America, my home sweet home  God bless America, land that I love  Stand beside her and guide her  Through the night with the light from above  From the mountains to the prairies  To the oceans white with foam  God bless America, my home sweet home  From the mountains to the prairies  To the oceans white with foam  God bless America, my home sweet home  God bless America, my home sweet home |  |

**Background information:**

Today, for many Americans it is their unofficial national anthem of the US: “This simple one-verse song became an overnight hit, and a hopeful song as war threatened. “It’s not a patriotic song,” composer Irving Berlin said in a 1940 interview, “but an expression of gratitude for what this country has done for its citizens, of what home really means.”” <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/media-and-interactives/media/music/story-behind-the-song/the-story-behind-the-song/god-bless-america/> (19/02/2023)

**M3: AMERICA (© Michael Patrick Kelly, 2021)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nIsMTXdHDo>

Step 1: Listen to the song:

* Summarize the main message.
* Then have a closer look at the lyrics and underline passages that prove your findings.
* Bonus task: Mark historical references with a third color and be able to explain them.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5  10 | Touching ground on Ellis Island  Searching for the promised land  Am I a legal alien coming home?  Fifty steps to win my freedom  Pushing to the golden fever  Running through your maze of steel and stone  Somewhere between your stars and stripes  I think I see dawn's early light  Where is the love now?  Let it rise, let it rise  America, America  Wake up, wake up, wake up all your hopes and dreams  America, America  Stand up, stand up, stand up for what you believe | 15  20  25 | Tell me, will you keep your promise?  I have come to find the solace  glowing in your flame of liberty  Even though you've got your demons  In the end, your better angels  always change the course of history  Somewhere between your stars and stripes  I still can see dawn's early light  Where is the love now?  Let it rise, let it rise  America, America  Wake up, wake up, wake up all your hopes and dreams  America, America  Stand up, stand up, stand up for what you believe |

Step 2:

Discuss whether Michael Patrick Kelly’s position – as presented in this song – corresponds to your own views.

**M4: AMERICAN IDIOT ( © Green Day, 2004)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee_uujKuJMI>

Listen to the song and watch the video:

* Discuss the style of the music, the language, the main topics, the general message.

Don't wanna be an American idiot!

Don't want a nation under the new media

And can you hear the sound of hysteria?

The subliminal[[1]](#footnote-1) mind fuck America!

Alright!

Welcome to a new kind of tension

All across the alien nation

Where everything isn't meant to be okay

Television dreams of tomorrow

We're not the ones who're meant to follow

For that's enough to argue

England!

Well, maybe I'm the faggot[[2]](#footnote-2) America

I'm not a part of a Redneck[[3]](#footnote-3) agenda(alright!)

Now everybody do the propaganda

And sing along to the age of paranoia

Alright!

Welcome to a new kind of tension

All across the alien nation

Where everything isn't meant to be okay

Television dreams of tomorrow

We're not the ones who're meant to follow

For that's enough to argue

Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey!

Alright, England!

I sing "Eh-oh"

Let's sing "Eh-oh", "eh-oh"

C'mon!

Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey!

Alright!

Are you guys ready to sing along?

I want to you sing so loud!

That every fucking Redneck in America

Hears you tonight alright!

Don't want to be an American idiot

One nation controlled by the media

Information age of hysteria

Go!

It's going out to idiot America

Welcome to a new kind of tension

All across the alien nation

Where everything isn't meant to be okay

Television dreams of tomorrow

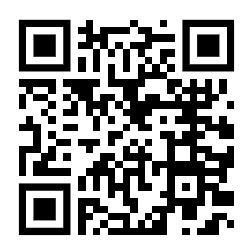
We're not the ones who're meant to follow

For that's enough to argue

C'mon!

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**M5: AMERICAN OXYGEN[[4]](#footnote-4) © RIHANNA, 2015**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao8cGLIMtvg>

1. **Getting started: Note down your associations with the title of the song.**
2. **Listen to the song and have a look at the lyrics:**
3. **Choose words that describe how the song makes you feel (and be prepared to explain why.)**



<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ce/bc/99/cebc99d2bdc5ff361c74cbd2da643f40.jpg> (last accessed: March 19, 2023)

1. **Have a look at the text and try to summarize the main message of the song.**

Breathe out, breathe in  
American oxygen  
Every breath I breathe2  
Chasin' this American Dream  
We sweat for a nickel and a dime3  
Turn it into an empire  
Breathe in, this feeling  
American, American oxygen

