

# Analyzing “2112” by Rush and Ayn Rand’s *Anthem*

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Lee, Geddy, Alex Lifeson, and Neil Peart. “2112.” Rush. 2112.

## Lesson Summary

**Pre-Seminar:** Students will first read the lyrics of the song “2112” by Rush and answer the pre-seminar questions for homework. Responding to the questions will prepare the students to consider the lyrics in a thoughtful way and to draw on their prior knowledge and personal experiences of the song’s theme. As they enter the class the next day, the song will be playing.

**Interpretation:** Students will complete a text rendering activity to further improve their interpretive thinking and encourage them to read the lyrics again more carefully and with greater sensitivity to significant details. Students will share their responses to the homework questions and to the text rendering activity.

**Post-Seminar:** Students will reflect on their interpretation of the song, elaborating and developing ideas raised in the seminar. They will also debrief their own and general participation in the seminar activity.

**Homework:** Read Chapter 1 of *Anthem*, pages 17-37. Distribute “Contract for Permission to Read Ahead” to interested students.

## Excerpt from "2112"

Words and music by Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson, and Neil Peart (Rush)

\* Complete lyrics are needed for lesson

### I. overture

And the meek shall inherit the earth.

### II. the temples of syrinx

... the massive grey walls of the temples rise from the  
Heart of every federation city. I have always been awed  
By them, to think that every single facet of every life is  
Regulated and directed from within! Our books, our music,  
Our work and play are all looked after by the benevolent  
Wisdom of the priests...

We've taken care of everything  
The words you hear the songs you sing  
The pictures that give pleasure to your eyes  
Its one for all and all for one  
We work together common sons  
Never need to wonder how or why

We are the priests of the temples of syrinx  
Our great computers fill the hallowed halls  
We are the priests of the temples of syrinx  
All the gifts of life are held within our walls

Look around this world we made  
Equality our stock and trade  
Come and join the brotherhood of man  
Oh what a nice contented world  
Let the banners be unfurled  
Hold the red star proudly high in hand

We are the priests of the temples of syrinx  
Our great computers fill the hallowed halls.  
We are the priests of the temples of syrinx  
All the gifts of life are held within our walls.

🎵 2112 Pre-Seminar 🎵

Read the lyrics of the song “2112” by Rush carefully. After reading, answer the following questions below—you may write your responses on this paper and use the back if you need more space. While there are no “right” or “wrong” answers, remember that there are always thoughtful and shallow responses (think deep!). You will share your responses with the class as we prepare to seminar this song.

1. Which is more important—being an individual or being part of a group? Explain.
2. What makes you unique? What makes you similar to others?
3. Write a brief summary of the song. What is the theme or main idea? (Do NOT say you don’t “get it” or respond “I don’t know”! If you are unsure, do the best you can.)

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Weak</b>
Responses to Questions	Thorough, thoughtful, based in the reading, insightful, original	Thorough, thoughtful, based in the reading	Incomplete, not based in the reading, and/or shallow
Discussion Participation	Active participant with comments and by listening to classmates, comments added to discussion, asked follow-up questions	Active participant with some comments, listened to classmates, comments were relevant to discussion	Did not participate, did not pay attention, comments detracted from discussion

## Text Rendering

Instructions to Students: The following prompts will be given orally to students with pauses after each for students to complete the task. Instructions will also be written on the whiteboard.

1. Underline or highlight one word that is important in the song.
2. Underline or highlight a phrase that is important in the song. The phrase cannot contain your important word.
3. Underline or highlight a sentence or stanza that is important to the meaning of the song. The sentence/stanza cannot contain your important word or phrase.
4. Put an exclamation point beside lyrics that you think are interesting or that you particularly like.
5. Put a question mark beside lyrics that confused you or that you didn't understand.
6. With someone sitting near you, share what you marked as important. Explain why you think it is important.

Full Class Discussion: Students will share what they marked in the text with an exclamation point and a question mark.

## Textual Analysis

*Passages for Textual Analysis:*

1. Look around this world we made  
Equality our stock and trade  
Come and join the brotherhood of man  
Oh what a nice contented world
2. I can't wait to share this new wonder  
The people will all see its light
3. Don't annoy us further  
We have our work to do  
Just think about the average  
What use have they for you?
4. I see the works of gifted hands  
That grace this strange and wondrous land  
I see the hand of man arise  
With hungry mind and open eyes

1. Is a world in which everyone is equal a good place? Explain.

2. Why does the speaker assume everyone will appreciate his discovery? Why don't they?

3. What do the last two lines of this stanza mean? Do you agree or disagree with the priest? Why?

4. What does the speaker refer to in this quote? Explain the last line. Do you think most people have "hungry mind and open eyes"? Why or why not?

## Post-Seminar

Students will respond to the following questions and then volunteers will share their responses with the whole class while we debrief the seminar.

- How would you feel about living in a society that did not value your interests, gifts, or talents?
- When is individuality valued by a society? When is individuality not valued by a society?
- What did you do well in today's seminar? What could you improve for the next seminar?

### Seminar Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Acceptable	Weak
Seminar	Active participant with comments and by listening to classmates, comments added to discussion, asked follow-up questions, comments indicate thoughtful preparation, was a valuable member of seminar group in all stages	Participated with comments and by listening, comments relevant to discussion, clearly prepared for seminar, contributed to seminar in all stages	Not prepared, did not participate, comments were irrelevant or detracted from discussion, behavior was distracting or obnoxious, did not contribute much if anything