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Close Reading & Rhetorical Analysis: “We Don’t Talk About Bruno”

Disney’s hit film “Encanto” delivered a number of songs that got stuck in our heads and that actually made their way into mainstream media. At its height, “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” was number one on the charts for multiple weeks – shining a spotlight on its global impact, its catchiness, and its powerful use of language.

That being said, we’re going to take a deeper dive into the lyrics to gain a better understanding of the song’s **argument**. You will begin by closely reading each of the excerpted lyrics below (left column), considering the guiding questions (middle column), and capturing all of your insights (right column). Remember to *always* consider the nuanced effect that every word has on the meaning of a sentence... and *always* consider who is saying it, who they’re saying it to, and what they’re hoping to accomplish by saying it. That thought process is at the heart of rhetorical analysis! (***Note: The color version of this document uses different colors for different characters!***)

Excerpted Lyrics	Guiding Questions	Your Notes & Analysis
We don't talk about Bruno, no, no, no!	The argument begins with these words, spoken by Pepa Madrigal. (In the film, Pepa is Bruno’s sister... Felix’s wife... Mirabel’s aunt...) She opens with a line that has been spoken multiple times throughout the film, that is echoed in the title of the song, and that enables any outsider to wonder or infer about the “situation” regarding Bruno. Analyze this choice thoroughly. Guiding questions include: • Why does she open with this particular line? • What might someone guess is the reason why they “don’t talk about” a member of the immediate family? From a rhetorical perspective, why might the speaker have deliberately kept the story behind this a mystery? What’s the intended effect? • Why does she use the word “we”...? Who is she referring to when she says “we”...? What is <i>implied</i> by this word? • Why does she use the word “don’t”...? Why not use words like “shouldn’t,” “can’t,” “won’t,” or “never”...? • Why does she repeat the word “no” three times? What’s the intended effect?	
We don't talk about Bruno... but	Pepa repeats the line a second time. Why the repetition? What is the effect? Although the line is repeated, Pepa includes a qualifier; she adds the word “but.” What is interesting (or unexpected, or paradoxical, or ironic) about this particular phrase? In other words, the song is literally titled “we don’t talk about Bruno,” but that’s <i>all</i> they’re about to talk about. It’s <u>purposeful</u> – but why?	

It was my wedding day	Pepa begins “talking about Bruno” by talking about herself. This line places her at the center – she says “it was <u>my</u> wedding day.” How does that inform your understanding of Pepa in the context of the other people involved in this argument? (Her relationship with co-speakers – like her husband? Her relationship with Bruno, who she is singing about? Her relationship with Mirabel, who she is directly speaking to and might be considered her target audience?)	
It was our wedding day	Felix, Pepa’s husband, interjects. He repeats her sentence, but changes the word “my” to “our.” What is the rhetorical effect? How might Felix’s “correction” of Pepa be interpreted? How might the difference in their sentences help to inform our understanding of either individual? What might it reveal about their relationship? Further – it’s important to note that the introduction of a second speaker (a co-speaker) can be considered an interesting rhetorical device. Normally, if a person is delivering an argument like a speech, we imagine a single person at a podium. Here, we have Pepa delivering an argument, but suddenly Felix joins in. What effect might bringing <i>two</i> speakers into the argument have? When would you <i>ever</i> purposefully bring in a second speaker when crafting an argument? What might Felix’s role be, from a rhetorical standpoint, if the first thing he did is correct Pepa’s explanation?	
We were getting ready, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky	Pepa seems to take the cue from Felix and says “<u>we</u> were getting ready” instead of “<u>I</u> was getting ready.” Why is this subtle shift important? What might it reveal about her relationship with Felix? About how Felix is influencing her language and the general argument? “There wasn’t a cloud in the sky” might be considered a common phrase, and even an idiomatic expression. (People say often use the phrase: “not a cloud in the sky.”) Why does she use these words, instead of something more unique? Why does she use words that have the double-meaning of not having a worry or a care? Do these words normally foreshadow something problematic – and if not, why do they foreshadow something problematic in this argument?	

