

Censored Songs after 9/11

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Introduction

As a teacher, I hear students in school say, "It's a free country!" I wonder if they know what that means. I asked my fifth graders what is the First Amendment and what does it mean? Most said that they studied the First Amendment in Social Studies but didn't remember what it meant. Others said, "Does it have something to do with music or chorus?" In music class, we sing patriotic songs like "God Bless the U.S.A." In the music video, there is a picture of firemen holding up the American flag in the rubble of the Twin Towers. My fifth graders do not remember 9/11. They were not born. I need to teach the facts about 9/11 and discuss the music at that time. Why were some songs after 9/11 censored? Were the words offensive? How do songs after 9/11 that were banned compare to songs like "God Bless the USA" which were not censored?

I want to teach my students about censorship and the First Amendment. It can be discussed in 5 important sections: Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Assembly and Right to Petition. What are their rights under the First Amendment? Why is Freedom of Speech important to them today? Censorship suppresses communicative materials such as lyrics in music. What makes the material too dangerous or objectionable to be viewed or heard? Then students will discuss the events of 9/11 and why it was suggested that certain songs not be played after 9/11. Why are lyrics censored? What makes the words of one song acceptable and the words of another song banned?

Eisenberg Elementary provides academic studies for kindergarten through fifth grade. The school reflects a culturally diverse student body of approximately 520 students. Strong academic emphasis focuses on physical, social and emotional development to create a community of learners. Programs offered are STAR and Accelerated Reader which enable students to succeed by addressing their reading needs. 24 Club strengthens Math skills as well as learning to work together. The Positive Behavior Support Program allows students to focus on appropriate encouraging actions in an educational environment. Teachers use research-based methods of instruction (Learning Focus and Responsive Classroom) which are aligned with the Delaware State Standards. In the Arts, students may participate in band in grades 4 and 5. Chorus is offered for grades 3, 4 and 5. In second, third, fourth and fifth general music class, recorders, world drumming and guitars are presented as units of study. My role as a music educator is not only to develop musical skills but also relate music to other academic areas such as English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science. This unit, **Censored Songs after 9/11**, will relate Music and Social Studies in the fifth grade. Students will focus on the First Amendment, censorship and historical facts of 9/11/01. Fifth graders will learn and analyze popular songs that were banned after the tragedy on 9/11.

Rationale/Objective

The fifth grade Delaware State Civics curriculum states: “Civics Standard Three: Students will understand the responsibilities, rights, and privileges of United States citizens [Citizenship]. The political, religious, and economic freedoms provided to American citizens are accompanied by the responsibility of active civic participation at the individual, community, state, and national levels. Effective citizens need to understand the dedication and commitment necessary to safeguard those rights for themselves and future generations, as well as the potential consequences of inaction. They should also be able to distinguish between rights and privileges.”¹ In fifth grade, students learn the fundamental rights of all American citizens as enumerated in the Bill of Rights (Standard 4.5) Delaware State Music Standard 9 states: Understanding music in relation to diverse cultures, times and places.² In studying the First Amendment, in particular censorship, students can examine why music lyrics were banned. There is an emphasis on banned songs after 9/11. Students will use knowledge of the First Amendment, censorship and 9/11 to discuss the lyrics of songs that were banned after 9/11.

Students will be introduced to some censored songs after 9/11, “New York New York” by Frank Sinatra and “Dancing in the Streets” by Martha and the Vandellas.³ Classes will learn these songs. Students will discuss reasons why these songs would be banned. Do these songs foster violence, anti-American feelings or terroristic thoughts? Why was “God Bless the USA” not censored? If the lyrics from “New York, New York”, a suggested banned song are compared to “God Bless the USA”, an uncensored song, are the lyrics different in meaning? Are they similar? Also, why was “Dancing in the Street” sung by Martha and the Vandellas prohibited but not the versions by Van Halen or David Bowie and Mick Jagger?

The purpose of **Censored Songs after 9/11** unit is to introduce fifth graders to the censored songs that were suggested to be censored in 2001. Students will discuss why these two songs may have been banned because of the events of 9/11. Students will then form conclusions as to why “New York New York” performed by Frank Sinatra was banned. The objectives for **Censored Songs after 9/11** unit are that the learners will discuss the meaning of the First Amendment as it relates to Freedom of Speech, define censorship, summarize important ideas and events for the 9/11, recognize famous banned songs from 2001 and describe the functions of censored songs and the conditions under which these songs could be sung and performed.

