

Example of Student Writing – Approaching College Ready

Coolios gangster paradise came out when rap and hip hop was were taking over becoming very popular all over the world. Why was this song such a big impact on our culture? I think it's because there was so many other people going through the same struggles that Coolio talks about in the song. The song takes us on a point of view of the real hood lifestyle. A place he calls gangster paradise, saying it has not been easy growing up there. Having to make hard decisions like killing people but he says he only did it because he had to "living life do or die." He says he can't have a normal life because "they got this situation they got me facing" in this line he is talking about the government and how he grew up getting in trouble so this government/system has showed him a very unfair side. That's why he chooses to be "down with the hood team" that's his family his protection his back up. In a way Coolio has accepted this as his life and has pretty much given up on anything better to come. As if he were stuck and nobody could help him because "they say I gotta learn, but nobody is gonna teach me. If they can't understand, how can they teach me? I guess they can't that why I know my life's outta luck foo!" This is very true because the circumstances that one lives in the hood aren't exactly a walk in the park. He is facing situations like drugs, drugs dealers, killing, and not a lot of motivation on doing something better something different. Not many people make it in this type of scene because when you're faced with these circumstances you might end up dead yourself either from using drugs, being a drug dealer and fighting for territory for your gang. I can really see how it can be overwhelming for anyone growing up in that lifestyle. In this time that's all that Coolio knew was the hood so the song is very heart felt for people all over the world. Like the LA street riots in 1992, this is just one example of the abuse and struggles that people faced. Now as far as Coolios hair goes I don't exactly know what the statement was there. Maybe it was that he was

Comment [1]: This paper lacks a proper introduction and does not include a thesis statement in which the student tells the audience the purpose of the paper. This sentence is an example of the major issues with capitalization, punctuation, and grammar prevalent in this essay.

Comment [2]: This student demonstrates the ability to incorporate text from the song to support claims made in the paper.

Comment [3]: This is a good example of elaborating on the point the student attempts to make.

Comment [4]: This is a good example of a specific historical event incorporated into the argument of the paper. It establishes context for the song.

standing up (like his hair) and speaking up about these problems.

Now with Stevie Wonders Pastime Paradise is similar because he is standing up and talking about issues but the issues that he was talking about are in a different time 1976. I think that the difference with this and gangsters paradise is that I get a little bit more hope maybe because his approach is different, even though it is still very dark and haunting. With lyrics like “They’ve been spending most their lives living in a pastime paradise.” What he is saying is that we as society are living in the past even after the segregation had stopped there was still a lot of individuals who are ignorant and still have the same mentality about equality. Even to this day people are fighting for their rights like LGBT with gay marriage. I think the songs purpose was clear. Stevie wants everybody to be treated equal no matter what happened in the past that should stay there and through this song its stating that that's how it should be but it wasn't. For me the lyrics that most caught my attention were “Tell me who of them will come to be, how many of them are you and me?” He is saying that if you don't stand up for the cause of change you're just going to become just another person living in a pastime paradise. The reason why I see more positive in this song is because towards the end Stevie does state that we should be living in a future paradise with changes in our society and really all of us being equal. Now I do get a sense of good and bad, the bad is the past and the good is the future I like how he played that out. It's interesting because 1976 was the start of black history month and we started seeing more black authors being published and black actors on television shows so that was just the start of more positive changes to come. Thirty-seven years later we have a black president.

In Gangstas Paradise Coolio has his version “tell me why are we so blind to see, that the ones we hurt are you and me? I find that this line is also very powerful and probably the line that caught my attention the most because it's very true in both songs. There is however something

Comment [5]: This is a good example of relating the song to the contemporary world.

Comment [6]: Good point supported by text from the song. With the correct structure and grammar, this could be conveyed much more easily.

Comment [7]: Seems like a haphazard connection to the previous song rather than a purposeful tie-in, adds to the feeling that this is not a final draft and needs much more planning/revising.

spiritual about them even the church choir in both songs its very interesting how each did its own take.

For Amish Paradise with Weird Als parody is really clever if you familiar or at least know the Amish lifestyle. So how Coolio took us through his gangsters paradise Al takes us through his version of how this lifestyle is so secluded from the way people are living now or at the time. His lyrics, “I take a look at my wife and realize she's very plain. But that's just perfect for an Amish like me; you know I shun fancy things like electricity.” In the Amish culture of course women and men dress very plain they have to make their clothes from plain dark fabrics keeping their traditions is very important for them. Al also makes fun of the fact that the Amish don't believe in electricity because they fell if they start watching TV they start to become vain and they are all about equality. Which I know Stevies song was talking about that but that's going to the extreme of things in my opinion but we won't get into that. He also uses the line “Im the pious guy little Amlettes wanna be like, on my knees day and night scoring points for the afterlife.” It's hilarious how he takes the line from Coolios version and makes it well, Amish relevant. So its very clever of weird al to come up with this because their lifestyle is so primitive that's really how it was 150 years ago. That's the connection that I see with all three songs. I get the feel they are stuck in that place or time interesting how that plays out.

In conclusion I feel that both Pastime and Gangsters Paradise are very effective as far as the times and events going on during their release. I really cannot choose as far as a favorite song between the two because I can relate to both of them in different ways. I will however say that the beat that Pastime Paradise has is little more dark and deep and stayed in my head more and it's funny because I grew up listening to Gangstas Paradise but they are both very heart felt.

Comment [8]: While these sentences suffer from large mechanical errors, the complexity of the student's thought in relating the songs is apparent.

References

1. <http://www.cnn.com/2006/EDUCATION/O 1/31/extra.civil.rights.timeline/>
2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_United_States_history_\(1990%E2%80%93present\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_United_States_history_(1990%E2%80%93present))

Comment [9]: Although the format of the references and citations need work, the student acknowledges the sources of information used in the paper.

Assessment

Strengths

This essay attempts to answer the impact of each song, its viewpoint, its purpose, what was similar and/or different between the songs, the historical context, and the songs' effective points. It also does a good job of using the text as support for the author's analysis. The essay also references present day issues outside of the song, talks about what was good and bad, makes astute references, and begins to analyze the song's content and impact.

Opportunities for Improvement

This essay is riddled with grammatical issues such that the good points the author makes get lost sometimes. There are serious sentence-level issues such as fragments, comma usage, run-ons, and possessive issues. Heavy editing, reading aloud, and having a friend proofread would all benefit this essay.

Overall

This essay is **Approaching College Ready** because it does a good job of addressing the topic and beginning to analyze the songs, but it needs work in terms of language and style.

The Scoring Sheet that accompanies this CRA is designed to assess the student's performance throughout the CRA, so here are some example skills and scores based only on this final essay:

Exceeding College Ready (4): Substantially exceeds the performance expectations
College Ready (3): Shows proficiency in all of the performance expectations
Approaching College Ready (2): Meets only some of the performance expectations
Initiating College Ready (1): Does not yet meet the performance expectations

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS	Instructor's Score
Writing Across the Curriculum (writes clearly and coherently using standard writing conventions; composes and revises drafts)	1
Research Across the Curriculum (evaluates the validity and reliability of sources; synthesizes and organizes information effectively; designs and presents an effective product)	2
SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS	Instructor's Score
Diverse Human Perspectives and Experiences (explores the issues of multicultural societies; examines factors that influence personal and group identities, e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, etc.)	2
Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation of Information (performs critical examinations of all sources; uses established research methods; reaches conclusions supported by evidence)	2
Effective Communication (uses clear and coherent communication; attributes ideas and information to source materials)	1