

WOODY GUTHRIE ORGANIZER: TEACHER'S NOTES

Why did Woody Guthrie create and perform music?	
Source	Inferences/Evidence
Station 1	Guthrie created music to advocate for the rights of others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wherever men are fightin’ for their rights, that’s where I’m a gonna be.” • “This machine kills fascists.”
Station 2	Guthrie created music to bring a message to the public about important issues: “One of the mainest ways [of getting the word around] is by singing... If the fight gets hot, the song gets hotter.”
Station 3	Guthrie believed his music could offer a way to advocate for change and help find solutions to the problems people faced: “A folk song is what’s wrong and how to fix it.”
Station 4	Guthrie saw his guitar as his weapon for fighting fascism and defending the rights and equality of people. He wrote “This Machine Kills Fascists” on his guitar.
Video	Guthrie created music to help people. In the video, it was said that he spoke up for the disenfranchised, wanted people to help each other, advocated for social justice, and noted that as long as there are people keeping the common man down the fascists are still with us and there is work to be done.
<p>Woody Guthrie created and performed music...</p> <p>To speak out against social, political, and economic injustice with the hope of inspiring change.</p>	

WOODY GUTHRIE'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL COMMENTARY

What social and political issues did Woody Guthrie highlight in his music?

Use the sentence starter below to help you summarize your analysis of Woody Guthrie's music.

In his song (song title), Woody Guthrie highlights this/these issue(s) (identify the issue(s)) in an effort to create a more just society. The song conveys/accomplishes/does this by (provide your text evidence and reasoning).

In his song "I Ain't Got No Home," Woody Guthrie highlights economic inequality and exploitation in an effort to create a more just society. The song does this by recounting the experiences of migrant workers during the Great Depression. Specifically, Guthrie includes lines such as, "I mined your mines and I gathered in your corn, I been working, mister, since the day I was born," and "Oh the gamblin' man is rich an' the workin' man is poor, and I ain't got no home in this work anymore." With these lyrics, Guthrie acknowledges that in America's economic system, people performing hard labor every day can hardly make a living, while rich people benefit. The economic system gives mine or farm owners, or any large business, the ability to exploit workers for the sake of a larger profit, which creates severe economic inequality.

Social and political issues that Woody Guthrie highlighted with his music include:

- Social inequality
- Economic inequality
- Political inequality
- Abuse of policing power
- Racial oppression and injustice
- Workers' rights
- Exploitation of labor
- Civil rights
- Union organizing
- Redistribution of wealth and land
- Equality
- Fascism
- Poverty/unemployment