



# “We Didn’t Start the Fire”

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History  
Grades 9-12



## Introduction

This is an exciting lesson that can be used in any U.S. History class. It would be a great way to introduce the class to students at the beginning of the year as a way to preview events that would be discussed in the class.

## Learning Objectives

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1](#); Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence

## Materials Needed

- Audio – “We Didn’t Start the Fire” by Billy Joel
- Copies of the lyrics for each student
- [Copies of graphic organizer](#) for each student
- Internet access for each pair of students

## Procedure

1. Begin by playing the above listed song
2. Give students a copy of the lyrics and have them listen to the song again. Students will then be given time to conduct research on the internet, in pairs, to determine the relevance of at least five of the events mentioned in the song using the graphic organizer.
3. As students finish their research, they will be asked to discuss what the message is that the author is trying to convey in the song lyrics and how the events they have researched apply to that message.

## Evaluation

For an evaluation of the understanding of the significance of events researched, students will complete the following writing prompt.

**What is the message or theme in this song? What is the author trying to convey? How do the events you have researched support that message? Your paper should include an introductory paragraph with a clear thesis statement about the message/theme of the song lyrics, one paragraph for each event researched, and one concluding paragraph.**