**Lyrics to Protest Songs in WAR AND MILITARISM**

***Eve of Destruction***

**P. F. Sloan, recorded by Barry McGuire in 1965**

The eastern world, it is exploding  
Violence flarin', bullets loadin'  
You're old enough to kill, but not for votin'  
You don't believe in war, but what's that gun you're totin'?  
And even the Jordan River has bodies floatin'  
  
But you tell me  
Over and over and over again, my friend  
Ah, you don't believe  
We're on the eve  
of destruction.  
  
Don't you understand what I'm tryin' to say  
Can't you feel the fears I'm feelin' today?  
If the button is pushed, there's no runnin' away  
There'll be no one to save, with the world in a grave  
[Take a look around ya boy, it's bound to scare ya boy]  
  
And you tell me  
Over and over and over again, my friend  
Ah, you don't believe  
We're on the eve  
of destruction.  
  
Yeah, my blood's so mad feels like coagulatin'  
I'm sitting here just contemplatin'  
I can't twist the truth, it knows no regulation.  
Handful of senators don't pass legislation  
And marches alone can't bring integration  
When human respect is disintegratin'  
This whole crazy world is just too frustratin'  
  
And you tell me  
Over and over and over again, my friend  
Ah, you don't believe  
We're on the eve  
of destruction.  
  
Think of all the hate there is in Red China  
Then take a look around to Selma, Alabama  
You may leave here for 4 days in space  
But when you return, it's the same old place  
The poundin' of the drums, the pride and disgrace  
You can bury your dead, but don't leave a trace  
Hate your next-door neighbour, but don't forget to say grace  
And, tell me over and over and over and over again, my friend  
You don't believe  
We're on the eve  
Of destruction  
Mm, no no, you don't believe  
We're on the eve  
of destruction.

Click [**here**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfZVu0alU0I)to see a music video with news clips of the time to illustrate the theme.

**Question:**

1. Make a list of the issues that are raised in this song. Which ones are still of concern today?

***War: What is it Good For?***

**Barrett Strong and Norman Whitfield, recorded by Edwin Starr in 1969**

War, huh yeah  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, oh.  
War huh yeah  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, say it again y'all   
War, huh yeah  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, listen to me

Oh, war, I despise  
'Cause it means destruction of innocent lives  
War means tears to thousands of mothers’ eyes  
When their sons go to fight and lose their lives

I said  
War, huh yeah Good God  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, just say it again   
War, huh yeah  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, listen to me   
War, it ain't nothin' but a heartbreaker  
War, friend only to the undertaker

Oh war, is an enemy to all mankind  
The thought of war blows my mind  
War has caused unrest within the younger generation  
Induction, then destruction. Who wants to die?

War, huh yeah  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, say it say it again  
War, huh yeah  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, listen to me   
War, it ain't nothin' but a heartbreaker  
War, it's got one friend that's the undertaker

Oh, war has shattered many young man's dreams  
Made them disabled, bitter and mean  
Life is much too short and precious to spend fighting wars these days  
War can't give life it can only take it away, ooh

War, huh y’all  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, say it again   
War, huh yeah  
What is it good for?  
Absolutely nothing, listen to me

War, it ain't nothin' but a heartbreaker  
War, it ain't nothin' but a heartbreaker  
War, friend only to the undertaker

Peace love and understanding  
Tell me is there no place for them today  
They say we must fight to keep our freedom  
But Lord knows there's got to be a better way

War, huh y’all  
What is it good for?  
You tell me, say it, say it, say it, say it   
War, Good God, huh yeah  
What is it good for?  
ooooh war !

Click [**here**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mn91L9goKfQ)to see Bruce Springsteen perform this song in 1985.

Click [**here**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01-2pNCZiNk) to see a film of Edwin Starr performing the song in 1969.

Click [**here**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bX7V6FAoTLc)to watch a music video with news clips of the time.

**Question:**

1. For what reasons do the writers of this song oppose war?

***We Didn’t Start the Fire***

**Billy Joel, 1989**

Harry Truman, Doris Day, Red China, Johnnie Ray  
South Pacific, Walter Winchell, Joe DiMaggio2

Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Studebaker, television  
North Korea, South Korea, Marilyn Monroe

Rosenbergs, H-bomb, Sugar Ray, Panmunjom  
Brando, "The King and I" and "The Catcher in the Rye"

Eisenhower, vaccine, England's got a new queen  
Marciano, Liberace, Santayana goodbye

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Joseph Stalin, Malenkov, Nasser and Prokofiev  
Rockefeller, Campanella, Communist Bloc

Roy Cohn, Juan Peron, Toscanini, Dacron  
Dien Bien Phu falls, "Rock Around the Clock"

Einstein, James Dean, Brooklyn's got a winning team  
Davy Crockett, Peter Pan, Elvis Presley, Disneyland

Bardot, Budapest, Alabama, Krushchev  
Princess Grace, "Peyton Place", trouble in the Suez

