**Name: Assignment 2: Song Analysis**

**Historical Context -** [**Draft Dodger Rag**](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11BzumAtacPBKvXp2x7AT5CJ54feBcyZX/view?usp=sharing) **- by Phil Ochs 1964**

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| Phil Ochs was a protest singer in the 1960’s. He was an especially harsh critic of the military-industrial complex. The song Draft Dodger Rag was written and released in 1964.  |

**First Listen:** Draft Dodger Rag: Listen to the song [*Draft Dodger Rag*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11BzumAtacPBKvXp2x7AT5CJ54feBcyZX/view?usp=sharing). The first time you listen to it, jot your thoughts down in the space below. Use the questions below to help you shape your notes and reflections. (remember- this is just a way to get you ready for this song)

* What do you hear?
* What stands out to you?
* What questions do you have about the song you just heard?

**Listen to the song and follow along with the lyrics below.**

Oh, I'm just a typical American boy from a typical American town

I believe in God and Senator Dodd[[1]](#footnote-1) and a-keepin' old Castro down

And when it came my time to serve I knew "better dead than red"

But when I got to my old draft board, buddy, this is what I said:

(CHORUS)

Sarge, I'm only eighteen, I got a ruptured spleen

And I always carry a purse

I got eyes like a bat, and my feet are flat, and my asthma's getting worse

Yes, think of my career, my sweetheart dear, and my poor old invalid aunt

Besides, I ain't no fool, I'm a-goin' to school

And I'm working in a DEE-fense plant

I've got a dislocated disc and a wracked up back

I'm allergic to flowers and bugs

And when the bombshell hits, I get epileptic fits

And I'm addicted to a thousand drugs

I got the weakness woes, I can't touch my toes

I can hardly reach my knees

And if the enemy came close to me

I'd probably start to sneeze

(Chorus)

Ooh, I hate Chou En Lai[[2]](#footnote-2), and I hope he dies,

One thing you gotta see

That someone's gotta go over there

And that someone isn't me

So I wish you well, Sarge, give 'em Hell!

Kill me a thousand or so

And if you ever get a war without blood and gore

I'll be the first to go

(Chorus)

**Some interesting things you need to understand about this song:**

**Analysis Questions:** [Draft Dodger Rag](https://drive.google.com/file/d/11BzumAtacPBKvXp2x7AT5CJ54feBcyZX/view?usp=sharing)

1. *Sourcing:* Who wrote this song? What do you know about the singer’s perspective that might have shaped or biased his perspective?
2. *Contextualization:* When was this song first published? How strong was the Anti-Vietnam War movement at the time this song was published?
3. *Close Reading and Analysis:* Whose point of view is the song written from? How do you know? Cite **evidence** **from the lyrics** to support your claim.
4. *Close Reading and Analysis:* Who do you think the singer is addressing in this song? Who is the intended audience of this song? Cite **evidence** from the song to support your claim.
5. *Close Reading and Analysis:* What is the main point or idea of this song? Use complete sentences to answer this question and EXPLAIN your answer.
6. *Close Reading and Analysis*: Does Phil Ochs use satire or irony to shape his message? Cite evidence from the lyrics to support your claims.
7. *Close Reading:* What do you think Phil Ochs wants listeners to be thinking about when they hear his song?
8. *Corroboration:* What does this song suggest to you about how Americans felt at this time?
9. *Sourcing:* Do you think this song is a reliable source of information about the American public’s response to US involvement in the Vietnam War? Why or why not?
1. Senator Thomas J Dodd of Connecticut was a staunch pro-Vietnam War advocate in Congress. He believed that the US participation in the Vietnam conflict was a key policy move to ensure that the spread of communism would be limited. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. First chairman of the People’s Republic of China - instrumental in the rise of the communist party in China [↑](#footnote-ref-2)