

Life Soundtrack: Liner Notes

History Lesson: In the days before digital music, rock-and-roll dinosaurs like your teacher used to go to *record stores* and buy music on 12-inch vinyl disks called *albums*. Those massive, black circles were played on stereo systems that included a *turntable* or *record player*. If a vinyl record got scratched, it would skip when you tried to play it, so records were packaged in a protective paper sleeve called an *album liner*, which was then slipped inside the *album cover*. Album covers usually included the title of the artist and the album, the list of songs on the album, and some kind of cover art or a picture of the artist (like CD covers today, but far bigger). This was all the stuff that potential buyers could see before they purchased the album, when it was still shrink-wrapped in plastic at the music store. Sometimes, however, as an extra to fans that purchased the album, bands would include notes on the protective sleeve inside the album cover: *liner notes*. Such notes often contained a mix of factual and anecdotal material, a discography for the artist, and/or information about the album's theme and how the songs came to be written. Nowadays, if you purchase a CD, you will often get a little booklet inside the jewel case that contains similar information, but most teenagers now don't know how they came to be called *liner notes*. Now you do. And you are going to write the liner notes for your own Life Soundtrack.

Your liner notes are going to be in the form of a series of narrative vignettes that illustrate why you chose the particular songs that you did. For each song, you will need to reflect on the experiences, persons, places, etc., that inspired the selection. Obviously, you will also need to explain who you are as a person and then offer some type of reflection upon the album as a whole.

As you draft your narrative reflection, remember that longer is better in first drafts. You can always cut out repetitive or useless information when you revise. For now, let the stories, experiences, and feelings spill! Your final draft will contain the following elements and will be posted on the class wiki.



Introduction—Explanation of yourself (one paragraph): This is basically a brief autobiography, and it will serve as your introduction. Introductions are important because they give the reader a frame of reference. *Who are you? Where have you been and where are you going in life? What do you think this Life Soundtrack says about you?*

Stories/Reflections: Your first draft of this section will be done on the handouts provided in class. *Song by song, explain the name of the song and artist. Tell the story of the event the song represents and why it is an accurate reflection. Quote the lyrics that are significant to your story but not the entire song. Explain why the style, tone, or mood captures the essence of the experience for you and what the song reveals about the kind of person you are and what you believe is important in life.*

Conclusion—Final remarks and reflection on the soundtrack as a whole (one paragraph): This is your conclusion. *Thank your reader for listening and offer any final reflections upon this project as a whole: What does it tell people about you? Is it truthful? What do you want listeners of your Life Soundtrack to think about? What did you learn about yourself while putting this together?*