

**ACTIVE LISTENING**  
(adapted from Library of Congress, “Thinking About Songs”)

**Assignment:** Choose a song. First, read the song lyrics online (without the music). Then, listen to the music. Then (if applicable), watch the music video. This exercise is designed to help you learn to “close listen” to music as you would “close read” a novel or poem.

**Song Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Artist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>LYRICS</b>	<b>MUSIC</b>	<b>MUSIC VIDEO (if applicable)</b>
<i>What is the chorus/refrain? What words or phrases are repeated most often in the song?</i>	<i>Describe the musical properties of the song. You might want to consider: tempo (fast or slow), affect (lively, somber, upbeat), key (major or minor), tone (angry, sad, happy, etc.) What strikes you about the music itself?</i>	<i>Describe the visual elements presented in the music video.</i>
<i>What lyrics stand out to you? Which are the most poetic? Which are the most emotionally moving?</i>	<i>How do the musical sounds interact with the lyrics? Do you think the music changes the meaning of the lyrics?</i>	<i>How does watching the music video change your perception of the song, if at all?</i>
<i>Do the lyrics seem to convey any political or social messages? If s, which ones?</i>	<i>Is there anything in the music itself that either enhances or detracts from the political or social message of the lyrics?</i>	<i>How does the music video alter or enhance the political/social message of the song?</i>