



English 12 Portfolio Assignment: High School Soundtrack

Music plays an important role in creating the mood of *Stand By Me*; it mimics the childish fun and games (“Lollipop” by the Chordettes and “Yakety Yak” by the Coasters) as well as the more meaningful moments (Ben E. King’s “Stand By Me”). Thinking back on your high school years, what have been the most meaningful songs to you and why? **Choose one:**

- a.) Create a soundtrack for your high school experience. List 8-10 songs and their respective artists, and then write a brief explanation (4-6 sentences) of why you chose them. NOTE: Song titles are put in quotes.
- b.) Select one song that would be the “theme song” of your high school experience. Print the lyrics and then explain how and why this song works as a theme for your high school experience. (2-3 well-developed paragraphs)
- c.) ALTERNATE ASSIGNMENT: If you are not into music, or feel you could not put together a full soundtrack, you may complete a different portfolio prompt from the original prompt sheet (Childhood Friendship, Childhood Legend, Rite of Passage, or Revenge).

SAMPLE SOUNDTRACK SONG

“Small Town” by John Mellencamp

Although I wasn’t “born in a small town,” the lyrics of this song certainly portray my life growing up in Pleasantville, NY. It is only one square mile, and I’ve known most people in my graduating class since we were in kindergarten together. While it could be claustrophobic at times, I feel grateful for the friendships I made in my small town. As Mellencamp says, “No I cannot forget where it is that I come from/I cannot forget the people who love me.” And despite what people say about small towns, as a senior in high school, I was truly myself, outspoken about my beliefs, involved in a multitude of activities, and unashamed of my nerdiness: “Yeah, I can be myself here in this small town/And people let me be just what I want to be.”

SAMPLE THEME SONG

Music is one of the most important things in my life, so it was no easy task to choose a song to be the theme of my high school experience. Eventually, I picked Corinne Bailey Rae's song "Put Your Records On." This song is so significant for so many reasons, the first being that it embodies the spirit of my friend Quincy so well. Quincy loved this song. She used to sing it all the time, in the car, and while getting ready for school. I would hear her belting, "You go ahead, let your hair down," through the bathroom door while she was in the shower. Every time I listen to this song I think about all the good memories I have with Quincy and it makes me feel close to her. Music has a way of connecting human beings in a way that nothing else can. In a way, Quincy lives on through the music she loved, and the songs she sang while we kicked back by a fire pit on a Friday night.

Quincy's little cousin, Moira, was so young when Quincy passed away. My goal is to pass along the wisdom, love, and sisterhood that Quincy gave to me, to Moira. One way to do this is by sharing the music that Quincy loved. Moira is literally a little Quincy, and I must admit, it gives me goose bumps when I hear her sweet little voice sing out "You go ahead, let your hair down." It is truly a beautiful thing.

The lyrics to this song are so uplifting and reassuring. Listening to this song gives me a feeling of comfort and serenity. When it feels like the world is totally ending, and nothing is ever going to go my way again, this song reminds me to relax and let it sink in that everything will be okay, no matter what. Driving in the car, with a million things on my mind, I hear this song comes on the radio and it's as if Quincy is sitting right next to me, belting out the lyrics, comforting me, and reassuring me that everything will be all right, as always.

-JK, 2013