

# #BLACKLIVESMATTER: MUSIC IN A MOVEMENT

Est. Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: History/Social Studies

Age Range: High School

See the full lesson [here!](#)

Note: this lesson contains some profanity. Discretion advised.


★ *TEACHROCK* ★





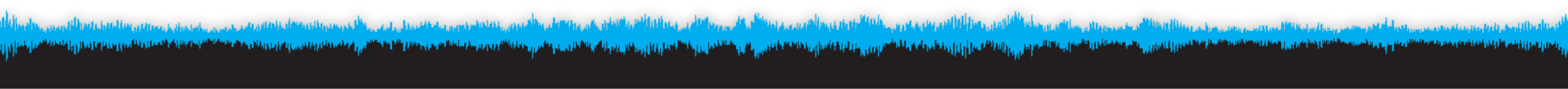
How have musicians responded to the Black Lives Matter movement?

In this lesson, you will:

- Understand the formation and mission of the Black Lives Matter organization and movement
  - Discover how Solange's "F.U.B.U." and Beyoncé's "Formation" celebrate Black culture in America and relate to the Black Lives Matter movement
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Consider or ask a friend:

- What is an anthem?
  - Can you think of a song that defines a historical moment you have experienced in your lifetime, or speaks to your identity? Would you consider that song an anthem? Why or why not?
  - What do you know about the Black Lives Matter movement and organization? When did you first hear about it, and where?
  - What issues do you think Black Lives Matter confronts?
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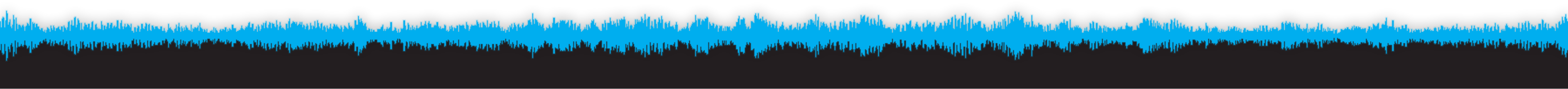
## Handout 1 – Black Lives Matter Document Set

Read **this document set** on Black Lives Matter. Highlight and annotate any information you feel is important.





Consider or ask a friend:

- What is Black Lives Matter?
  - How is it organized? Who are the founders? What inspired its formation?
  - What are the goals of Black Lives Matter?
  - What are the guiding principles of Black Lives Matter? How do these principles connect to their overall goals?
  - Considering the beliefs and mission of the organization, what do you think art inspired by Black Lives Matter might look or sound like?
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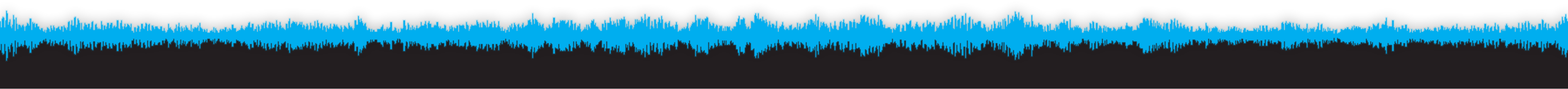
## DISCUSSING “ALRIGHT”

Watch [this video](#) discussing Kendrick Lamar’s song “Alright.”





Consider or ask a friend:

- Have you heard this song before? Where?
  - According to the clip, Rev. Jesse Jackson tried to get demonstrators to sing the song “We Shall Overcome.” What is the historical relevance of this song?
  - According to the clip, why didn’t the song resonate with demonstrators of today?
  - Why do you think “Alright” resonated with the Black Lives Matter movement?
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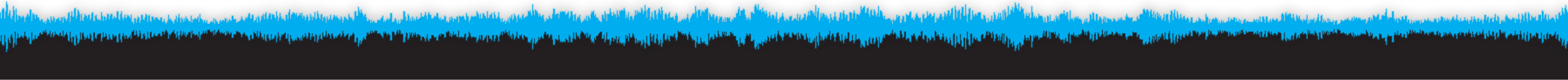
## FORMATION

Watch a **portion of the music video** for Beyoncé's 2016 song, "Formation" from 3:12- 4:47. Take notes on whatever strikes you as important or appealing.







