8th grade General Music

Unit III

(1970’s)

Conflict:

The Vietnam War was a long, costly armed conflict that pitted the communist regime of North Vietnam and its southern allies, known as the Viet Cong, against South Vietnam and its principal ally, the United States. The war began in 1954 (though conflict in the region stretched back to the mid-1940s), after the rise to power of Ho Chi Minh and his communist Viet Minh party in North Vietnam, and continued against the backdrop of an intense Cold War between two global superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union.  More than 3 million people (including 58,000 Americans) were killed in the Vietnam War; more than half were Vietnamese civilians. By 1969, at the peak of U.S. involvement in the war, more than 500,000 U.S. military personnel were involved in the Vietnam conflict. Growing opposition to the war in the United States led to bitter divisions among Americans, both before and after President Richard Nixon ordered the withdrawal of U.S. forces in 1973. In 1975, communist forces seized control of Saigon, ending the Vietnam War, and the country was unified as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam the following year.

Politics:

The 1970s were a tumultuous time. In some ways, the decade was a continuation of the 1960s. Women, African Americans, Native Americans, gays and lesbians and other marginalized people continued their fight for equality, and many Americans joined the protest against the ongoing war in Vietnam. In other ways, however, the decade was a repudiation of the 1960s. A “New Right” mobilized in defense of political conservatism and traditional family roles, and the behavior of President Richard Nixon undermined many people’s faith in the good intentions of the federal government. By the end of the decade, these divisions and disappointments had set a tone for public life that many would argue is still with us today.

Fashion:

The early 1970s fashion scene was very similar to 1969, just a bit more flamboyant. It wouldn’t be hyperbole to say that a fashion revolution occurred in the 1970s. Polyester was the material of choice and bright colors were everywhere. Men and women alike were wearing very tight fitting pants and platform shoes. By 1973, most women were wearing high cut boots and low cut pants. Early 1970s fashion was a fun era. It culminated some of the best elements of the 60s and perfected and/or exaggerated them. Some of the best clothing produced in the 1970s perfectly blended the mods with the hippies. Just when it seemed pants couldn’t flare any more (bell bottoms, anyone?), the flare was almost gone. By the late 1970s the pant suit, leisure suit and track suit was what the average person was sporting. Every woman had a cowl neck sweater in her closet and every man had a few striped v-neck velour shirts.

Music:

If ever a musical style defined a decade, Disco was the definition of the 1970s. Although its popularity was relatively short-lived, the genre hosted a great deal of songs and artists that people are still dancing to today and had a large influence on the [**fashions of the decade**](http://www.thepeoplehistory.com/70sclothes.html), too. Van McCoy's "The Hustle" has often been referred to as the definitive disco track and many people say it was the first disco song created. Gloria Gaynor also enjoyed disco popularity with her anthem "I Will Survive." The Bee Gees also helped to define the disco genre with their hit "Jive Talkin'" and their blockbuster "Stayin' Alive" is often synonymous with the disco musical era. The Village People’s "YMCA" and "Macho Man" also helped to add to the popularity of this style of music. This style of music became so popular that well respected artists like Rod Stewart and Diana Ross jumped on the bandwagon by adding Disco elements to their new music or creating their own disco albums. Unfortunately, it did not take long for the public to see disco's silliness and commercialization - something that they had just rebelled against a few years earlier. Its lack of attention to musical significance helped add to its downfall after only a short time of popularity. When disco fell from grace, it fell fast, and many radio stations held public events dedicated to ridding the world of disco music with symbolic album burnings. Youths rebelled against the genre as well and it was not uncommon to see a few music fans sporting "Disco Sucks" T-shirts.

Youtube: The Hustle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84n4rP-RD4A>