No clouds allowed in the sky	Felix echoes Pepa again, but with a nuanced change in the line. Often times, when we do a close reading, we consider alternative ways of saying things. For example, we might consider why Pepa said “there wasn’t a cloud in the sky” instead of “no clouds allowed in the sky.” In this argument, we actually get to consider something even more complex – which is, why does Pepa say it one way, and why does Felix “correct” Pepa? Or at least, why does Felix offer a slightly different perspective? How does the meaning change in Felix’s version? Felix uses the word “allowed.” What might he mean by this? Who is allowed to make a determination as grand as not allowing clouds in the sky? (Does he actually mean something different than “allowed”...? Or is he purposefully portraying a feeling in this line?)	
Bruno walks in with a mischievous grin	Pepa continues the story, and introduces us to Bruno for the first time. She carefully chooses these words, and limits the description. What is conveyed here? Why are these particular words used, as opposed to some other possibilities?	
Thunder!	Felix interjects again, establishing a sort of back-and-forth with Pepa. (She speaks a line, and then he does – although it’s still clear that she is the primary speaker, and he is simply interjecting, correcting, sharing a second perspective, or adding details.) If you were to consider Felix a rhetorical device, what would his purpose be? (Again, consider what Felix is doing for Pepa’s argument? In what ways is he impacting it? Is he compromising the argument, or is he somehow strengthening it?) Why does Felix shout the word “thunder”...? How is this rhetorically different from interjecting and saying something more formal, or in a complete sentence?	
You telling this story, or am I?	Instead of continuing with the argument as she has, Pepa now responds directly to Felix by addressing his interjections. What does this reveal about their relationship? How does this impact the overall argument, if at all? Go on to analyze Pepa’s specific word choice, too. (She calls Felix “you” instead of something more endearing like, “my love.” She calls it a “story” instead of something more formal, like an “account.” What do these nuances reveal?)	

I'm sorry, mi vida, go on	Felix responds to Pepa's confrontation with an apology, before referring to her as "mi vida." ("Mi vida" translates to English as "my life," but it's similar to the English idiomatic expression of lovingly referring to someone as "my everything.") How does this line, in combination with the previous line, influence our understanding of these two speakers? And how does THAT – our understanding of these two speakers – influence the overarching argument? (Are they <i>credible</i> speakers? Do they make each other more or less credible? Do they, in tandem, make the overarching argument – and the claims about Bruno – more or less credible?)	
Bruno says, "It looks like rain"	Pepa continues with the second glimpse of Bruno that we are given in the argument. In this case, she offers specific dialogue – the exact words that Bruno said. Why does she use specific dialogue here? How does that rhetorical device influence the argument? (Does this make her more or less credible? How might dialogue function as a device in arguments like this one?)	
Why did he tell us?	Felix extends the argumentative "work" that Pepa began in the last line by asking the rhetorical question, "Why did he tell us?" First, consider <u>what it is that Pepa and Felix are trying to convince their audience (Mirabel) of.</u> In other words – what is the message that they're trying to convey to her? Then, consider how the rhetorical devices in line and the previous line are working to serve that purpose. (Why does Felix pose this as a question instead of stating something more direct like, "Bruno told us that to cause problems"...? What is Felix hoping will happen in your head, or in Mirabel's head, when he poses this rhetorical question?)	
In doing so, he floods my brain	Pepa elaborates on the effects of Bruno's dialogue. She structures this sentence in a manner that places the intention, and blame, with Bruno. (She plainly states that his actions "flooded her brain.") How else might she have phrased this? And why might she have said it <i>this</i> way, as opposed to any of the alternatives? (It's important to note that in the film, Pepa is able to control the weather with her emotions – hence the alleged connection between Bruno's words and the corresponding stormy weather.)	