Music Standards that have recently been adopted by Delaware have overarching concepts of Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. By creating a unit on censorship, I hope to encourage my students to select, evaluate, refine and connect to the events and music. The Delaware Music Standards focused on are to evaluate, refine and document revisions to personal music, applying teacher-provided and collaboratively-developed criteria and feedback, and explain rationale for changes. (MU: Cr3.1.5). Students demonstrate how interests, knowledge and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing and responding to music. (MU: Cn10.1.5) They explain the connections to and appropriateness of the music to the context. (MU: Re9-4.b) Finally, students demonstrate and explain how the selection of music to perform is influenced by interest, knowledge, purpose and context. (MU:

Pr4.1.4)⁴

The Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions were extracted from the Delaware Recommended Curriculum in Music. In enduring understandings, students will recognize that people communicate about their culture through music, changes in history cause changes in music and music as a form of expression becomes a part of the history and culture. Students discuss essential questions concerning the First Amendment, censorship and music after 9/11. To what extent does society influence musicians? When do the words of a song become offensive? Is the music after 9/11 a form of expression protected by the First Amendment? Who determines whether the lyrics infringe on the right of Freedom of Speech? To what extent does music affect the world community? How can historical events help us understand Americans and their experiences?

Background Information

First Amendment

In order to teach **Censored Songs after 9/11**, I wanted to teach some background knowledge starting at the very beginning with the First Amendment. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, written by James Madison, is often called the most valued Amendment in the Bill of Rights.⁵ This amendment, along with the remaining nine amendments makes up the Bill of Rights. These laws were passed by Congress and ratified by the states as an addition to the Constitution in 1791. It is one of the best known amendments because it is the one that applies to every citizen on a daily basis. The freedoms of expression that are outlined in the First Amendment are rights that each American practices every day of our life. We practice the rights guaranteed in this amendment every time we voice our opinion, read a newspaper or attend a religious ceremony.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of **religion**, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of **speech**, or of the **press**; or the right of the people peaceably to **assemble**, and to **petition** the government for a redress of grievances.⁶

There are five fundamental and inalienable rights laid out in the First Amendment. In Freedom of Religion, the First Amendment includes two religious principles – separation and tolerance. It averts the government from creating an official religion. It offers wide-ranging protection for an individual's personal religious beliefs and traditions. Americans are free to exercise their right to attend a synagogue, temple, church or mosque of their choice. Religious practices should be free from government influence.⁷

The First Amendment, under Freedom of Speech, prohibits government censorship of opinions and exchange of thoughts by the Supreme Court. There are exceptions to the rule, but generally this right helps ensure that speech is not restricted because of its content. Americans have the right to question censorship by the government and other local authorities. Freedom of the Press mandates that the government cannot control the media. Within certain areas, it cannot control what is printed in the newspapers, books, or Internet, radio broadcasts or

television programming. Citizens are allowed to receive information from any source. Disapproval can be shown by speaking, writing letters to the newspaper editors, passing out fliers or communicating through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The First Amendment allows Americans the right to assemble peaceably, in public or private places. They can organize and advocate on behalf of any idea that matters to them. A recent example of freedom of assembly is the marches in Baltimore for Freddy Grey in the spring of 2015. In the Freedom to Petition, U.S. citizens can request the government for changes. This can come about by collecting signatures and sending them to elected officials. They may also contact representatives by phone, letter, or email to convey ideas.⁸

Censorship

Since the First Amendment covers a broad set of rights, I wanted to narrow my lessons more into Freedom of Speech involving censorship. “Censorship is the act of suppressing communicative material (in print, in images, in art) because it is considered too dangerous or objectionable to be consumed.”⁹ This suppression should function differently for adults and children. For adults, the limitations are narrow. Only when speech creates clear-cut danger or when speech falls within certain categories such as obscenity, fighting words or libel, should adult speech be censored. For a child, on the other hand, the restrictions are broad. A developing child may be psychologically affected by unrestricted speech. Protecting a child from evils that adults have to tolerate safeguards the child in their growth. “This same shielding also serves to protect the rest of society. Any negative effects that free expression has on children affect not only children but society as a whole.”¹⁰

Supreme Court Censorship Cases

Three important U.S. Supreme Court cases define freedom of speech in public school. Although these cases are not directly related to the censorship of music, they illustrate efforts to limit the freedom of expression when the speech could be considered offensive or disturbing to others. The cases of *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District, 1969*, *Bethel School District. No. 403 v. Fraser, 1986* and *Hazelwood School District v. Huhlmeier, 1988* were landmark cases in freedom of expression. Freedom of expression includes the freedoms of speech, press, assembly and petition. In defining free expression rights of students in a public school, the Supreme Court developed three standards from these important cases.

