

War! What Is It Good For?

The 20th century would come to be known as a time of conflict. WWI, WWII, and the Cold War marked the century and changed the way we view the world in significant and irreversible ways through both conflict and reactions to those conflicts. No longer content to tell the ancient stories of the past, artists, writers, and creators of all kinds began to respond to the world in new and interesting ways.

Some of these responses were more traditional, like poetry and music, and others were street art and spoken word. Poetry during and after the First Great War showed the world that glory wasn't always worth it, that bloody and disgusting battles were being fought among men. The music and protest photography surrounding Vietnam would become culturally iconic, giving voice to those who felt powerless. Even the iconic Rosie the Riveter had a purpose as she rallied women together to keep a country at war running.

All types of cultural expression- art, music, literature, poetry, film, and even science- are often responses to the changes and challenges the world is experiencing at a given time. Most recently, we have seen these changes as the world reacts to coronavirus in different ways. Maybe the picture of the older man holding up a sign to thank the emergency room staff for saving his wife's life will become the flower in the barrel of the gun for our generation. No matter what, though, what we realize is that it is imperative to know that the world shapes art and, in turn, that art often critically comments on the world.

For this project, we are going to task you with exploring that codependent relationship between cultural expression and the changes and challenges the world experiences. **How is culture (art, science/tech, music, and literature) influenced by conflict and change or vice-versa?** As we learn about the history of the 20th century, you will not only be introduced to the conflicts and changes that the century is synonymous with but various works of cultural expression that were inspired by or commented on those conflicts. While we will primarily focus on the skill of analysis, there should also be an opportunity for you to be reevaluated for skills you may not have been as successful in mastering.

There will be three benchmarks in this project. The first will be two-fold: the development of historical content knowledge while also creating a personal creative response. The product for this benchmark will come from your own experiences. You will choose from the list to create a product (for example a poem or playlist with an album cover) as a commentary on an issue our world faces that is important to you (income inequality, racism, immigration, coronavirus to name a few) and present that to a small group of peers and facilitators.

For the second benchmark, you will practice and write a DBQ as one of our final preparations for the AP World History Exam. You will write this as a timed essay, however, you will be given the opportunity to revise it in order to be evaluated on Organization and Context. Benchmark #3 will specifically relate to the book that you have chosen to read for this project and will require you to focus your specific discussion on identifying themes in the novels that are relevant to our modern world.

For the final benchmark, you will be regrouped based on a specific theme that is present in your novel and you will create a product that demonstrates that theme. Finally, your group will present your product and be evaluated on Clarity of Presentation and Facts and Research.

"Literature is a mirror that humans hold up to the world, to themselves and to history. It can show us who we have been, who we are, and who we may become."

Possible Products

- Write a poem
 - Perspective poems for science/technology people
- Write a song
- Create a piece of art
 - New Novel cover
- Album of music with cover art
 - Ex: Pink Floyd's The Wall
 - Could be made on Spotify or Youtube (collecting other people's songs)
 - Album should include 6-8 (or more if you want) tracks that in some way function as commentary on the event/idea that you are focusing on.
- [One-pager with accompanying analysis](#)
 - Sketch one visual symbol that represents the thing being commented on
 - Write out two quotations that are indicative of the thing being commented on
 - Examine one or two main players in some way
 - Be creative and add anything additional that stands out to you.
 - This should fill up an entire page.
- Write a new ending, an additional chapter, epilogue or prologue

Benchmark 1 Product Directions:

The product for this benchmark will come from your own experiences.

Choose from the following list of products (or come up with your own, just get it approved!).

Possible Products

- Write a poem
 - Perspective poems for science/technology people
- Write a song
- Create a piece of art
- Album of music with cover art
 - Pink Floyd's The Wall as an example
 - Could be made on Spotify or Youtube (collecting other people's songs)
- One-pager with accompanying analysis?
- Write a short story

Choose a topic that you feel like you want to comment on. For example, income inequality, racism, immigration, or the coronavirus pandemic to name a few. Create a commentary on that idea in a creative way. You might choose to write a song or if you are more artistically inclined you might choose to create a piece of art. If you love music, you might create a Spotify playlist and accompanying analysis of why the songs that you have chosen represent or comment on your chosen topic.

Then, you will write about your creation and present your creation to your facilitators and a group of peers. This presentation should address the following information:

- Context of your topic
- For example, if you choose income inequality, you will need to do some research on income inequality and share the context for that topic.
- Describe or read what you have created.
- Discuss, using evidence from what you created (specific artistic choices you made/lyrics or lines from your poem or song) and explain how what you have created demonstrates your perspective on the topic.
- Conclusion that brings your creation full circle.

We will re-evaluate your presentation skills and analysis feedback.

Benchmark 3:

Read the novel that you chose and participate in book clubs discussing your chosen novel.

Then, you will create a product that highlights one theme from the novel that you have read.

Choose from the following list of products (or come up with your own, just get it approved!).

Possible Products

- Write a poem
 - Perspective poems for science/technology people- There is a virtual workshop on this.
- Write a song
- Create a piece of art
 - New Novel cover
- Album of music with cover art
 - Pink Floyd's The Wall
 - Could be made on Spotify or Youtube (collecting other people's songs)
- Playlist for the novel or a one-pager with accompanying analysis
- Write a new ending, an additional chapter, epilogue or prologue

Choose a theme from the novel that you would like to comment on.

Theme is defined as a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work, which may be stated directly or indirectly. In *Things Fall Apart*, a theme might be the struggle between tradition and change. If that were the focus, I might create a poem that explores that. I would want to use specific details from the text as imagery in my poem. If I created a piece of art, I would want in some way that theme to be really clear. Note that theme is never going to be one word. Love. Tradition. All are main ideas, but they aren't themes. A theme is something that is specific to the novel that you are reading.

Once you have identified the theme that you most want to explore, you will then create a product that you feel represents it. You will present your creation. In your presentation, you will explain how what you have created reflects your analysis of the theme by using specific details from the novel. You should have at least three quotes from the text that support your analysis of theme and those should be included in some way in your creation. This will follow a similar format to your Benchmark 1 presentation and should have similar components for the presentation.

Benchmark 3:

The final benchmark for this project will come from an analysis of a work that was a commentary on a time period/war/specific event. Taking the skill of analysis that you have developed as you created your own products, you will now apply that skill to a creation from history (a protest song from the Vietnam era for example). This requires an understanding of the world that the artistic product comments on (context).

Your first step would be to identify the creative work you will analyze. Again, this could be a book, a song, a poem, a piece of art, a cartoon strip, a concept album, etc. The sky's the limit as long as the work is a commentary on what was happening in society at the time.

You will then need to do some research on the work in order to understand the world the artist is commenting on as well as to develop an understanding of their perspective of the topic. You need to be able to articulate the theme of the work. You will need to cite at least two outside sources in your analysis.

Once you have an understanding of the context and the "theme" of the work you will write an analysis that makes a claim about the theme, provides evidence to support your assertion of what the theme is, and analysis that explains how the evidence proves your claim. Finally, you will need to write a conclusion that connects to the bigger picture—why this work might still be important and/or relevant today.