

## 2023 Summer Reading, English 11 and 12

**Directions:** Read the article “An Ode to Playlists, The Perfect Sonic Diary” ([found here](#)). Your task, inspired by Xie’s article, is to document your literary wanderings this summer and create a “playlist” of your own. You are not, however, limited to just full-length books. You are welcome to include albums, songs, podcasts, magazines, newspapers, films, television shows, etc. The goal is to present a snapshot of who you are through the language, broadly speaking, you consume, and this will serve as an introduction to your next English class.

**Requirements:** Think of the literary selections as tracks on your playlist.

- Between 10 and 15 tracks with titles, artists, and release dates
- A carefully and aesthetically pleasing arrangement of the tracklist (can be hand-drawn or digitally produced)
- A paragraph explanation for 5-7 of the tracks. The paragraph explanations will accompany the playlist as a separate doc. Here are some guiding questions for you:
  - Why is this track included?
  - What does it represent about you?
  - How does this capture how you were feeling in this particular moment in time?

**Rubric:**

<b>10+ Tracks</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Quality of Written Explanations</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Aesthetics/Arrangement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

<p><b>4-5 Strong Response-</b> Excellent effort. The student provides a thoughtful response to the prompt that is grammatically correct.</p>	<p><b>3 Adequate-</b> The response addresses the prompt at a sufficient, but basic level, without providing much depth or originality.  Some grammatical errors are present.</p>	<p><b>2 Some Effort-</b> The response attempts to answer the prompt, but only manages partial success.  Many issues with grammar and mechanics are present.</p>	<p><b>1 Minimal Effort-</b> The response demonstrates little attention to the prompt and/or text.  Significant errors in grammar and mechanics are present.</p>
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# An ode to playlists, the perfect kind of sonic diary

April 3, 2023 6:00 AM ET By [Teresa Xie](#)

I made my first playlist on Spotify when I was 13. It's titled March '14, it's 200 songs, and it's got everything you would expect from a very-online middle-schooler: Marina and the Diamonds (now MARINA), The xx, The 1975, Florence + The Machine, and "Let's Go" by Matt & Kim. The next playlist, April '14, is not so different. It stands at a whopping 213 songs and still has most of Marina and the Diamonds' *Electra Heart (Deluxe)* album on it. But in April, it seems I was also introduced to Five Seconds of Summer, was really into Tyler the Creator and Chance the Rapper, and even discovered Nirvana (I probably saw the cover of *Nevermind* on Tumblr and thought it was cool).

Fast-forward to March '23, and you'll find a playlist consisting of about 10 songs, featuring the likes of Brutalismus 3000, JPEGMAFIA, Nia Archives, and a little bit of Sonic Youth. Between that (cursed) March '14 collection and my March '23 one sits more than 107 playlists: one for each month of the year.

Most of my playlists are bad (even the most recent ones), and I don't think they're necessarily even a reflection of my music taste. While most playlists tend to focus on cohesion, mine have always been more about documentation. I'll add whatever songs stick out to me that month without any thought about how it fits into a larger theme (that's how you get Radiohead and Ice Spice within a few minutes of each other).

While I never intended to make monthly playlists when I created my first in March 2014, over the years they've become sonic diaries — ways to take me back to places and people from the past through a collection of songs. When I listen to my August '21 playlist, consisting mostly of house tracks from artists like Park Hye Jin, Jayda G and TSHA, I'm reminded of a sweet summer living with my friend in Brooklyn, when all that stood in front of us was weekends exploring the city and our final year of college.

But not every playlist is reminiscent of rosy memories: November '20 only has four songs on it (most of them are by Jamila Woods), leading me to believe I must have *really* been going through it.

In the last couple of years, I've started adding a cover photo to each playlist, defined by a picture taken from that month. It's usually something silly: a piece of art I saw on the street, a meal I cooked, or the occasional mirror selfie. The photos serve less of an aesthetic purpose than a memory cue, much like the collection of songs itself. Often, listening to old playlists triggers more complicated emotions for me than looking at old journal entries; instead of reading stories told from my perspective at the time, I'm hearing music for what it was and always has been.

Playlisting or even being methodical about organizing interests and tastes isn't for everyone. It can definitely be a daunting task. But whether you're pulling together a collection of photos, making zines, or creating moodboards, you can relieve some of that pressure of cohesion if you see it as just a culmination of what you're thinking or feeling in the moment.

In a digital age where everything seems like it's meant to be neatly packaged and consumed, creating something without such intention shows us that most of our experiences can't replicate a specific model. And re-engaging with art that meant something in the past redefines the way we look at the present: revealing where we've been and what we came from — even if that place is "Therapy" by All Time Low or an obsession with the Arctic Monkeys! And who knows, maybe you'll realize not much has changed after all. Can someone queue "cellophane" by FKA Twigs?

**Digital Resources:**

- Canva [Templates](#):
- [Slidemia](#) (you can pick a template and open in Google Slides)
- [Slidesgo](#)
- [Slides Carnival](#)

**Samples:**

- Riefler [Playlist](#) and [Doc](#)
- Arthur [Playlist and Doc](#)