In the Tinker Standard (*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District, 1969*), fifteen-year-old John Tinker, his sister Mary Beth, thirteen and a friend, Christopher Eckhardt, sixteen wore black armbands to their public school in Iowa in December, 1965 to protest the Vietnam War. The school enacted a no-armband policy yet allowed the wearing of other symbols like iron crosses. School officials suspended the three students. Students and parent sued in federal court claiming a violation of their First Amendment rights but lost. The case was heard in the Supreme Court and the suspension was overturned. Justice Abe Fortas of the Supreme Court stated “it can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and expression at the schoolhouse gate.”¹¹ By a 7-2 vote, the Court held that school officials cannot censor student speech, or wearing of

armbands, unless school officials realistically predict that the speech or clothing will cause a substantial disruption of school activities or conflict with the rights of others. Anxiety is not a justification for censorship. This decision by the Supreme Court governed a student's freedom of expression until 1986.¹²

In the Fraser Standard (*Bethel School District. No. 403 v. Fraser, 1986*), a public high school student, Matthew Fraser, nominated Jeff Kuhlman for a student government position in a speech which contained sexual innuendoes. The school suspended Matthew for violating the no-disruption rule barring profanity. Matthew contended that his First Amendment rights were violated because his speech did not cause a disruption of school activities as stated in the case of *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District, 1969*. By a vote of 7-2, the Court upheld that the school administrators may prohibit students' speech during an assembly if it contains obscene and profane language. The Court wrote "Teachers and administrators must have the authority to do what they reasonably believe is in the best interest of their educational responsibilities, as we cannot abandon our school to the whims or proclivities of children."¹³ Matthew founded Education Unlimited in 1993 with other college friends.¹⁴

In the Hazelwood Standard (*Hazelwood School District v. Huhlmeier, 1988*), students wrote a school newspaper as a requirement of a journalism class. The paper was to include student-based articles about teen pregnancy and the effect of divorce on children. The principal objected to the stories, citing that they were unsuitable for younger students and unfair to those students who were pregnant and easily recognized from the article. The principal also believed that the divorced parents should be given the chance to give their response. The articles were deleted from the school newspaper by the principal. Three students sued citing a violation of their First Amendment under the Tinker Standard. In a 5-3 decision, the Court held that the principal can censor school-sponsored publications written by students when they have educational apprehension. (An interesting note: There were only eight justices at the verdict of the Hazelwood case. Judge Lewis Powell retired in 1987. If the justices had reached a 4-4 decision, the verdict of the court of appeals favoring the students would be the final verdict). Justice Byron White wrote: "A school must also retain the authority to refuse to sponsor student speech that might reasonably be perceived to advocate drug or alcohol abuse, irresponsible sex, or 'conduct otherwise inconsistent with the shared values of a civilized social order,' or to associate the school with any position other than neutrality on matters of political controversy."¹⁵

Lower Court Music Censorship Case

After researching the court cases of Tinker, Fraser and Hazelwood, I was interested in finding a case involving music censorship. In *McCullom v. CBS* the parents of nineteen year old John McCullum claimed that the lyrics of Ozzy Osbourne's "Suicide Solution" caused their son to commit suicide. John shot and killed himself while lying on his bed listening to these lyrics from "Suicide Solution."

