



Listening Template

The listening template is designed to help you listen with greater awareness to the various musical elements of a song. It can be used individually, in small groups, or to facilitate a class discussion.

Page 2 of this handout includes blank copies of this graphic organizer for future lesson plans.

| Artist “Song Title” | Instrumentation/ Vocals <i>List the instruments you can hear in this recording, such as drums, percussion, bass, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, piano, organ, lead vocal, harmony vocal, background vocals, horns, strings, synthesizer, turntables, or sampling, etc.</i> | Mood <i>What kind of mood or emotion does the song create? Romantic, dark, bright, sad, happy, urgent, dream-like, angry, scary, contemplative, hopeful, frustrated, playful, etc.</i> | Tempo <i>What is the rhythmic feel of the song? Fast, slow, moderate, mid-tempo, up-tempo, ballad, laid back, lilting, lively, etc.</i> | Lyrics <i>Do you understand what the writer is trying to convey? Is there a definitive rhyming structure? Is there a clear story or narrative or are the lyrics more poetic and image-driven? What are the most effective images in the song? What do you think is the theme of this song?</i> | Sounds Like / Genre <i>If possible, name a song that seems similar to this recording in terms of instrumentation or theme. What genre(s) is this song? Blues, Jazz, Doo Wop, Pop, Folk, Rock and Roll, Soul, Singer-Songwriter, Disco, Metal, Hip Hop, etc.</i> |
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| The Temptations “My Girl” | In order of appearance, you may hear bass, electric guitar, finger snaps, drums, lead vocals, piano, rhythm guitar, background harmony vocals, lead vocals, horns, strings. | Positive, bright, romantic | Moderate, mid-tempo | The lyrics are clearly articulated, with a defined rhyming structure. There are a lot of images of nature, such as “I’ve got sunshine on a cloudy day.” There is no story narrative, but the lyrics focus on poetic metaphors and how the singer feels in love. | It is reminiscent of other Motown songs like “How Sweet It Is” by Marvin Gaye. The vocal harmonies have a Doo Wop sound. The music feels like a Soul song, although the strings also give the song a swelling Pop sound. |
| Chuck Berry “Johnny B. Goode” | | | | | |

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