Abuela, get the umbrellas	Similar to shouting “thunder,” Felix offers a peripheral detail to support Pepa’s story. Why? (How might this impact credibility, authority, and the perception of truth in this argument?)	
Married in a hurricane	Conversely, rather than to provide details, Pepa offers four words (“married in a hurricane”) and expects her audience to fill in all the gaps. Think about what it is that we <i>know</i> (it was their wedding day, Bruno arrived and said a few words...) and think about what Pepa is implying, or rather, what she is trying to force her audience to <i>assume</i> . When might the tactic of leaving gaps for the audience to fill in for themselves an effective rhetorical device? (When is it more effective to bring in heaps specific details?) Is Pepa’s device working here?	
What a joyous day... but anyway We don't talk about Bruno, no, no, no! We don't talk about Bruno!	Felix continues in the “rhythm” of interjecting after each of Pepa’s lines. How would you characterize the manner in which he qualifies her line here? (Is he “correcting” her? Or, is he doing something else?) How does this line contribute to the overarching argument? Why is it important to note that Felix claims that in spite of the rain (which is apparently being blamed on Bruno), the wedding was a “joyous day”...? How does this contribute to the perception of Bruno that Pepa and Felix are working through? What is it that Pepa and Felix are trying to accomplish here? Are they trying to portray a specific characterization of Bruno? Are they trying to vilify him? Are they exploring these memories to better understand Bruno themselves? What’s their motive here? What is their purpose?	
Hey! Grew to live in fear of Bruno stuttering or stumbling	Dolores suddenly enters the argument as an additional speaker, addressing the same target audience (Mirabel). (Dolores is Pepa and Felix’s oldest daughter.) Consider the use of additional speakers again; what is the intentional impact of offering <i>three</i> speakers (or, put differently, <i>three different “testimonials”</i>) <i>might be</i>? What does Dolores contribute to the argument in this opening line? What is objective and about Bruno, and what is subjective / part of her own perceived experience? What do we learn? Why does she use the specific words that she does (fear, stuttering, stumbling)?	

I could always hear him sort of muttering and mumbling	Continue the analysis you began above. How do the specific attributes of Bruno's that Dolores offers (stuttering, stumbling, muttering, mumbling) contribute to the argument? In what way is the context shaping the target audience's application and understanding of these attributes? (In other words, if your friend started suddenly "stuttering or stumbling," you might be immediately concerned for their well-being. But something different is happening in the case of Bruno. Why is that so? How has the language in this argument <i>caused</i> a different response?)	
I associate him with the sound of falling sand, ch-ch-ch	Aside from other details in the film that might associate Bruno with sand, what other connotations might exist when considering this particular description? (Do you associate <i>anything</i> with the sound of falling sand? Is it unique? Mysterious? Ambiguous? She could have said she associated Bruno with <i>anything</i>, and yet she chose "falling sand" in order to evoke a particular response from the audience. <u>Why?</u>) Dolores utilizes a device known as onomatopoeia, which is the use of a word that sounds like the noise it describes. ("Ch-ch-ch" as the sound of falling sand.) Why does Dolores incorporate this device? What does it do for her argument? Does it make her or less credible? Does it strengthen or diminish her authority? How has the argument evolved, even if in a small and nuanced way, as a result?	
It's a heavy lift, with a gift so humbling	Dolores offers two abstract phrases here to offer more insight into the audience's understanding of Bruno. They aren't very direct or very specific, but they do seem to offer more positivity in Bruno's favor than previous details have. Take some time here to each phrase. What does it mean for something to <i>symbolically</i> be a "heavy lift"...? (What is the "it" that's heavy? What does it mean to be "heavy," and in what way is it "heavy"...? Who is it heavy for?) What does it mean for something (like a gift, or an experience) to be "humbling"...? How might the audience's understanding of this particular line better inform each of the lines preceding it?	