Wine is fine but whiskey's quicker
Suicide is slow with liquor
Take a bottle and drown your sorrows

Then it floods away tomorrows

Evil thoughts and evil doings
Cold, alone you hang in ruins
Thought that you'd escape the reaper
You can't escape the Master Keeper¹⁶

At the time John had a problem with alcohol and emotional issues. The Court of Appeals of California ruled that the lyrics are protected by the Constitution.¹⁷ It stated, "In the context of this case we must conclude, in order to find a culpable incitement, (1) that Osbourne's music was *directed and intended* toward the goal of bringing about the imminent suicide of listeners and (2) that it was *likely* to produce such a result. It is not enough that John's suicide may have been the result of an unreasonable reaction to the music. We find no such intent or likelihood here. Apart from the "unintelligible" lyrics quoted above from "Suicide Solution," to which John admittedly was not even listening at the time of his death, there is nothing in any of Osbourne's songs which could be characterized as a command to an immediate suicidal act."¹⁸

Censorship, which is the suppression of words, images, lyrics or ideas that are offensive, often occurs when some people succeed in forcing their personal, political or moral views on someone else. Censorship can be enforced by private groups or the government. Government censorship is unconstitutional. Private groups or individuals can organize protests or boycotts under the First Amendment. The Supreme Court has explained censorship very broadly as seen in its verdict of Tinker, Fraser and Hazelwood. Court cases in music also uphold the freedom of speech.

9/11

My fifth grade students were not born when the 9/11 attacks occurred. Every year, the attacks of 9/11 move further into the past. I want them to know the facts of what happened. They can use this knowledge as background when discussing why songs were censored after 9/11. Discussing the facts about that day can be emotionally difficult. Some children will listen while others will ask questions. Discussions should be respectful. Conversations will include numerous what and why questions. Let the children's thoughts guide the group discussions. Answers must be based on research and be age and developmentally appropriate. It's also important to be sincere and honest. If I don't know the answer to a question, I will admit that I don't know but will research for the answer. I am learning along with my students. I will also emphasize that 9/11 showed us the worst in humanity. However, out of despair came hope and heroes who brought families together.

Facts about 9/11 may come from students' questions. A first question may be "What is 9/11?" 9/11 stands for September 11, 2001. On that bright and clear sunny morning, 19 men hijacked four commercial planes. They deliberately flew three airplanes into the Twin Towers at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon just outside of Washington D.C. After two planes, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, hit the Twin Towers, both fell from the damage. The entire sixteen-acre World Trade complex was destroyed. American

Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon which partially collapsed the western side of the building. The fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, went off course and seemed to be heading for Washington D.C., possibly the Capitol or the White House. The passengers and crew, after realizing that they were being skyjacked and pulled off course, fought the terrorists and crashed the plane into an open field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people lost their lives from the 9/11 attacks including citizens from over 90 countries.¹⁹

Another question may be “What were the Twin Towers, World Trade Center and Pentagon?” In New York City, the Twin Towers at 110 floors, were the tallest buildings in the world for two years. They were called Twin Towers because they were almost identical. The North Tower, 1WTC, had an antenna on the rooftop and stood 1,368 feet tall. The South Tower, 2WTC was 1362 feet high. Views from both buildings could extend 45 miles to often see all of New York City, New Jersey and Connecticut. The World Trade Center was in lower Manhattan. It included numerous buildings, restaurants, an underground shopping mall and the Twin Towers. The Pentagon is the home of all the armed forces in the United States.²⁰

Another possible question could be “Why did the hijackers do this?” The hijackers were terrorists who used aggression to attempt to scare people and force them to accept their ideas. They belonged to a radical group called al-Qaeda formerly led by Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. They hoped that by destroying America and hurting thousands of people, Americans would support al-Qaeda, a militant Islamist organization.²¹

Censored Songs after 9/11

Imagine that we live in a world where we are told what to play, what to sing and what to listen to at home and at school. Music is that free expression of ideas, traditions and emotions of all people. Through music, they express hopes, dreams, joys and sorrows. It can be their identity. These ideas may conflict with others and those in power or control. The opinions of musicians may simply be unpopular or not accepted by different interest groups. Under the First Amendment, song lyrics can be banned if they are dangerous or objectionable, especially to children. Censorship of music has been used by states, religions, educational organizations, families, retailers and various lobby groups. Why is music censored? South African Johnny Clegg said, “Censorship is based on fear.”²²

