

Team members:

Finding Voice in Song

Artist/Song:

Element	Artist/Song Characteristics	Evidence
Tone		
Revelations about artist		
Writing Style		

PROMPT: Determine what a song reveals about an artist by analyzing the music, lyrics and performance for tone and technique. Draw conclusions about the artist and his/her writing style.

P1: INTRODUCTION: Engaging lead and clear, guiding thesis:

Lead: What is your essay about? How can you hook your reader into your topic? Look at notes, linked online or on your table. Try your own. DO NOT COPY MS. HOEFER'S!

Thesis: Respond to prompt. Who and what your essay is referencing and what you will be analyzing.

P2: BODY: Analysis of tone and technique with evidence

Remember ACCE—Be sure to address the prompt, embed your evidence with context and commentary, and explain.

P3: BODY: What tone and technique reveals about character

What kind of person does your analysis reveal? Remember ACCE—Be sure to address the prompt, embed your evidence with context and commentary, and explain.

P4: BODY: What writing devices and tone would define your singer's voice?

Use the list of devices and tone words to aid your conclusions. Justify with evidence and commentary

P5: BODY: What is the tone of the cover art, what do you see that makes you believe that and how does it compare with your evaluation of the musician?

Remember ACCE—Be sure to address the prompt, embed your evidence with context and commentary, and explain.

Rubric: 4-3-2-1

1. Introduction has engaging lead and clear thesis:
2. Identifies and proves with evidence the tone, technique and writing style:
3. Image is analyzed for tone and compared to your conclusions about the artist:
4. Presentation is planned with notes, organized and audible:
5. Double-spaced essay and slide are final draft quality, including a full heading and an engaging title:
6. G.U.M.S.:
7. Group participation (member group score each other):

TOTAL: _____/28

Jennifer Hoefer

Charlie Green

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Strange Fruit and the Conflicted Billie Holiday

Haunting, mysterious, disconcerting. These attributes might easily describe a horror movie or the latest episode in “America’s Most Wanted, “ but they also capture the essence of Billie Holiday and her rendition of “Strange Fruit,” a complex, critical commentary on life in the Jim Crow South.

The dark and mournful tone of the song is captured in the music, presentation and lyrics. The tune begins with a dragging piano and muffled trumpet, setting a slow pace in a minor chord and creating an air of mystery. The lyrics contrast a beautiful “pastoral scene” of “southern gentleman” and a “fresh” breeze rife with the scent of magnolias with the shock of “black bodies swinging” and the horror of “bulging eyes/and twisted mouths.” Holiday’s voice adds to the anxiety of the tune by mirroring the dragging beat with long, quivering notes and fluctuating between a booming voice then dropping to almost a whisper. At times, her singing feels like a sob.

This stirring presentation reveals a troubled soul. Only someone with tragedy and darkness in her life could present the lyrics in such a way that one feels her pain. She drags her words as she drags through tragedy in her own life. She also is an astute observer, capturing life like a painter might.

As a writer, Ms. Holiday would use imagery, contrasting points of view, and symbolism. In “Strange Fruit,” she describes the hypocrisy of America during that time period by juxtaposing beautiful images of countryside with the violence of a lynching, highlighting the stark contrast between the white and black world. The metaphorical “crop” of “strange fruit” highlights how powerful figurative language can be, and Holiday would definitely utilize this device since her voice exudes both power and irony as she sings; the metaphor forcing the listener to unravel the metaphor, like unraveling the truth of the American experience for African-Americans. Her overall tone would add a hint of darkness, reflective of her _____ American experience.

The cover art for Holiday's haunting tune is one of power and passion. There is a close up photograph of just her face, passionately engaged in song, eyes closed, mouth open in tune. The picture is superimposed on the top of a black and white landscape scene that depicts a field and clouds covering, almost reaching for a red moon. Besides the red moon, the photograph is in colors with a reddish brown tint. Gleaming white teeth are the brightest and the white font is the only bright contrast on the cover. The tone is ominous and dreary, with the palette being greys, blacks and the reddish tint. The cover does fit the conclusions made about Ms. Holiday. The darkness of the cover reflects the darkness of her life.