

English/Social Studies Lesson

Lesson and contests created by Marc Hoberman, CEO of Grade Success Education

The theory is that the song has such a powerful message for youth, and we want to help young people delve more deeply into the meaning and importance of the lyrics. The best way to learn is to discuss. With thought provoking questions, we are hopeful that we will engage young students in powerful and impactful discussions.

Title: We Are Strong

Written by Tracey Napoleon

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We Are Strong Study Guide

1. Why did the songwriter choose the word “We” instead of “I”? Would the song take on a different meaning if the title changed to “I am strong”?
2. What does it mean to do “soul searchin”?
3. “Gotta learn from our mistakes.” Given the timeframe of when this song was written, what mistakes might Tracey Napoleon be referencing. What past mistakes in your life do you need to learn from?
4. What is the significance of being “true relating”?
5. “Can’t nobody tell me.” This is a statement that is open to interpretation. What might be the meaning of these words, and how do they speak to you personally?
6. Why is the phrase repeated four times in the Chorus? (We are strong, we are strong, we are strong, we are strong)?
7. If we are “just free living, doing what we can, and go getting, etc....,” how can we also be independent? How does being independent relate to the combined strength of “We” vs. “I”?

8. Is the phrase, “stronger than you know” a warning, or is it challenging others to understand that the strength of many is endless and needs to be respected? Explain your answer.

9. Give an example of the “battle scars” being referred to in the bridge of the song? Are these only physical scars?

10. “We are stronger than we will ever be.” Why is this the *strongest we will ever be*? Why can this statement be seen as a hope for our future?

11. If “we are warriors”, what does that entail? Does this only refer to physical battles? How can we as citizens create change and be “warriors” without physical confrontations? Is that possible?

12. Prepare a speech where **you will explain the meaning** of this song to a younger sibling, family member, or friend.

Common Core Learning Standards Addressed in this lesson

CCS Standards: Reading — Literature

RL.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
RL.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCS Standards: Writing

W.9-10.2.a, f	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
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Contests:

Individual:

Essay contests based on compositions that focus on the meaning of the song and why it is so relevant and needed today more than ever.

Song or Poem Response: Individual students will be asked to write a poem or song that responds to the messages in *We Are Strong*.

Groups:

Song Contests where groups of students/friends submit their VIDEO versions of the song. (We can create a rubric of what we are looking for) Athletic Teams should also be part of these contests. (CLUBS TOO)

Presentation Power: A group of students can create a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the various messages in each verse and chorus. (Again, we can create a rubric of what we are looking for here. Ex. Number of slides, colors, pictures, real-life pictures)

Prizes

Skype session with Ny'a, Students to sing their song as an opening "act" at a Ny'a concert.

SCHOOL:

The winning school performance of *We Are Strong* gets a virtual or LIVE concert from Ny'a at their school!

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Intro: Music machine Ny'a

Chorus: We are strong, we are strong, we are strong, we are strong

1st Verse: We are hardworking, soul searchin, gotta learn from our mistakes. We are strong minded, never blinded, just doing what it takes. We are awesome creatures, true believers, we the comeback kids. We are non-hating, true relating, that's who we are.

Chorus: We are strong, we are strong, we are strong, we are strong

2nd Verse: We are motivated, we self-made it, not fearing what's ahead. (fearing what's ahead) We are always giving, just free living, doing what we can. We are real determined, go getting, trying to make it through. We are optimistic, independent that's who we are.

Chorus: We are strong, (yes we are) we are strong (so very strong) we are strong (stronger than you know) we are strong. We are strong (can't nobody tell me) we are strong (can't nobody tell me) we are strong (stronger) we are strong (stronger than we'll ever be)

Bridge: I know you been through some hard times, and I know you got your battle scars. I'm here to tell you its alright cause we are warriors. I know you been through some hard times, and I know you got your battle scars. Everything gonna be alright cause we are warriors.

Chorus: We are strong, we are strong, (stronger stronger) we are strong, (stronger than you know) we are strong(yes we are). Don't let nobody tell you different don't let nobody hold you down. Stronger (stronger than we'll ever be) Strong strong strong, strong strong strong, strong strong strong strong strong strong