The censorship of music in the United States began in 1927. The Radio Act prohibited the use of obscene, indecent or profane language on the radio. The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) was created by Congress in 1934. The FCC monitors interstate and international communications. The Supreme Court upheld the FCC’s power to regulate and fine stations for inappropriate language for children during certain hours. In 1958, Elvis Presley was only filmed from the waist up on “The Ed Sullivan Show” Some churches in 1966 protested by burning records by the Beatles because John Lennon said that the Beatles “are more popular than Jesus.” In 1970, a Pennsylvania radio station was fined by the FCC for an interview with Jerry Garcia because it contained sexual suggestions. In 1985 with the help of Tipper Gore, Senator Al Gore’s wife, Parents Music Resource Center opposed explicit content in music. The “Parental Advisory-Explicit Lyrics” sticker is displayed on CDs with explicit language decided by the PMRC. In 1994, MTV, or Music Television, censored every third

music video for explicit language by blocking or bleeping the inappropriate word.²³

There was a musical response to 9/11/2001. Because of the attacks on the Twin Towers, the World Trade Center, Pentagon and western Pennsylvania, the executive of Clear Channel Communications, (currently known as iHeartMedia, Inc.), the largest radio network in the United States, created a list of 160 “lyrically questionable” songs out of fear from the assaults.²⁴ One week after the airplane strikes, 1,200 radio stations across the country received the list of banned songs suggesting not playing them on the air. “Given the environment, a Clear Channel program director took it upon himself to identify a number of songs that certain markets or individual may find insensitive today,” the company said in a statement. “This was not a mandate, nor was the list generated out of the corporate radio offices. It was a grassroots effort that was apparently circulated among program directors.”²⁵ In Responses to 9/11, Thomas Shevory claims that what Clear Channel did was to use a large, corporate company to suppress and control the playing of these songs.²⁶ Many activists said that this list violated the First Amendment. Songs could be pulled off of store shelves causing an economic concern. Some of the radio stations did not adhere to the ban. New York’s Z100 continued playing “inappropriate songs” like “New York, New York” and “Imagine.”²⁷ “While Clear Channel insists it did not endorse or squash the list’s distribution, First Amendment watchdogs say it’s problematic – especially if you consider that Clear Channel owns one out of every 10 stations in the U.S.”²⁸

What songs were banned after 9/11? 160 songs are too many to list in this research paper. For the complete list go to <http://freemuse.org/archives/5679>. Certain songs on the list were barred because the lyrics evoked violence such as Gap Band’s “You Dropped a Bomb on Me”. Some songs gave a suggestion to the 9/11 terror but were not violent. “Walk Like an Egyptian” by the Bangles brought mention of the Middle East where the hijackers dwelled. Other songs were appropriate to play but Clear Channel thought they were too emotional after 9/11. An example is John Lennon’s “Imagine”. “Lennon’s lyrics had managed to capture and question the motives of the Al Qaeda terrorists but also those domestic politicians who would use the attack to stoke the nationalist fervor and protect their own political power.”²⁹ The titles from “Leavin’ on a Jet Plane” by Peter, Paul and Mary, AC/DC’s “Safe in New York City” and “Burning down the House” by Talking Heads reminded Americans of the plane attacks on New York City. All songs by the group Rage Against the Machine were banned because of their questionable political statements and violent lyrics. An example of inappropriate lyrics is from the song, “Testify”, by Rage Against the Machine released in 2000. “Mass graves for the pump and the price is set. Who controls the past now controls the future.”³⁰

“New York New York” vs. “God Bless the USA”

One song on the banned song list that I would discuss in my fifth grade music classroom is “New York New York” performed by Frank Sinatra and written in 1977 by John Kander and Fred Ebb. The lyrics include:

Start spreadin' the news, I'm leavin' today
I want to be a part of it
New York, New York

These vagabond shoes, are longing to stray
Right through the very heart of it
New York, New York
I want to wake up, in a city that doesn't sleep
And find I'm king of the hill
Top of the heap
These little town blues
Are melting away
I'll make a brand new start of it
In old New York
If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere
It's up to you, New York, New York
New York, New York³¹

In my fifth grade music class, we will discuss why these lyrics were banned. Is it because the name of New York City is in it? Is it “lyrically inappropriate?” Do the lyrics denote violence? Does it contain a hate message? Does it contain a message that would offend others? Do the lyrics cause danger to anyone? Does it depict a grim image? I feel that “New York, New York” was censored because it mentions the city of New York. However, in my opinion, the song shows a great pride to want to be a part of New York. Personal success is stressed (“If I can make it there I’ll make it anywhere”³²) even with a large amount of competition.

