

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)	<p>“Mississippi Goddam” by Nina Simone “The High Priestess of Soul”</p> <p>-birth name: Eunice Waymon, 1933-2003</p> <p>-trained classical pianist; denied scholarship at Curtis Institute of Music; moved to NYC to study music</p> <p>-became civil rights activist; stated to Dr. King, “I am not non-violent”</p>
Citation Information (album title, recording studio/label, year written and released)	<u>Nina Simone in Concert</u> , Philips Records, 1964
Historical Context (include significant historical events and influential national and global trends/issues)	<p>-inspired by anger over the bombing of the 16th St. Baptist Church and assassination of Medgar Evers</p> <p>-song captured the culmination of years of frustration of racial injustice, violence, and the slow pace of change</p>
Genre (note the style and musical category)	-claims it is a “show tune” though she says the show has not yet been written; general category is jazz
Social Issue Being Addressed (note the specific topic the author wants to highlight)	<p>-Simone expresses frustration at the hundreds of years of oppression, noting the “hound dogs on my trail” and “school children sitting in jail” as well as the common credo to “Go slow!”</p> <p>-she profiles America’s history of institutionalized racism, lack of opportunity, inequality, etc.</p>
Connection to Modern Times (note the current issues which relate to the social issue presented and the extent to which the issue has changed)	<p>-police brutality (disproportionately affects African-Americans)</p> <p>-continuing discrimination in hiring, housing, voting, etc.</p>
Intended Audience and Purpose (include the intentions of both the composer and the performer)	-serves to both galvanize African-Americans and confront white Americans (especially those in the South)
Tone (note two adjectives with textual evidence)	<p>-angry, defiant, and insistent</p> <p>“And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam,” “Yes, you lied to me all these years,” “Don’t tell me, I tell you,” “Oh, but this whole country is full of lies / You’re all gonna die and die like flies”</p>
Literary and Rhetorical Devices (note techniques like interesting diction, unique syntax structures, metaphor, simile, repetition, alliteration, rhetorical question, etc.)	<p>-rhetorical question: “Can’t you see it?” “Can’t you feel it?” “Where am I going?” “What am I doing?”</p> <p>-repetition: “Desegregation, do it slow / Mass participation, do it slow”</p> <p>-metaphor and simile: “It’s all up in the air,” “You’re all gonna die and die like flies”</p>
Lyrics (Rhetorical Analysis)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Claim (often found in the 	Claim: “And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam,” “Oh, but this whole country is full of lies,” “All I

<p>chorus, this is the main message the writer is trying to convey)</p> <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>want is equality”</p> <p>Evidence: “Hound dogs on my trail,” “School children sitting in jail,” “Washing the windows, do it slow,” “Picking the cotton, do it slow,” “Picket lines, school boycotts / They try to say it’s a communist plot”</p> <p>Commentary: “It’s all in the air / I can’t stand the pressure much longer,” “Lord have mercy on this land of mine / We all gonna get it in due time,” “You keep on saying, ‘Go slow! Go slow!’ / But that’s just the trouble, do it slow”</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>piano, drums</p> <p>quick, urgent tempo; repeating melody</p> <p>-ironically upbeat melody with an homage to cheerful “show tunes” to show the disparity of “go[ing] slow” with the frustration and urgency of Simone’s demands -strong, defiant vocal with occasional vibrato -background vocals provide “call and response” for Simone’s call to action</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>-Simone defiantly asserts her demands for equality by highlighting the legacy of injustice from the past as well as the current events (Sixteenth St. Baptist Church bombing; Medgar Evers assassination) which caused her to speak out. “All I want is my equality / For my sister, my brother, my people, and me”</p>