Always left Abuela and the family fumbling	Dolores's next line becomes a bit less abstract in that she specifically states that Bruno's "gift" (or, for the sake of analyzing this argument, Bruno's actions) had a neutral or problematic effect on his family. As was the case with the previous line, consider how this information might reshape the claims made earlier in the argument. Why does Dolores use the word "always"...? Why does she single out "Abuela" (Dolores and Mirabel's grandmother, Bruno's mother) as someone who was always confounded by Bruno's actions? Why does she follow that with the sweeping addition of the entire "family"...? (Why not just "Abuela," or just "the family," or just specific members of the family?) Why does Dolores use the word "fumbling" instead of so many other possibilities (such as confounded, confused, angry, suffering, hurt, etc.)?	
Grappling with prophecies they couldn't understand	In this line, Dolores connects some of the dots for her audience. She clarifies that Bruno had been offering "prophecies" that his mother (their Abuela) and family could not comprehend, and simply did not know how to deal with. With that in mind, consider what Dolores's role in this argument has been. Is she here to strengthen the case made by Pepa and Felix? Is she here to redeem Bruno? Is she here to create additional confusion and ambiguity? What is Dolores's <i>message</i>, and what is her <i>purpose</i>?	
Do you understand?	Dolores wraps up by checking in with the audience. She asks Mirabel, "Do you understand?" Why is this deliberate connection to her target audience important? How does a line like this strengthen or weaken Dolores as a speaker? What's the intended effect? In this line, Dolores repeats the final word of the previous sentence ("understand"). She also creates an opportunity for contrast – "<i>they</i> couldn't understand... do <i>you</i> understand?" What's the effect of this juxtaposition? What might Dolores be trying to highlight, as far as a similarity or difference between her target audience (Mirabel) and their family?	
A seven-foot frame	Camilo is the fourth speaker to join in. (He is Dolores's younger brother.) How is his opening line much different than Dolores's? What do his words <u>purposefully</u> do here?	

Rats along his back	Camilo extends on what feels might be hyperbole (or exaggeration) in the first line. He adds a detail about rats along Bruno's back. From a rhetorical standpoint, there is much to consider here. • What's the effect of bringing in a fourth speaker? (Are there diminishing returns, with each additional speaker that is brought in? Do two speakers assert authority, while four begin to suggest something else – like “mob mentality” or a “rumor mill”...?) • Camilo's language is intentionally darker and scarier, and if taken literally, it casts Bruno in a terrifying light. But what effect is Camilo <i>actually</i> having on the argument? Is he truly leading the audience to believe that Bruno is huge and covered with rats? (Is it trying to instigate trouble or inspire fear? If so, is he doing this to be malicious or is he being playful? • Or, is Camilo's language actually having the <i>opposite</i> effect? Is Camilo offering obvious exaggerations to highlight the mystery and uncertainty about Bruno? To showcase the fact that these are all just rumors? • What is Camilo's authority or credibility in this argument? (Remember, he is Dolores's younger brother... Pepa and Felix are his parents, too.) Does he impact the authority or credibility of Dolores in any way? Of Pepa and Felix? • How might these lines have a different impact if they were spoken by Dolores? Or by Pepa or Felix? • Closely read and analyze the specific words that Camilo chose to use. Why “rats” and not “mice”...? What's the difference? How does the connotation of either impact the audience (and the argument) differently? • In stating that the rates are “along his back,” Camilo offers a very unique visual representation. It is vivid, memorable, and probably unlike anything the speaker has ever seen. (Have you ever seen someone with “rats along their back”...?) Why is this <u>deliberate</u>? What's the intended effect of the language in this phrase?	
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When he calls your name it all fades to black	Extend your analysis of the previous line. Is this a continuation of what you might expect from Camilo's argument or "testimonial"...? Analyze Camilo's specific word choice here. What is implied by the phrase, "when he calls your name"...? (Why "when" and not "if"...? Why "calls" and not "says"...?) What do these words, and the general phrasing in this line, subtly suggest?	
Yeah, he sees your dreams and feasts on your screams	Again, continue to extend your analysis of the details Camilo has offered. Is this more of the same? Has his language evolved or escalated in some way? Does this line impact your understanding of Camilo's role in this argument? (Again, what is Camilo's <i>purpose</i>?)	
We don't talk about Bruno, no, no, no! We don't talk about Bruno	Camilo's words culminate with the same recurring line that has been repeated time and time again. He (and <u>they</u>) continue to talk about Bruno, while simultaneously saying, "we don't talk about Bruno." How might this line contribute to the argument in a different way now than it did in the beginning? (Does it still ironic, paradoxical, goofy, and somewhat lighthearted? Or does the <u>hypocrisy</u> of the line erode the authority or credibility of the speakers?)	
He told me my fish would die -- the next day: dead!	The accounts shared by Pepa, Felix, Dolores, and Camilo are followed by a sudden series of quick testimonials. Individuals who are otherwise unknown (not major characters in the film, not well known to Mirabel) pop up to share brief anecdotes about their negative experiences with Bruno. <u>Why</u>? What's the intended effect of a rhetorical device such as this one: brief testimonials in rapid succession?	
He told me I'd grow a gut! And just like he said...	With the second testimonial (spoken, again, by a different person), a trend becomes apparent. Not only are these all negative accounts, but they all begin with "<u>He</u>," and they position Bruno as separate from the speaker ("me"). In this case, both testimonials open the same exact way: "He told me..." Why is this significant? What is the language intentionally doing there?	
He said that all my hair would disappear, now look at my head	It also becomes apparent that the three brief testimonials all report "prophecies" that are common (and often inevitable) occurrences in life. How does this impact their effectiveness?	