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Little Rock, Pasternak, Mickey Mantle, Kerouac  
Sputnik, Chou En-Lai, "Bridge on the River Kwai"

Lebanon, Charlse de Gaulle, California baseball  
Starkweather, homicide, children of thalidomide

Buddy Holly, "Ben Hur", space monkey, Mafia  
Hula hoops, Castro, Edsel is a no-go

U2, Syngman Rhee, payola and Kennedy  
Chubby Checker, "Psycho", Belgians in the Congo

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Hemingway, Eichmann, "Stranger in a Strange Land"  
Dylan, Berlin, Bay of Pigs invasion

"Lawrence of Arabia", British Beatlemania  
Ole Miss, John Glenn, Liston beats Patterson

Pope Paul, Malcolm X, British politician sex  
JFK, blown away, what else do I have to say

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Birth control, Ho Chi Minh, Richard Nixon back again  
Moonshot, Woodstock, Watergate, punk rock  
Begin, Reagan, Palestine, terror on the airline  
Ayatollah's in Iran, Russians in Afghanistan

"Wheel of Fortune", Sally Ride, heavy metal, suicide  
Foreign debts, homeless vets, AIDS, crack, Bernie Goetz  
Hypodermics on the shores, China's under martial law  
Rock and roller cola wars, I can't take it anymore

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
But when we are gone  
Will it still burn on, and on, and on, and on

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

We didn't start the fire  
It was always burning  
Since the world's been turning  
We didn't start the fire  
No we didn't light it  
But we tried to fight it

Click [**here**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFTLKWw542g1) to watch the fascinating music video of this song which follows a series of American families attempting to live the American dream of a house and family.

**Questions:**

1. This song summarizes 119 important political or cultural people or events from 1949, the year of Joel’s birth, to 1989. What is Joel’s theme?
2. There have been many parodies of this song. Keep the same message and update it by writing a verse about current issues. Below is a version about events in 2010:

Oil spill in the gulf, heath care, Time Square scare

Blagojevich, Big Ben, Conan’s gone then back again

Wikileaks, iPads, Lindsay’s back in rehab

Bristol’s dancing with the starts, Tiger’s bustin’ up his car

http://www.shmoop.com/we-didnt-start-the-fire/meaning.html

***The Universal Soldier***

**Buffy Sainte Marie, 1964**

He's five feet two and he's six feet four,  
He fights with missiles and with spears,  
He's all of thirty-one and he's only seventeen,  
He's been a soldier for a thousand years.  
  
He's a Catholic, a Hindu, an Atheist, a Jain\*,  
A Buddhist and a Baptist and Jew,  
And he knows he shouldn't kill and he knows he always will   
Kill for me my friend and me for you;  
  
And he's fighting for Canada, he's fighting for France,  
He's fighting for the USA,  
And he's fighting for the Russians and he's fighting for Japan  
And he thinks we'll put an end to war this way.  
  
And he's fighting for democracy, he's fighting for the Reds  
He says it's for the peace of all,  
He's the one who must decide who's to live and who's to die  
And he never sees the writing on the walls.  
  
But without him how would Hitler have condemned him at Dachau\*?  
Without him Caesar would have stood alone.  
He's the one who gives his body as the weapon of the war,  
And without him all this killing can't go on.  
  
He's the universal soldier and he really is to blame,  
his orders come from far away no more,  
They come from him and you and me and brothers can't you see  
This is not the way we put an end to war.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGWsGyNsw00> Click here to view a 4:22 min video in which Buffy Sainte-Marie explains how she came to write this song, and then she performs it.

\*Jain – A follower of Jainism, a religion founded in India in 500 B.C. whose believers are very respectful of the lives of animals.

\*Dachau – notorious Nazi concentration camp

**Question:**

1. What moral statement is this song making? Do you agree with the musician’s point of view? Why or why not?

***The Times They Are A-Changin'***

**Bob Dylan, 1964**

Come gather 'round people  
Wherever you roam  
And admit that the waters  
Around you have grown  
And accept it that soon  
You'll be drenched to the bone.  
If your time to you  
Is worth savin'  
Then you better start swimmin'  
Or you'll sink like a stone  
For the times they are a-changin'.  
  
Come writers and critics  
Who prophesize with your pen  
And keep your eyes wide  
The chance won't come again  
And don't speak too soon  
For the wheel's still in spin  
And there's no tellin' who  
That it's namin'.  
For the loser now  
Will be later to win  
For the times they are a-changin'.  
  
Come senators, congressmen  
Please heed the call  
Don't stand in the doorway  
Don't block up the hall  
For he that gets hurt  
Will be he who has stalled  
There's a battle outside  
And it is ragin'.  
It'll soon shake your windows  
And rattle your walls  
For the times they are a-changin'.

Come mothers and fathers  
Throughout the land  
And don't criticize  
What you can't understand  
Your sons and your daughters  
Are beyond your command  
Your old road is  
Rapidly agin'.  
Please get out of the new one  
If you can't lend your hand  
For the times they are a-changin'.  
  