American oxygen  
Breathe in, this feeling  
American, American Oxygen

Oh say can you see4, this is the American Dream  
Young girl, hustlin'5  
On the other side of the ocean  
You can be anything at all  
In America, America  
I say, can't you see  
Just close your eyes and breathe

Breathe out, breathe in  
American oxygen  
Every breath I breathe  
Chasin' this American Dream  
We sweat for a nickel and a dime  
Turn it into an empire  
Breathe in, this feeling  
American, American oxygen

American oxygen  
Breathe in, this feeling  
American, American Oxygen

American oxygen  
Breathe in, this feeling  
American, American Oxygen

Oh say can you see, this is the American Dream  
Young boy, hustlin'  
Tryna6 get the wheels in motion  
But he can be anything at all  
In America, America  
I say, can't you see  
Just close your eyes and breathe

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**(3) Now watch the video :**

1. **Use a second color and mark the words in (2a) which you would choose now.**
2. **Try to identify some of the scenes presented in the video and complete the mind map below.**

**USA**

**(4) Good angel or bad angel? Take your notes as a starting point and discuss this question.**

**M6: GOD BLESS THE U.S.A. ( © Lee Greenwood, 1984)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KoXt9pZLGM>

Make at least five screenshots of scenes which deal with

“typical” American life and explain your choice.

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**M6: Good Bless The USA © Lee Greenwood, 1984**

If tomorrow all the things were gone  
I worked for all my life  
And I had to start again  
With just my children and my wife

I thank my lucky stars  
To be living here today  
'Cause the flag still stands for freedom  
And they can't take that away

And I'm proud to be an American  
Where at least I know I'm free  
And I won't forget the men who died  
Who gave that right to me  
And I'd gladly stand up next to you  
And defend Her still today  
'Cause there ain't no doubt  
I love this land  
God Bless the U.S.A.

From the lakes of Minnesota  
To the hills of Tennessee  
Across the plains of Texas  
From sea to shining sea

From Detroit down to Houston  
And New York to L.A.  
Where's pride in every American heart  
And it's time we stand and say

That I'm proud to be an American  
Where at least I know I'm free  
And I won't forget the men who died  
Who gave that right to me  
And I'd gladly stand up next to you  
And defend Her still today  
'Cause there ain't no doubt  
I love this land  
God Bless the U.S.A.

And I'm proud to be an American  
Where at least I know I'm free  
And I won't forget the men who died  
Who gave that right to me  
And I'd gladly stand up next to you  
And defend Her still today  
'Cause there ain't no doubt  
I love this land  
God Bless the U.S.A.

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**M7: GOD BLESS THE U.S.A. ( © version by Beyoncé, 2011)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnCNHFg9y1Q>

Step 1: Watch the video and describe the atmosphere.

Step 2: Identify elements you would expect from such a patriotic song (text / video clip).

Step 3: Discuss whether living in the US is something you can be proud of.

If tomorrow all the things were gone  
I worked for all my life  
And I had to start again  
With just my family by my side.

I thank my lucky stars  
To be living here today  
'Cause the flag still stands for freedom  
And they can't take that away

And I'm proud to be an American  
Where at least I know I'm free  
And I won't forget the men who died  
Who gave that right to me  
And I'd gladly stand up next to you  
And defend Her still today  
'Cause there ain't no doubt  
I love this land  
God Bless the U.S.A.

From the lakes of Minnesota  
To the hills of Tennessee  
Across the plains of Texas  
From sea to shining sea

From Detroit down to Houston  
And New York to L.A.  
Where's pride in every American heart  
And it's time we stand and say

That I'm proud to be an American  
Where at least I know I'm free  
And I won't forget the men who died  
Who gave that right to me  
And I'd gladly stand up next to you  
And defend Her still today  
'Cause there ain't no doubt  
I love this land  
God Bless the U.S.A.

And I'm proud to be an American  
Where at least I know I'm free  
And I won't forget the men who died  
Who gave that right to me  
And I'd gladly stand up next to you  
And defend Her still today  
'Cause there ain't no doubt  
I love this land  
God Bless the U.S.A.

