

Historical and Rhetorical Song Analysis Form

	Include details and textual evidence (where appropriate) to support your ideas ↓↓
Title, Composer, and Performer (include biographical information for each)	“In the Mississippi River” by Marshall Jones, sung by The Freedom Singers Performed by Mavis Staples and the Staples Singers
Citation Information (album title, recording studio, year written and released)	<u>Voices of the Civil Rights Movement</u> , Smithsonian Folkway Recordings, 1997 (Mavis Staples) <u>We'll Never Turn Back</u> , ANTI-Records, 2007
Historical Context (include significant historical events and influential national and global trends/issues)	Song written by Freedom Singer, Marshall Jones, as the Mississippi River was being dragged for three missing Freedom Summer volunteers. While searching, the bodies of dozens of African Americans were discovered, all of them tortured, some lynched, and all deposited in the river.
Genre (note the style and musical category)	Field Holler (call and response), Gospel, Folk
Social Issue Being Addressed (note the specific topic the author wants to highlight)	Mourns the innocent who lost their lives in the corrupt and racist state of Mississippi and calls for action to stop the violence and hatred
Connection to Modern Times (note the current issues which relate to the social issue presented and the extent to which the issue has changed)	Mavis Staples released the song in 2007 to continue to highlight the racial injustice which persists in the south, especially after the inadequate response to Hurricane Katrina.
Intended Audience and Purpose (include the intentions of both the composer and the performer)	Marshall Jones wrote this as both to bear witness to the tragic murders of the victims and a call to action to stop the violence.
Tone (note two adjectives with textual evidence)	Mournful and insistent “Well, you can count them five by five / With their hands tied / And they don’t come out alive” “We’re going stop them from going in the river”
Literary and Rhetorical Devices (note techniques like interesting diction, unique syntax structures, metaphor, simile, repetition, alliteration, rhetorical question, etc.)	Repetition: “In the Mississippi River / Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord” Rhetorical Question: “Do you want to see?”
Lyrics (Rhetorical Analysis) ● Claim (often found in the chorus, this is the main message the writer is trying to convey)	“And you can count them ten by ten” “We’re going stop them from going in the river”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence (often the precise details of a social injustice incident. These details personify the injustice, bringing a human face to the cause) • Commentary/Warrant (often this is the explanation of how the evidence warrants the outcry for change) 	<p>“With their hands tied ... And their feet tied” “Like Goodman...Like Schwerner...And Chaney”</p> <p>“Oh, well-a into the river they go” “And they are gone because of hate” “And we wonder when the right will win”</p>
<p>Instrumental Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruments used (note percussion, brass, strings, keyboard, etc.) • Composition Elements (note how the composition form supports the author’s ideas by analyzing tempo, melody, rhythm, key, register, bridge, etc.) • Vocals (note the artist’s choices in style, pitch, dynamics, intonation, and phrasing) 	<p>Guitar, acapella voices</p> <p>-Call and response beginning, then tempo quickens and voices are accompanied by guitar</p> <p>-Male lead voice with background vocals and harmonies by group -Layers of tones with echoed effect to create a mournful tone</p>
<p>Conclusions about Themes and the Argument’s Effectiveness (draw conclusions about global themes which emerge from your analysis of this song and whether the author or artist was successful)</p>	<p>“In the Mississippi River” seeks to bear witness to those who lost their lives in the river and to insist that “We’re going to stop...” senseless racism and violence from happening again. Ultimately, this song was effective because it brought attention to the nameless victims of the Mississippi River and continued to highlight the discrimination that endures in the South, even today.</p>