Your fate is sealed when your prophecy is read!	The crowd joins in claiming that “your fate is sealed when your prophecy is read” – which implies that Bruno is at fault for the various problematic fates of these individuals. But this is a great example of a logical fallacy – and you can unpack it without actually naming a specific fallacy. Instead, simply consider where the flaws in the logic are. (Is their fate sealed <u>when</u> their prophecy is read – or, was it sealed all along? Is Bruno’s prophesizing truly the <u>cause</u> here, or is his presence insignificant? Is he “just the messenger”...? Or, is it possible that there is a <u>reverse</u> relationship at work here – i.e. perhaps Bruno can read their prophecies, but upon knowing their tentative fates, those fates can be changed? Could these be self-fulfilling prophecies, rather than prophecies that are sealed-by-fate?) In summary, what do we <u>know</u> to be true, and where is the logic in this claim <u>flawed</u>?	
He told me that the life of my dreams would be promised, and someday be mine. He told me that my power would grow, like the grapes that thrive on the vine.	Isabela (Mirabel’s sister) enters the argument and offers evidence that is quite contrary to what everyone else in the song as suggested. In a sense, Isabela’s contribution functions almost like a counterargument in that it appears near the end of the argument and it offers a contradictory thought that might be in the reader’s mind (i.e. “<i>Are <u>all</u> of Bruno’s prophecies bad news?</i>”). What effect do these lines have on the overarching argument? On the speaker’s evolving understanding of the message? Why might this line have been reserved for the end of the argument? (What is its impact <i>here</i>, and how might that impact be different if this line were shared near the beginning of the argument?) In order for counterarguments to be effective, the counterclaims that are raised must be <u>refuted</u>. (A good argument doesn’t introduce a counterargument just poke a hole in itself; rather, it introduce a counterclaim with the intention of <u>shutting that counterclaim down</u>. The whole point is to make the argument stronger offering a contrary perspective, and then disproving it.) What might have to happen next in order for this counterargument to propel the argument that Bruno is “dangerous” or a “bad guy”...? How would the argument be affected if it ended here, without a refutation?	

He told me that the man of my dreams would be just out of reach Betrothed to another	Dolores offers this rebuttal to Isabela's line. Does it "refute" the counterclaim? Does it make the counterargument more or less effective? Why are these two lines (Dolores and Isabela) placed side-by-side, just as the argument is drawing to its close? What's their intended effect?	
Don't talk about Bruno, no! Why did I talk about Bruno? Not a word about Bruno! I never should've brought up Bruno!	The argument ends with additional repetition of the now iconic line, "Don't walk about Bruno." It is rephrased in several different ways, each of which implies a slightly different meaning. Begin by analyzing and unpacking the different variations. Several of these lines are actually spoken by Mirabel, who has been the audience the entire time. She says, "Why did I ask about Bruno?" and "I never should've brought up Bruno!" What does this reveal about the impact of this argument? (What might this argument's purpose have been all along? Was it effective?)	