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**M8: © Eminem, 2002**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZIzD0ZfTFg>

**Step 1:**

**Write down the first five words or phrases that come into your mind when you read the first lines of this song. Then explain your ideas to your partner and create a mind map together.**

America, hahaha, we love you

How many people are proud to be citizens

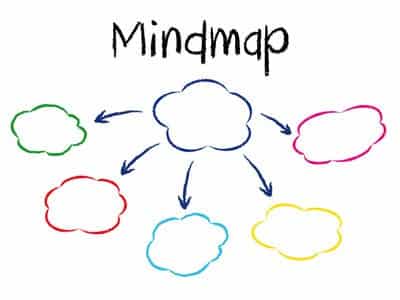
Of this beautiful country of ours, the stripes and the stars

For the rights that men have died for to protect?

The women and men who have broke their necks

For the freedom of speech

The United States government has sworn to uphold

 © Gooseman - Fotolia.com

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**The first lines you have just read are from “White America” (2002), an autobiographical song by Eminem. Read the info text before you go to step 2.**

When Eminem released his first album in 1996, no one would have expected that he would become such a successful and influential artist. By now, he has won 15 Grammy Awards, 8 American Music Awards, 17 Billboard Music Awards, an Oscar Award and a lot more. [[5]](#footnote-5)

He is said to have “conquered Black music” and “broken racial barriers”. In the 1990s, rap / hip hop was still dominated by Afro-Americans, who often expressed their "underprivilegedness" with this kind of music. It had been unthinkable before that a white artist would use “their” style and become successful. But coming from an “underprivileged” family himself, Eminem became the first (white) rapper who gave “a voice and lyrics to the disaffected and disadvantaged white families” (condescendingly referred to as “white trash”).

Despite all this, his reputation is quite controversial: while his rap music is mainstream now, he rather confirmed the general stereotype of the criminal gangster rapper genre by using offensive language at the beginning of his career.

**Step 2:**

**Listen to the song now and underline / mark all passages which express this dichotomy[[6]](#footnote-6) black – white.**

America, hahaha, we love you

How many people are proud to be citizens

Of this beautiful country of ours, the stripes and the stars

For the rights that men have died for to protect?

The women and men who have broke their necksFor the freedom of speech

The United States government has sworn to uphold

(Yo, I want everybody to listen to the words of this song)

Or so we're told

I never would've dreamed in a million years I'd see

So many motherfuckin' people who feel like me

Who share the same views and the same exact beliefs

It's like a fucking army marching in back of me

So many lives I touched, so much anger aimed

In no particular direction, just sprays and sprays

And straight through your radio waves, it plays and plays

'Til it stays stuck in your head, for days and days

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Who would've thought, standing in this mirror, bleaching my hair

With some peroxide, reaching for a t-shirt to wear

That I would catapult to the forefront of rap like this?

How could I predict my words would have an impact like this?

I must've struck a chord with somebody up in the office

'Cause Congress keep telling me I ain't causing nothin' but problems

And now they're saying I'm in trouble with the government

I'm loving it, I shoveled shit all my life, and now I'm dumping it on

Chorus: White America, I could be one of your kids

White America, little Eric looks just like this

White America, Erica loves my shit

I go to TRL, look how many hugs I get

White America, I could be one of your kids

White America, little Eric looks just like this

White America, Erica loves my shit

I go to TRL, look how many hugs I get

Look at these eyes, baby blue, baby just like yourself

If they were brown, Shady'd lose, Shady sits on the shelf

But Shady's cute, Shady knew Shady's dimples would help

Make ladies swoon, baby (ooh, baby)

Look at my sales

Let's do the math, if I was black, I woulda sold half

I ain't have to graduate from Lincoln High School to know that

But I could rap, so fuck school, I'm too cool to go back

Give me the mic, show me where the fucking studio's at

When I was underground no one gave a fuck I was white

No labels wanted to sign me, almost gave up, I was like

"Fuck it, " until I met Dre, the only one to look past

Gave me a chance and I lit a fire up under his ass

Helped him get back to the top, every fan black that I got

Was probably his in exchange for every white fan that he's got

Like damn, we just swapped, sitting back looking at shit, wow

I'm like my skin is it starting to work to my benefit now? it's-

Chorus: [White America, (…) how much hugs I get]

See, the problem is I speak to suburban kids

Who otherwise woulda never knew these words exist

Whose moms probably woulda never gave two squirts of piss

'Til I created so much motherfucking turbulence

Straight out the tube, right into your living rooms I came

And kids flipped when they knew I was produced by Dre

That's all it took, and they were instantly hooked right in

And they connected with me too, because I looked like them

That's why they put my lyrics up under this microscope

Searching with a fine tooth comb, it's like this rope

Waiting to choke, tightening around my throat

Watching me while I write this, like, "I don't like this note"