The song, “God Bless the USA,” sung and written by Lee Greenwood in 1984 was not banned by the Clear Channel Communications. The lyrics consist of:

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 American³³

In music class, we will talk about why “God Bless the USA” was not censored. Is the name New York in the lyrics? Is there obscenity?” Do the lyrics denote terroristic threats? Does it contain a negative message? Does it contain a message that is offensive? Do the lyrics cause a threat to anyone? Does it depict a dismal or depressing image? In my opinion, the song shows honor for all those who serve in the armed forces. It depicts a great love for America. However, there is a grim image in the line concerning “if tomorrow all the things were gone.”³⁴ The 9/11 survivors had to start over without their loved ones. If “New York, New York” was banned because it mentions the city by name, so does “God Bless the USA.” I think “God Bless the USA” could have been on the banned song list also.

“Dancing in the Street” sung by Martha and the Vandellas (1964) or Van Halen (1982) or David Bowie and Mick Jagger (1985)

I chose “Dancing in the Street” sung by Martha and the Vandellas in 1964 as another example as a banned song. Not to compare it to another song but to ask why was the 1964 version of “Dancing in the Street” sung by Martha and the Vandellas banned, as well as the similar song and lyrics sung by Van Halen in 1982, but not the version sung by David Bowie and Mick Jagger in 1985?

Calling out around the world,
Are you ready for a brand new beat?
Summer's here and the time is right
For dancing in the street.
They're dancing in Chicago,
Down in New Orleans,
In New York City.

All we need is music, sweet music.
There'll be music everywhere.
There'll be swinging and swaying and records playing,
Dancing in the street.
Oh, it doesn't matter what you wear,
Just as long as you are there.
So come on, every guy, grab a girl.
Everywhere around the world
They'll be dancing.
They're dancing in the street.

It's an invitation across the nation,
A chance for folks to meet.

There'll be laughing, singing, and music swinging,
Dancing in the street.
Philadelphia, P.A.
Baltimore and D.C. now.
Can't forget the Motor City.³⁵

The song, "Dancing in the Street" has two meanings. In the 1970s, the British press claimed that Martha Reeves sang the song as a call to riot. Martha countered that she sang it as a party song. In the United States, Berry Gordy, creator of the Motown record label, formerly known as the Black Forum label, wanted to produce the song in America without the political issues or rioting. "This song (and others like it) and its associated political meanings did not exist in a vacuum. It was a partner with its social environment and they both played upon each other creating meaning that could not have been brought on by one or the other alone. The song therefore became a call to reject peace for the chance that unified unrest could bring about the freedom that suppressed minorities all across the United States so craved."³⁶ Martha and the Vandellas sang their rendition produced by Berry Gordy with a get up and dance feeling.

Van Halen released the same song in 1982 using a heavy metal sound. This version of "Dancing in the Streets" was censored by Clear Channel. It was written using synthesizers and electric guitars to create an original sound.³⁷

A third style was sung by David Bowie and Mick Jagger in 1985 as part of the Live Aid charity concert. This unbanned version used a line from the song, "Street Fighting Man". "Cause summer's here and the time is right for fighting in the street, boy."³⁸ The two musicians created a music video which was seen twice at Live Aid. It was shown in movie theaters before the movie, Ruthless People. It was played at street parties celebrating the marriage of Kate Middleton and Prince William.³⁹

After listening to all three versions of "Dancing in the Street", students will compare and discuss various reasons for banning some lyrics. They must explain their reason why the lyrics should be censored or not.

As soon as the list became public, Clear Channel began to recant. Corporate announcements stated that there was never an order from the station's management to not play or censor any songs. Clear Channel executives stated, "This was an effort to help people to be sensitive to an unthinkable environment. It's been somewhat turned into some sort of evil attempt to control pop music, and that's absurd."⁴⁰ The list of 160 songs, in fact, had been created impulsively and circulated to radio stations. These stations made individual judgments about what might be appropriate, taking into account complaints from their listeners. It was essentially a "grassroots" effort. Editorial reaction to the Clear Channel effort to censor music was negative. "The goal, as always," said a Los Angeles editorial, "is not to censor individual songs but to think about songs as they are written and recorded." Ultimately, Clear did not force a ban on 160 songs, it only recommended one.⁴¹

In conclusion, censoring songs after 9/11 either by a specific group or government of the United States can be debated and often different conclusions are discovered. Free speech under

the First Amendment should protect against “lyrically inappropriate” songs. What are unsuitable lyrics for a child are not always improper for an adult. Upon recommendation from Clear Channel Communications, songs were censored after 9/11 because of violence, politics, hate, terroristic threats and offense to others. Fifth grade students will discuss why it was suggested to ban some songs and not other songs after 9/11.

