Just a few weeks ago, marked the 50th anniversary of the Beatles’ first visit to America, their watershed appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show, and the start of a British Invasion that forever changed pop music, galvanized youth culture around the world and fueled the social and political upheavals of the 1960s and beyond.

Since the birth of rock ‘n’ roll in the 1950s, popular music has been a way for youth to express themselves. Music is a way for people to express themselves. Music provides an outlet where teens can be themselves without being judged.

Music serves as an influencing factor on the human mind. Studies have long shown that media messages have a pronounced impact on childhood behaviors.

"Most human learning is incidental in nature and takes place outside of designated educational settings," say the authors of a recent study on the influence of music on youth.

How youth use music

On average, American youth listen to music four to five hours a day, which in many cases is more time than they spend with their friends outside of school or watching television. "Music matters to adolescents, and they cannot be understood without a serious consideration of how it fits into their lives," the authors say.

"Music alters and intensifies their moods, furnishes much of their slang, dominates their conversations and provides the ambiance at their social gatherings. Music styles define the crowds and cliques they run in. Music personalities provide models for how they act and dress."

Teens use music most to control mood and enhance emotional states. "Music can make a good mood better and allow us to escape or 'work through' a bad one," he said.

Adolescents also use music to gain information about the adult world, to withdraw from social contact (such as using an ipod as a barrier, not unlike an adult hiding behind a newspaper at the breakfast table), to facilitate friendships and social settings, or to help them create a personal identity.

For many youth, however, "music is often a secondary, background activity rather than a primary, foreground one. It serves as a backdrop to other activities reading, studying, talking, housework, driving."

Many scholars have long viewed television as the central media influence on adolescents, but adolescents actually devote more time and intensity to music. Although music lacks the visual element of film and television, adolescent exposure to music is much more frequent, accounting for an average of 16 hours each week for music compared with about 6 hours each week for movie images, according to the study.
authors. But frequency of exposure is not the only factor. Unlike visual media, music is a powerful social force that also taps into an individual’s personal identity, memories and mood. “Music is well-known to connect deeply with adolescents and to influence identity development, perhaps more than any other entertainment medium,” said the study authors.

How does/has music influenced your identity, memories and mood?

You are going to construct a music identity map. Your ultimate task is to create a "Soundtrack for Your Life" by selecting 5-8 songs that highlight significant times that has shaped your life. For each song, list the name of the song, artist and year the song was released. Then write 3-4 sentences describing why you selected this song and why it reminds you of this special time period.

Start by visiting the following site: http://thisdayinmusic.com/birthdayno1 to find out what song was number 1 on the day you were born. You may also use the site to find out what the top song was on any other important days of your life. Think of the different stages of your life thusfar. What music do you associate with each of these stages?

Examples:
Year or month you were born
Birth or deaths with your family
School events / awards/ etc.
Prom
Vacations
Relationships
Sports / Musicals / Extracurricular activities

Your finished product can take whatever form you would like (Google slideshow, typed list, handwritten – just make sure it’s neat.)