All I hear is, lyrics, lyrics, constant controversy

Sponsors working round the clock to try to stop my concerts early

Surely hip-hop was never a problem in Harlem, only in Boston

After it bothered the fathers of daughters starting to blossom

So now I'm catching the flak from these activists when they ragging

Actin' like I'm the first rapper to smack a bitch or say "faggot, " shit

Just look at me like I'm your closest pal

The posterchild, the motherfucking spokesman now, for-

Chorus: [White America, (…) how much hugs I get]

So to the parents of America, I am the Derringer

Aimed at little Erica to attack her character

The ringleader of this circus of worthless pawns

Sent to lead the march right up to the steps of Congress

And piss on the lawns of the White House

To burn the - and replace it with a Parental Advisory sticker

To spit liquor in the faces of this democracy of hypocrisy

Fuck you, Ms. Cheney

Fuck you, Tipper Gore

Fuck you with the freest of speech

This Divided States of Embarrassment will allow me to have

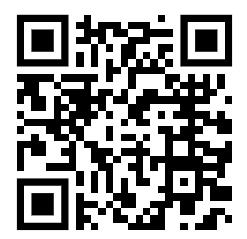
Fuck you

Hahaha, I'm just playing, America

You know I love you

**Step 3:**

**Discuss whether for you, this song has a real message or rather deals with Eminem himself.**

**M9: IN AMERICA (© John Legend, 2017)**

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hA29HXDHW9Y>

**Step 1: Listen to the song:**

* **Summarize the main message.**
* **Then have a closer look at the lyrics and underline passages that prove your findings:**

**Use two different colors to highlight similarities and differences to either one of the songs in M2 or M7.**

* **Bonus task: Analyze the stylistic devices and their effect.**

In America, in America

I poured my sweat in America

This land is my land

It's America

I broke my back for America

All of money I make

All of these chances I take

Just paying my rent in America

Won't just stand around

Watch it go down

Won't just stand around

Watch it go down

But maybe it's a long shot

Maybe it's a fantasy

We've given it all that we've got

Maybe we can live a dream

Oh, oh

Can we build a new life was it ever meant that we...

Could make it in America

Make it in America

In America, in America

They say I'm free in America

In America, in America

I still can't breath in America

Watch them squeezing my neck

Watch them bullets connect

We still gon' fight in America

Won't just stand around

Can't watch it go down

Won't just stand around

Watch it go down

But maybe it's a long shot

Maybe it's a fantasy

We've given it all that we've got

Maybe we can live a dream

Oh, oh

Can we build a new life was it ever meant that we...

Could make it in America

Make it in America (8x)

My hopes right here in America

In America, in America

My hope, my prayer in America

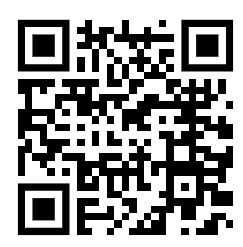
|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Step 2:**  **Discuss whether John Legend’s position – as presented in this song – corresponds to your own views.**  Famous soul and R&B & pop star (born in 1978) |  |  |

Ein Bild, das Diagramm enthält.

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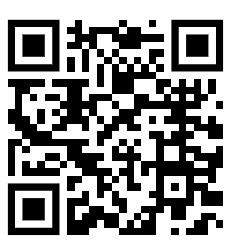
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**M10: American Dreams © Papa Roach, 2017**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6KX2mB7LHI>

**Step 1:**

Watch the first 25 seconds and write down all associations you have with the title.

**Step 2:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CXq51iC4yk>

You will be surprised that there is another version of the video (which was actually released before this one.)

Watch this video: summarize the central message and choose at least one of the following tasks:

1. Focus on the music and describe to what extent it underlines the overall message.
2. Focus on the video itself: find examples of topics you would consider important.
3. Focus on the lyrics: Underline / mark (“analyze”) different topics by using different colors.

**Step 3:**

Now watch the complete other version of the video.

1. Explain whether your first impression of the song has changed now. Why? / Why not?
2. Compare how the “Anti-American-Dream attitude” is conveyed here in contrast to the other video.

Give concrete examples.

Extra: Describe clichés of “typical” Americans as shown in the video.

**Step 4:**

Compare and discuss your considerations with a partner. (Add further aspects to your list).

