

Laura McShane

Fight the Power 55 min

Objective:

Understand importance of music to affect social change

Big Idea:

How can artists contribute to improve society?

1. Warm Up / Anticipatory 15 min

Watch Bob Dylan's

Subterranean Homesick Blues

2. Investigation and New Learning 20 min

Discussion: What is Bob Dylan trying to say here?

Lyrics

Johnny's in the basement
Mixing up the medicine
I'm on the pavement
Thinking about the government
The man in the trench coat
Badge out, laid off
Says he's got a bad cough
Wants to get it paid off
Look out kid
It's somethin' you did
God knows when
But you're doing it again
You better duck down the alley way
Lookin' for a new friend
A man in the coonskin cap, in the pig pen
Wants eleven dollar bills, you only got ten

Maggie comes fleet foot
Face full of black soot
Talkin' that the heat put
Plants in the bed but
The phone's tapped anyway
Maggie says that many say
They must bust in early May
Orders from the D.A. Look out kid
Don't matter what you did
Walk on your tip toes
Don't tie no bows
Better stay away from those
That carry around a fire hose
Keep a clean nose
Watch the plain clothes
You don't need a weather man
To know which way the wind blows

Oh, get sick, get well
Hang around a ink well
Hang bail, hard to tell
If anything is goin' to sell
Try hard, get barred
Get back, write braille
Get jailed, jump bail
Join the army, if you fail
Look out kid
You're gonna get hit
But losers, cheaters
Six-time users
Hang around the theaters
Girl by the whirlpool
Lookin' for a new fool
Don't follow leaders, watch the parkin' meters

Oh, get born, keep warm
Short pants, romance
Learn to dance, get dressed, get blessed
Try to be a success
Please her, please him, buy gifts
Don't steal, don't lift
Twenty years of schoolin'
And they put you on the day shift
Look out kid
They keep it all hid
Better jump down a manhole
Light yourself a candle
Don't wear sandals
Try to avoid the scandals
Don't want to be a bum
You better chew gum
The pump don't work
'Cause the vandals took the handles

Songwriters: Bob Dylan

Possible extensions:

- Explore the social context of this video filmed in 1965 when Bob Dylan was 24 years old. List the issues that affected youth at this time.
- List some of the issues that are stressful for youth today
- As a class prepare signs that express some of your fears, concerns, hopes. Use percussion to set the signs to music and, if you have the technology, film and edit for distribution via YouTube or Vimeo.
- Compile a playlist of contemporary artists who are making a statement through music

See: [We Rock! a fun family guide for exploring rock music history](#) by Jason Hanley



3. Review & Check for Understanding 30 min

["Fight the Power"](#) is a political music and social protest presentation for grades 7-12, linking genres of music to social movements or events. Visit the site for more lesson plans created by the [Rock & Roll Hall of Fame](#) in Cleveland, Ohio.

The program is **FREE** for schools within zip codes that begin with **440, 441, 442, or 443**. Regional groups can participate in *Rockin' the Schools* for a discounted rate.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1