Consider or discuss with a friend:

- What are some of the settings featured in the video? Where do you think the video takes place? What role do the settings play in the overall message of “Formation”?
  - The dancing scenes that take place in a parking lot are shot differently than other scenes in the music video. Describe how this scene is shot differently. Why do you think director Melina Matsoukas made this decision? How do you think this might relate to issues regarding the treatment of Black Americans?
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- In the chorus, Beyoncé calls out “okay ladies, now let’s get in Formation!” Why might Beyoncé specifically focus on Black women? What significance might the act of “Formation” have?
  - At the end of the video Beyoncé sinks into water on top of a New Orleans’ police car? What might this symbolize?
  - How are the police depicted in the music video for “Formation”?
  - What might make “Formation” an anthem?
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In 2016, singer-songwriter Solange released her third album, *A Seat at the Table*, which featured the song “F.U.B.U.”


Watch her perform the song in 2018 at the Sydney Opera House [here](#). (Note: This song contains profanity and the use of a racial slur in the form of reclamation. Please be advised.)







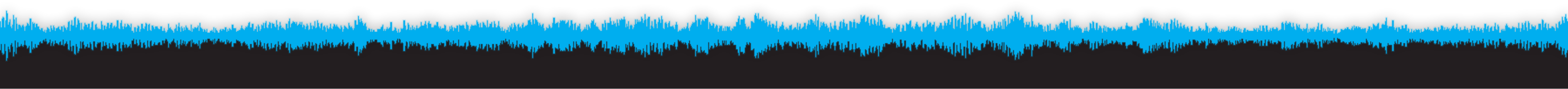
Consider or ask a friend:

- F.U.B.U was a Black-owned clothing line that started in 1992. Its name is an acronym for “For Us, By Us.” Why do you think Solange named the song “F.U.B.U”?
  - Who do you think Solange is addressing with her song? Who is she singing to while performing the song?
  - What do you think the purpose of the song is?
  - At the end of the song, Solange sings “Don’t feel bad if you can’t sing along/just be glad you got the whole wide world.” Is Solange addressing the same audience as she is throughout the rest of the song? What might she mean by this line?
  - What might make this an anthem?
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Choose one of the songs featured in the lesson and using the BLM handout you examined earlier, answer the following questions:

- **CONNECT:** How do the songs/videos connect to the goals and principles of the Black Lives Matter organization?
  - **EXTEND:** How do the songs/videos extend upon the beliefs of Black Lives Matter?
  - **CHALLENGE:** What are the musicians challenging with their work?
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# SUMMARY

- Black artists have found inspiration from the Black Lives Matter movement and created songs around Black pride and empowerment

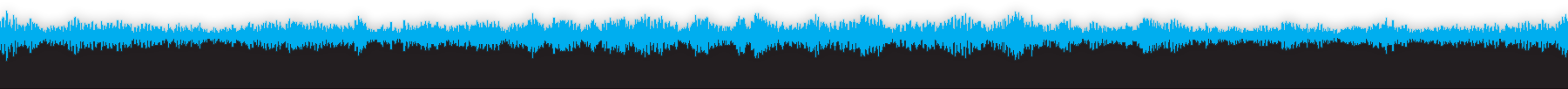




# BE CREATIVE

In 2020, in the midst of the COVID 19 Pandemic, uprisings and large protests broke out across the United States and around the world in response to police killing of George Floyd.

The organization Black Lives Matter demanded and started a petition calling for the defunding of police across the U.S. You can read it [here](#). Research and write a response explaining the motivation behind BLM's call to defund the police, what defunding the police entails, and what it would mean for the Black community.





# BE CREATIVE

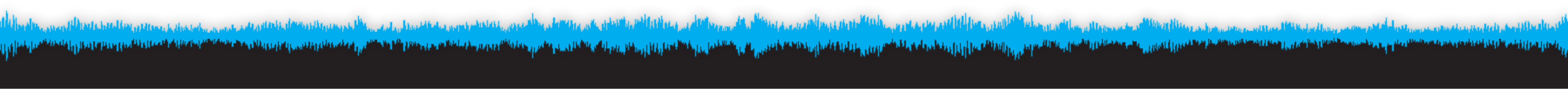
- Find another song that connects to the Black Lives Matter movement. Using the BLM handout, explain how it connects to the movement's history and organization's mission.
- Write about the song you chose as your personal anthem from the motivation activity. Why is it your anthem? What do you love about it?
- Write your own anthem and explain your creative process and inspiration.





# CONNECT

Share it with us! Either you or an adult in your life can share your work with TeachRock on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#), email to [info@teachrock.org](mailto:info@teachrock.org), or Tweet it to [@TeachRock](#)







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