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**M10: American Dreams © Papa Roach, 2017**

It feels like American dreams caught on fire

We're tearing down the white picket fences

A soldier bleeds and a soldier dies

Have you ever thought that war was a sickness?

I'm a son of it, fucked up from it

Casualty of my family 'cause of it

We dare to dream or live to die

Reunited by the truth at the right time

Something's wrong here, or so it seems

'Cause I'm not sleeping in

American dreams, American lies

We're trying to see through the smoke in our eyes

So give me the truth, don't tell me your lies

'Cause it's harder to breathe when you're buried alive

By American dreams

With every bullet hole, there's a blood stain

Another family that's struggling to keep sane

'Cause their neighborhood ain't a safe place

Got us all wearing black every Sunday

And I'm growing numb to the violence

Sing along to the sound of the sirens

We're trying to keep ourselves alive

But it's hard to get by when it feels like

Something's wrong here, or so it seems

'Cause I'm not sleeping in

American dreams, American lies

We're trying to see through the smoke in our eyes

So give me the truth, don't tell me your lies

'Cause it's harder to breathe when you're buried alive

By American dreams

'Cause I'm not sleeping in

American dreams, American lies

We're trying to see through the smoke in our eyes

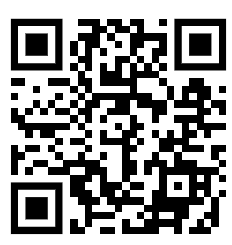
So give me the truth, don't tell me your lies

'Cause it's harder to breathe when you're buried alive

By American dreams (2x)

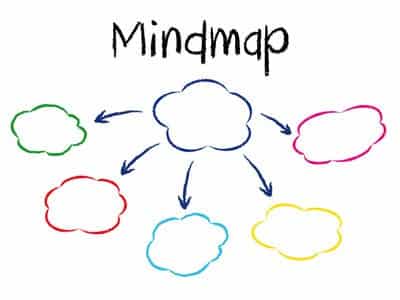
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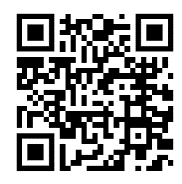
**M11: AMERICAN DREAM © WILL.I.AM, 2021**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NjH_pVai2M>

Get inspired by this song and write down as many associations as you can think of.



© Gooseman - Fotolia.com



**M12: I LOVE THE USA © WEEZER 2016**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amy-4jDlYgo>

Background information:

Weezer wrote this song as part of a NASA collaboration to celebrate the Juno mission. It was released on June 30, 2016 as the spacecraft approached Jupiter ( which entered the planet's orbit on July 4, 2016).

Although it seems patriotic at a first glance, there is more than a hint of sarcasm in the song, with passages such as "I love the USA, f--k yeah, this place is great" and "Home of the brave, dog on a leash."

[[7]](#footnote-7)

It's probably not what NASA had in mind, but it is said to be quite typical of Weezer.

In an interview, the song’s co-author, Sam Hollander, explained, “I don’t think the song was written as cynically as it might sound. It's almost a **Choose Your Own Adventure**, like you can infer **whatever you want out of it**.”

**Task 1:**

After this teaser, **choose your own adventure** and write your own lyrics that might fit to the description above.

Try to make use of stylistic devices.

**Task 2:**

Watch the video version.

Now here some background information again: The video clip was released just before the second TV debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton during their presidential campaigns.

Discuss **whatever you want out of it.**

1. subliminal = influences or messages affect your mind without you being aware of it [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. faggot = offensive term for gay / homosexual [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Redneck = a poor white person without education, especially one living in the countryside in the southern US, who has prejudiced ideas and beliefs [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. oxygen = O2(Sauerstoff); 2 to breathe = atmen, breath = Atem; 3 nickel = 5 cents, dime = 10 cents

   4 Oh say can you see” = first line of the US national anthem (Hymne) 5 to hustle: double meaning = to hurry / to be a prostitute

   6 tryna = trying to [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [www.eminem.com](http://www.eminem.com) & <https://www.levelman.com/how-eminem-conquered-black-music-and-white-privilege-with-the-marshall-mathers-lp-6b450f54920c/> & <https://english.elpais.com/culture/2022-10-18/50-years-of-eminem-the-rapper-who-survived-addiction-and-controversy-capable-of-ending-any-career.html> & <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/panorama/eminem-50-geburtstag-100.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. dichotomy = a division or contrast between two groups or things that are completely opposite to and different from each other (OLD) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.songfacts.com/facts/weezer/i-love-the-usa> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)