The line it is drawn  
The curse it is cast  
The slow one now  
Will later be fast  
As the present now  
Will later be past  
The order is  
Rapidly fadin'.  
And the first one now  
Will later be last  
For the times they are a-changin'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7qQ6_RV4VQ> Click on this to view a grainy but effective video of Bob Dylan performing this song in 1964.

<https://vimeo.com/11205275> Click on this to view a music video with this song in the background and newsclips from the time illustrating the relevant issues in 1964.

**Questions:**

1. Whom does Dylan call on to recognize that the times are changing? What does he ask them to do?
2. Dylan speaks of the creation of a new order, but does not list the specific changes that are taking place. What do you think are some of the changes Dylan was demanding in the early 1960s?

***Revolution***

**John Lennon and Paul McCartney, 1968**

You say you want a revolution  
Well, you know  
We all want to change the world  
You tell me that it's evolution  
Well, you know  
We all want to change the world  
But when you talk about destruction  
Don't you know that you can count me out  
Don't you know it's gonna be all right  
All right, all right

You say you got a real solution  
Well, you know  
We'd all love to see the plan  
You ask me for a contribution  
Well, you know  
We're doing what we can  
But when you want money  
For people with minds that hate  
All I can tell is brother you have to wait  
Don't you know it's gonna be all right  
All right, all right  
Ah

Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah...

You say you'll change the constitution  
Well, you know  
We all want to change your head  
You tell me it's the institution  
Well, you know  
You better free your mind instead  
But if you go carrying pictures of chairman Mao  
You ain't going to make it with anyone anyhow  
Don't you know it's gonna be all right  
All right, all right  
All right, all right, all right  
All right, all right, all right

Click [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGLGzRXY5Bw) to see the Beatles perform *Revolution*  
**Question:**

1. Why do you think some people in the peace movement considered this song a betrayal?

***Blowin’ In The Wind***

**Bob Dylan, 1962 Recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016.**

How many roads must a man walk down  
Before you call him a man?  
Yes, ’n’ how many seas must a white dove sail  
Before she sleeps in the sand?  
Yes, ’n’ how many times must the cannonballs fly  
Before they’re forever banned?  
The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind  
The answer is blowin’ in the wind  
  
How many years can a mountain exist  
Before it’s washed to the sea?  
Yes, ’n’ how many years can some people exist  
Before they’re allowed to be free?  
Yes, ’n’ how many times can a man turn his head  
Pretending he just doesn’t see?  
The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind  
The answer is blowin’ in the wind  
  
How many times must a man look up  
Before he can see the sky?  
Yes, ’n’ how many ears must one man have  
Before he can hear people cry?  
Yes, ’n’ how many deaths will it take till he knows  
That too many people have died?  
The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind  
The answer is blowin’ in the wind

Written in 1962, this song was voted by Rolling Stone magazine as the 14th of 500 greatest songs of all time.

Click [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G58XWF6B3AA) to hear Dylan sing this song with the lyrics superimposed on photos of him.

**Questions:**

1. What are the rhetorical questions asked in this song about peace, war and freedom?
2. The refrain "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind" has been described as "impenetrably ambiguous: either the answer is so obvious it is right in your face, or the answer is as intangible as the wind". *Gold, Mick (2002). "Life and Life Only: Dylan at 60". Judas!magazine, April 2002. p. 43.*

Which of these answers makes most sense to you? Why?

***Where Have All The Flowers Gone***

**Pete Seeger, 1955**

Where have all the flowers gone?  
Long time passing  
Where have all the flowers gone?  
Long time ago

Where have all the flowers gone?  
Young girls have picked them everyone  
Oh, when will they ever learn?  
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the young girls gone?  
Long time passing  
Where have all the young girls gone?  
Long time ago

Where have all the young girls gone?  
Gone for husbands everyone  
Oh, when will they ever learn?  
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the husbands gone?  
Long time passing  
Where have all the husbands gone?  
Long time ago

Where have all the husbands gone?  
Gone for soldiers everyone  
Oh, when will they ever learn?  
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the soldiers gone?  
Long time passing  
Where have all the soldiers gone?  
Long time ago

Where have all the soldiers gone?  
Gone to graveyards, everyone  
Oh, when will they ever learn?  
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the graveyards gone?  
Long time passing  
Where have all the graveyards gone?  
Long time ago

Where have all the graveyards gone?  
Gone to flowers, everyone  
Oh, when will they ever learn?  
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Where have all the flowers gone?  
Long time passing  
Where have all the flowers gone?  
Long time ago

Where have all the flowers gone?  
Young girls have picked them everyone  
Oh, when will they ever learn?  
Oh, when will they ever learn?

Click [here](http://performingsongwriter.com/pete-seeger-flowers-gone/) to see an elderly Pete Seeger sing the song that he wrote in 1955, and the audience gradually join in.

**Question:**

1. What is the lesson we are encouraged to learn?