Music Strategies

Students need to use 4 specific musical strategies in **Censored Songs after 9/11**. Call/Response, improvisation, long-phrased melody and active listening are musical skills that will assist the students in better understanding the censored songs of 9/11. Of course other approaches such as collaborative learning, working in small groups and think/pair/share will be used. Fifth graders use these strategies in other classes. I want to incorporate those strategies as well as add musical methods when learning and analyzing the songs.

Call/ Response

In music, call /response is a technique where one musician sings or plays a phrase and a second player answers with an exact or improvisational response to the phrase either sung or played on an instrument. Call/Response depicts an AB form using a solo/chorus, solo/solo or chorus/chorus. For example, students sit in a circle and one calls, “Start spreadin’ the news, I’m leaving today, I want to be a part of it.” All respond “New York New York” from the song, “New York New York.” Students can also individually take turns singing the call and response. Another example of call/response would be for me to sing “Whisper to me.” The class then sings “softly, softly.” An exact echo call/response would be for me to chant “We are the Eagles, the mighty, mighty Eagles” and the class then would echo, “We are the Eagles, the mighty, mighty Eagles.” One of the great elements of call and response is that it can be a powerful unifying tool. Those who respond learn to listen carefully to the leader, and in many cases, they gain a sense of belonging by completing or repeating the call. Sometimes, people use it as a way to get collective ideas across to others.

Improvisation

In many cases, particularly in spirituals when call and response involves a choir or ensemble, the director or caller often improvises once he’s established the main melody. Changes usually get more intense and complex as the music progresses to the climax of the composition. The answer remains fairly unchanged, providing a framework to fit the harmonic, rhythmic and phrasing structure of the piece. The leader often sings with what he’s feeling in the moment. However, he has to use a basic knowledge of how the song goes or musical order to make everything line up and sound good. Students create chants and percussion accompaniments. They improvise simple melodies. Often students create movements to emphasize the meaning of the words. Improvisation strengthens and nurtures a child’s creativity.

Slow, long-phrased melody

Long phrased melody is more common than call/response, improvisation or syncopation. Instead of short fragmented lines, long complete sentences were sung. Students who do not like to sing will probably not like this strategy. Choral singing best demonstrates long-phrased melody. Melodic contour can be analyzed for duration, upward and downward motion, repetition, imitation, sequence, steps and leaps and modulation. Examples of “God Bless the U.S.A.” can be viewed on **you tube** for the students to experience this approach. An effective method to feel long phrases is to have students move their arms in long arcs to the musical expressions.

Active Listening

Active listening means listening to music with focus and intensity, without diverting attention to any other activity. Active listening can be any form of listening activity where the students are engaged in the music one hundred percent of the time. Being engaged in the music means that, while they are listening to music, the students are committed and fully present. By listening, they are immersed in, captivated by, and preoccupied with the music. In other words, they are interacting with the music.

Classroom Activities

This unit is divided into three lessons discussing free speech, events of 9/11 and censored songs after 9/11.

Lesson One – Free Speech

What is Free Speech?

This introductory lesson gives students the opportunity to learn about the First Amendment and its five fundamental rights of religion, speech, press, assemble and petition. Focus will be on free speech and what it means to them.

Anticipatory Set: KWL chart for the free speech. Students fill in the K “Think I Know” and W “Think I’ll Learn.”

Directed Instruction: Introduce the First Amendment and its five fundamental rights of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition. Instruction will center on defining, characteristics examples of songs that illustrate freedom of speech.

Activity: Pair students to complete a Frayer model (definition, traits, examples and non-examples) for each element for free speech. Then ask the group to share their answers and make revisions.

Assessment: Acrostic Summary: In groups, students complete an acrostic for the word FREE using each letter to tell something the students think about free speech.

Lesson Two – Events of 9/11

How can students relate to the events of 9/11?

This lesson focuses on the events of 9/11/2001. The facts are taught so that the students can understand yet not be afraid of these happenings.