Name _____

Close Reading & Rhetorical Analysis: “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” – Part 2

Now that you’ve conducted a close reading of “We Don’t Talk About Bruno,” it’s time to consider the song from another angle. Each time a different speaker enters the song and takes the lead can be considered a **different argument** – and, in that sense, “Don’t Talk About Bruno” might actually be considered a compilation of arguments, rather than one cohesive argument.

Use the organizer below to **compare and contrast** the three arguments offered by Pepa & Felix, Dolores, and Camilo. Be sure to annotate them, jot your ideas in the blank spaces, and be prepared to share your insights!

Additionally, use these three questions to guide your comparative analysis:

1. What kind of **authority** or **credibility** do each of these speakers bring to the argument? In what ways might their authority be “automatic”...? In what ways might they purposefully strive to foster more of it?
2. How do the speakers’ **messages** vary from one another? (Consider them in isolation. What are they actually “saying” in their arguments?)
3. How do the speakers’ **purposes** vary from one another? (Again, consider them in isolation. What is each speaker actually hoping to accomplish by saying these words? What’s their motive? What’s their purpose?)

Pepa & Felix	Dolores	Camilo
We don't talk about Bruno, no, no, no! We don't talk about Bruno... but It was my wedding day It was our wedding day We were getting ready, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky No clouds allowed in the sky Bruno walks in with a mischievous grin... Thunder! You telling this story, or am I? I'm sorry, mi vida, go on Bruno says, "It looks like rain" Why did he tell us? In doing so, he floods my brain Abuela, get the umbrellas Married in a hurricane What a joyous day... but anyway We don't talk about Bruno, no, no, no! We don't talk about Bruno!	Hey! Grew to live in fear of Bruno stuttering or stumbling I could always hear him sort of muttering and mumbling I associate him with the sound of falling sand, ch-ch-ch It's a heavy lift, with a gift so humbling Always left Abuela and the family fumbling Grappling with prophecies they couldn't understand Do you understand?	A seven-foot frame Rats along his back When he calls your name It all fades to black Yeah, he sees your dreams And feasts on your screams We don't talk about Bruno

Name _____

Close Reading & Rhetorical Analysis: “Surface Pressure”

Disney’s “Encanto” is widely known for its smash hit song, “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” – but the film is packed with plenty of other songs (and arguments) that are masterfully crafted and worthy of analysis.

Below, you’ll find excerpted lyrics from the song “Surface Pressure.” Closely read and analyze the lyrics, and as you do, continuously consider the following questions:

- **Who is the speaker?** (What do I know about her? How do I know what I know? What was clearly spelled out for me, and what have I inferred? What else can I infer, if I read more deeply into these words?)
- **Who is the speaker speaking to?** (Is it another person? Is it a general audience? Is this a monologue – and is she speaking to herself? Always use textual evidence to guide your thinking here!)
- **What is the speaker’s message?** (What is she actually saying here? Read through the metaphors, the symbolism, the idioms, and get to the speaker’s meaning. What is it that she’s conveying in this argument?)
- **How is the speaker conveying that message?** (Is she stating it plainly – and if so, why? Is she using symbolism – and if so, why? Is she using monologue as a rhetorical device – and if so, why? Identify all of the rhetorical devices that are purposefully at work in this argument, consider why the speaker might have purposefully chosen them, and analyze their impact of the overarching argument.)
- **What is the speaker’s purpose?** (Don’t confuse “purpose” with “message.” Once you know what she’s saying, take some time to better understand why she’s saying it. What is the speaker hoping to accomplish? What is her motivation? What might she be hoping this song “does”...?)

Use the graphic organizer below to guide your analysis.

