Explicating and Analyzing a Song

1. **Listen to the song and read the Lyrics**
   - What’s the overall tone? (in literary terms this means the attitude of the song/singer) “Solemn or playful, arrogant or prayerful, angry or loving”
   - What is the MEANING of the Song??? What does the band/singer want you to know/do/think/feel???
   - How does the title of the song relate?

2. **Listen to the Music**
   - What is the overall tone of the music??
   - Listen to the MUSIC and identify CHANGES.
   - Where does the music speed up, slow down. Why?
   - Where does the music get louder, softer? Why?
   - Is there whispering? Vibrations? Scratching? Something unusual?
   - What happens during the instrument solos?
   - Identify the specific instruments and notice if there is anything unusual. Example: as bands have discovered anime, new instruments have been added in. Or you might suddenly see a horn or violin in a Rock band. Why? What does this add?

3. **Album/CD the song is on?**
   - What is the overall theme of the album?
   - How does this song fit into the overall album – is it first, last, ???

4. **Bands tend to have themes or areas of interest**
   - Examples: Martina McBride sings many songs about the abuse of women as well as the empowerment of women.
   - Bob Marley?
   - Dave Matthews?
   - Tupac?
   - U2?
   - Rage against the Machine?
   - Dixie Chicks?
5. **Biographical information**
   - What does the band’s name mean?
   - Does the song itself support the band’s overall theme?
   - Time/place/genre of band
   - What was going on in the band/singer’s life during the time this album is released?

6. **Historical Information**
   What was going on in the country when the album was released?

7. **Reading the Reviews**
   - Read over material about the Band/CD and underline/highlight all quotes, ideas, facts, that might support your ideas about the music/lyrics and what they MEAN. The divorce, drug problem, death of a friend, birth of a child, etc.
   - In particular, look for text that describe the “surreal, ominous strain” (“30 Seconds”) or the “fervor and precision of a seasoned executioner on a killing spree” (“Children”). In other words, if you don’t know anything about music, use the reviewer’s vocabulary.

**Thesis Formula – Just a sample!! There are many ways to write a thesis.**

Fill in the blanks: Band’s name and “song name” from the cd ____________________, demonstrates/shows/reveals ____________________________ with/because/by ________, __________, __________.