Subject and Title

OBJECTIVES
Students will understand that most popular songs resonate with many people because the songs address common human experiences.

Students will generate their own list of common human experiences.

Students will practice writing song titles and hooks.

PREPARATION
- Make copies of “Check Yes or No” Lyric Sheet and Writing Titles and Hooks Worksheet.
- Locate audio or video version of “Check Yes or No” performed by George Strait.

STANDARDS
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5
Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

FREE WRITE (5 minutes)

DISCUSS HOMEWORK (2 minutes)
Allow students to share the lyrics of their selected songs with a partner, explaining why they labeled each song section and offering textual evidence.

BRAINSTORM (5 minutes)
Share with students that most popular songs are about common human experiences, which are actions, thoughts, or feelings that many people can relate to. Brainstorm a couple examples as a class to make sure all students understand the concept.

For the main brainstorm activity, students will work alone and then in groups of four or five. Review the directions:

In your journal, write down as many common human experiences as you can in one minute. Afterward, you will break into groups to compare your lists. The goal is to come up with experiences you think your classmates are also writing down, so keep that in mind with this exercise. Try not to “overthink” your list, but just go with what first comes to your mind; focus on getting your ideas on paper.

After the one-minute brainstorm, divide the class into groups, and review these directions:

You now have two minutes to compare lists with your group, circling anything on your list that you have in common with another group member’s list.

Allow students to share some of their most common experiences with the whole class.
**ACTIVITY** (30-35 minutes)

1. Share this information:
   - A song **title** often comes from things heard in daily life. This can be a cool phrase, a line in a movie or TV show, or something repeated all the time.
   - Titles may or may not include the subject of the song. For example, the song “Single Ladies,” performed and co-written by Beyoncé, actually celebrates being a single woman, while the song “Roar,” performed and co-written by Katy Perry, is not just about a roar but also about someone who feels strong and powerful, despite challenges.

2. Ask students to share other examples of song titles that may or may not include the subject.

3. Distribute “**Check Yes or No**” Lyric Sheet. Prepare students to listen to the song by doing the following:
   - Discuss the title. What do students think the song will be about? Is the title a phrase that the songwriters likely made up, or is it a phrase that they likely heard somewhere and then wrote a song about it?
   - Ask students to get ready to listen to the way the title shows up in the chorus.

4. Listen to “**Check Yes or No**” and discuss:
   - How is the title used in the song?
   - What makes this title catchy? (There is no correct answer to this question, so responses will vary. Facilitate the discussion to draw out a variety of opinions.)
   - Discuss the relationship between the title, hook, and chorus. (This discussion should reinforce the concept that the title, hook, and chorus are related to one another. The **hook** usually occurs in the chorus, and all or part of the hook usually appears in the title.)

5. Ask students to list the following items in their journals:
   - Three things that you think about a lot.
   - Three objects or ideas that are important to you.
   - The first two happy memories that come to your mind.
   - The first two sad memories that come to your mind.
   - The first funny memory that comes to your mind.

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**TEACHER TIP**

Remind students not to overthink their lists—just go with what first enters their minds. The main goal is to get their ideas down on paper.
6. Distribute the **Writing Titles and Hooks Worksheet** and review the directions:

Look over the lists you just created. You may also look through what you wrote in previous lessons. Pick one or two subjects to practice writing song titles and themes. Then create three possible song titles (which also can serve as hooks) for each subject.

Support students as they practice writing titles and hooks.

**Note:** You may wish to encourage students to pick one of their titles for their final song.

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**TEACHER TIP**

If students get stuck writing titles, remind them that they also write titles for stories and essays in class. Writing a title for a song is a similar task.

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“Check Yes or No” was a #1 hit for George Strait in 1995. The song was written by Dana Oglesby and Danny Wells.

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**HOMEWORK**

Give students the following prompt to complete as a journal entry:

Titles can come from everyday conversations you overhear, a cool or popular phrase, a line in a movie or TV show, or something that your family or friends say all the time. For the rest of the school day and tonight when you go home, use your journal to record anything catchy you hear. Remember to listen in the hallways, the cafeteria, the playground, and on your way home. A good song title can come from anywhere! Write down as many titles as you can. You will share your favorite titles with the class tomorrow.