- In the left column, you’ll find excerpted lyrics to help you pace your analysis and closely read every word.
- In the middle column, you’ll find a space for your own guiding questions. Develop questions as you go, similar to those that were modeled for you when analyzing “We Don’t Talk About Bruno.”
- In the right column, capture your analysis, your insights, and your ideas!

Excerpted Lyrics	Guiding Questions	Notes & Analysis
I'm the strong one, I'm not nervous		
I'm as tough as the crust of the Earth is		
I move mountains, I move churches		
And I glow, 'cause I know what my worth is		
I don't ask how hard the work is		

Got a rough indestructible surface		
Diamonds and platinum, I find 'em, I flatten 'em		
I take what I'm handed, I break what's demanded, but		
Under the surface		
I feel berserk as a tightrope walker in a three-ring circus		
Under the surface Was Hercules ever like, "Yo, I don't wanna fight Cerberus?"		
Under the surface I'm pretty sure I'm worthless if I can't be of service		
A flaw or a crack		
The straw in the stack That breaks the camel's back		
What breaks the camel's back?		
It's pressure, like a drip, drip, drip that'll never stop		
Pressure that'll tip, tip, tip 'til you just go pop		
Give it to your sister, your sister's older		

Give her all the heavy things we can't shoulder		
Who am I if I can't run with the ball?		
If I fall to Pressure like a grip, grip, grip, and it won't let go		
Pressure like a tick, tick, tick 'til it's ready to blow		
Give it to your sister, your sister's stronger		
See if she can hang on a little longer		
Who am I if I can't carry it all?		
If I falter		
Under the surface		
I hide my nerves, and it worsens, I worry something is gonna hurt us		
Under the surface, the ship doesn't swerve as it heard how big the iceberg is		
Under the surface, I think about my purpose, can I somehow preserve this?		
Line up the dominoes A light wind blows You try to stop it tumbling But on and on it goes		

But wait, if I could shake the crushing weight of expectations		
Would that free some room up for joy or relaxation, or simple pleasure?		
Instead, we measure this growing pressure, keeps growing, keep going		
Give it to your sister, it doesn't hurt, and see if she can handle every family burden		
Watch as she buckles and bends but never breaks		
No mistakes		
Just pressure like a grip, grip, grip, and it won't let go		
Give it to your sister and never wonder if the same pressure would've pulled you under		
Who am I if I don't have what it takes?		
No cracks, no breaks, No mistakes, no pressure		

Name _____

Compare & Contrast: “Surface Pressure”

Now that you’ve closely read and analyzed “Surface Pressure,” you’re ready to do a **comparative rhetorical analysis**. To get started, select a second song of your choice to compare and contrast with “Surface Pressure.” The song you choose should deal with similar themes (stress, pressure, etc.). If you’re unsure where to begin, here are a few *awesome* possibilities:

- “Breathin” by Ariana Grande
- “Help!” by The Beatles
- “Waving Through a Window” from Dear Evan Hansen
- “Under Pressure” by David Bowie and Queen

Once you’ve selected the song, begin your comparative analysis. You should:

- Do a close reading and rhetorical analysis of the song you chose (annotate it, write all over it!)
- Place the lyrics side-by-side as you explore similarities and differences
- Consider similarities and difference regarding the broadest elements (such as speaker, audience, message, and purpose, using the graphic organizer below)

Compare and Contrast These Elements:	“Surface Pressure”	Text of Your Choice
Speaker		
Target Audience		
Message		
Purpose		
Rhetorical Devices Used		
Anything Else		

Name _____

Compare & Contrast Essay: “Surface Pressure”

After comparing and contrasting “Surface Pressure” with another song of your choice, compose an essay in which you unpack the rhetorical similarities and differences across both arguments. Use the graphic organizer that you developed as a guide to organize your thoughts as you write this essay. Be sure to include an introduction, to thoughtfully organize your body paragraphs in a manner that is logical and cogent, and to share any insights that you’ve gleaned by synthesizing both arguments in your conclusion.

Prewriting

Additional Notes

Rough Draft Due _____ Final Draft Due _____ Page Requirement _____