Anticipatory Set: Students activate “What’s Already in my Head?” They fill in a thought bubble with words or pictures to show 9/11.” These pictures are divided into Twin Towers, pictures from the song, “God Bless the U.S.A.” relating to 9/11.

Directed Instruction: Students listen to facts about 9/11. They discuss in pairs how music could impact how people react to these events.

Activity: Students in small groups of eight discuss the lyrics of “New York New York,” “God Bless the U.S.A.” and “Dancing in the Streets” by Martha and the Vandellas. How do the words relate to 9/11?

Assessment: Learning Log: Students responds to the prompt on post-it notes the answer to “Something new I learned today is.....”

Lesson Three: Censored Songs after 9/11

What makes some songs suggested to be banned after 9/11?

This lesson focuses on listening to performances of “New York New York,” “God Bless the U.S.A.” and “Dancing in the Streets” by Martha and the Vandellas.

Anticipatory Set: Have students read the lyrics and sing “New York New York,” “God Bless the U.S.A.” and “Dancing in the Streets” by Martha and the Vandellas.

Directed Instruction: Students listen to the songs of “New York New York,” “God Bless the U.S.A.” and “Dancing in the Streets” by Martha and the Vandellas. Words are grouped in small sections and the meanings are discussed.

Activity: Students discuss in their group of eight why some lyrics in “New York New York,” “God Bless the U.S.A.” and “Dancing in the Streets” by Martha and the Vandellas would be censored after 9/11.

Assessment: Have student Think, Pair and then Share their ideas on “I would like to learn more about...”

Final Assessment: Students will be able to perform “New York New York,” God Bless the U.S.A.” and “Dancing in the Street” by Martha and the Vandellas. Students will then discuss why the lyrics in these songs might be censored after 9/11. Also, the class will give ideas for the L “I Learned” on the KWL chart. They then review the KWL chart.

Please check my website for **Censored Songs after 9/11** for updates.

<http://cmhann.weebly.com>

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Appendix

Delaware Civics Standard One: Students will examine the structure and purposes of governments with specific emphasis on constitutional democracy [Government].

4-5: Students will understand that governments have a variety of structures and exist for many purposes and that in America, these are explained in the United States and State constitutions.

Delaware Civics Standard Two: Students will understand the principles and ideals underlying the American political system [Politics].

4-5: Students will understand that a society based on the ideal of individual liberty requires a commitment on the part of its citizens to the principles of civic responsibility and personal civility.

Delaware Civics Standard Three: Students will understand the responsibilities, rights, and privileges of United States citizens [Citizenship].

4-5: Students will identify the fundamental rights of all American citizens as enumerated in the Bill of Rights.

Delaware Music Standard 9: Understanding music in relation to diverse culture, times and places

9.6: Students will identify and explain the characteristics that cause a musical work to be considered culturally, historically and/or geographically significant.

Endnotes

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- ⁸ Ibid.
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Curriculum Unit
Title

Censored Songs after 9/11

Author

Cecilia Hann

KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.

Students discuss Freedom of Speech as it relates to the suggested banned of songs after 9/11. Students sing “New York New York”, God Bless the U.S.A.” and “Dancing in the Street” by Martha and the Vandellas.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT

What is Free Speech?
How can students relate to the events of 9/11?
What makes some songs suggested to be banned after 9/11?

CONCEPT A

CONCEPT B

CONCEPT C

Dramatic structure

Improvisation

Active Listening

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS C

What is Free Speech?

How can students relate to the events of 9/11?

What makes some songs suggested to be banned after 9/11?

VOCABULARY A

VOCABULARY B

VOCABULARY C

First Amendment
Bill of Rights
Framer Model
Freedom of Speech

Imagination
Improvisation
Originality
Meaningful

Style
Censorship
Creativity
Collaboration

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES

Dramatic Structure: Explanation of the First Amendment: “The Five Freedoms” <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org>.
The First Amendment in Schools a Guide from the First Amendment by Marjorie Haynes
Improvisation: "September 11 Attacks," https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11_attacks.
Listening: "From Censorship to Irony; Rhetorical Responses to 9/11," <https://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent>
Musical Responses to 9/11: List of Allegedly 'banned' Songs," <http://freemuse.org>
“New York New York” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KJQNMqVIug>
“God Bless the U.S.A.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HL8_UtKe6w
“Dancin’ in the Streets” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQpbURSFaNU>