

# The british invasion essay sample



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“ I Want to Hold Your Hand” was the first song released in America by the popular band from Liverpool, The Beatles. From that moment forward, The Beatles became popular all over the world and forever changed the music industry. The Beatles started the British Music Invasion in the United States. On December 10, 1963, Walter Cronkite from the CBS evening news featured a story about “ Beatlemania” in the United Kingdom where their song “ She Loves You” was featured. A girl from Maryland saw the news report and sent a letter to a DJ for a local radio station asking why they can’t have music like that in America. The DJ then played “ I Want to Hold Your Hand” and America went crazy. Capitol Records then proceeded to release the record three weeks ahead of schedule. The song reached number one on many music charts like Billboard.

John Lennon formed a small group with some of his friends in March of 1957. Paul McCartney and Lennon met in July of 1957, and McCartney soon became the guitarist for the band. In February of 1958, McCartney invited his friend George Harrison to watch the group. He ended up auditioning for the band. Lennon was impressed by Harrison but he thought he was too young for the band because he was only fourteen years old at the time. After much persistence, Lennon gave in and allowed Harrison to become the lead guitarist. In 1959, John Lennon’s friends had left the group while he started his studies at the Liverpool College of Art. Lennon, McCartney, and Harrison then became “ Johnny and the Moondogs” and played whenever they could find a drummer. Lennon’s friend from college, Stu Sutcliffe, joined the band and suggested they change the band name to “ The Beatles”. They became a tribute band to Buddy Holly and The Crickets. According to Mark Lewishon,

a Beatles expert, they used the name “ Beatals” through the month of May, then became “ The Silver Beetles”, then changed their name to “ The Silver Beatles” before finally settling on “ The Beatles” in August of 1959

They released three songs, “ Love Me Do”, “ P. S. I Love You, and “ Please Please Me”. By 1963, Lennon and McCartney had established a songwriting partnership. The Beatles left the United Kingdom during February 1964. As they were leaving, about four thousand fans gathered at the airport to see them off. When they arrived in New York at John F. Kennedy Airport, they were greeted by approximately three thousand fans. Just two days after arriving in New York, the Beatles were featured on their first live US television show, The Ed Sullivan Show, where they performed. Approximately seventy-three million viewers in over twenty-three million households, or thirty-four percent of the American population, tuned in just to watch the Beatles. According to the Nielsen rating service, it was the “ largest audience that had ever been recorded for an American television program.” Following their television performance, they gave a performance at the Washington Coliseum, as well as two shows at Carnegie Hall. The band then went to Florida to appear on the Ed Sullivan Show for a second time, in front of seventy million viewers, before returning to the United Kingdom.

Throughout the rest of the decade, the Beatles released many more albums toured in many different places, and made quite a few films. During one week, twelve of their songs held spots on the Billboard Hot 100 singles chart. The Beatles hairstyle was unusually long during that time, but many people adopted it and it became a form of rebellion to the younger culture. The final show for the Beatles was in San Francisco at Candlestick Park. That show

marked the end of a four year period dominated by touring. Since they weren't touring anymore, they just stuck to recording music, specifically Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, in late November 1966. "Let It Be" was the Beatle's final album. Their break-up was caused by many reasons, including the end of their tour in 1966, and their manager's death in 1967. John Lennon was the most affected by their manager's death because he had the closest relationship with Brian Epstein. While John Lennon was grieving, Paul McCartney took that opportunity to initiate projects for the group, but the other members weren't happy with his growing domination. They never got a new manager which played a big part in the break-up.

John Lennon and Paul McCartney were the primary songwriters and vocalists for the band, while George Harrison and Ringo Starr had more supporting roles. Lennon and McCartney would often compose one song per album for Starr to sing, and they would have Harrison cover a song, or record one of his own compositions. From 1965 and on, Harrison's compositions started to mature and became more appealing. The other band members acknowledged his potential but would reject his song ideas. George Harrison became frustrated and this led to parting from the rest of the group. After the band stopped touring, the members of the band began to pursue their own musical tastes. In late 1966, their individual differences were becoming more known. McCartney developed a deep interest in the pop music trends and styles in both Britain and the United States, whereas Harrison developed an interest in Indian music, and Lennon's compositions became more experimental. Because of their different tastes in music, the Beatles began

growing impatient with each other. John Lennon became infatuated with a Japanese-American conceptual artist, Yoko Ono.

He met her at one of her exhibitions in 1966. They maintained a platonic relationship until the spring of 1968. In May 1968, they spent time together in his home studio while his wife was away on holiday. They recorded a tape before consummating their new relationship. From then on, the couple was almost always together including when Lennon was in the studio with the rest of the Beatles. This violated an agreement between the band. The agreement was that the members were not allowed to let wives or girlfriend into the studio. Lennon's "artistic infatuation" with Ono grew, so he decided that she would be allowed artistic input into the band's recordings. Yoko Ono would comment and make suggestions in the studio, but the other band members were not happy. The group continued recording together sporadically during the spring and summer of 1969. These recording sessions were all about the Beatles' last studio recording project, Abbey Road. John Lennon's alleged use of heroin inspired him to record "Cold Turkey" soon after the sessions for Abbey Road concluded. He offered the song to the Beatles so they could record it as a single, but the members weren't thrilled about the song.

The formation of the Plastic Ono Band was originally planned for an artistic outlet for Lennon and Ono in 1969; however, their enthusiastic reception as performers in Toronto was a big deciding factor for John Lennon on leaving the Beatles. He informed McCartney of his decision in September 1969. Paul McCartney reported that the Beatles had effectively disbanded in November 1969. McCartney, Starr, and Harrison started working on solo projects as well

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as reconvening for a short period of time to finish an album. McCartney was not happy with the way their music label was handling the Let It Be album, and his solo album was scheduled to be released around the same time as the Let It Be album. Ringo Starr asked McCartney if he would delay his solo debut for the sake of the band but McCartney refused. On December 31, 1970, McCartney filed a lawsuit against the other three Beatles for “dissolution of the Beatles’ contractual partnership”, and from that moment on the Beatles were officially over. Even though the Beatles were over, they were still very popular in the sixties and are still popular today. Paul Gardner, author from the New York Times, said “ Multiply Elvis Presley by four, subtract six years from his age, add British accents and a sharp sense of humor.

The answer: It’s the Beatles...”. In his article, “ 3, 000 Fans Greet British Beatles”, he discusses the day that the Beatles arrived in New York for the very first time. There were more than three thousand teen-agers standing at the International Arrivals Building just to greet the band. An official at JFK Airport said “ We’ve never seen anything like this here before. Never. Not even for kings and queens”. There were tons of teenage girls screaming, singing, whistling, etc. They had signs welcoming the Beatles, and “ We Love You” signs. As soon as the band arrived, the girls were chanting “ We want Beatles” . The Beatle’s haircuts seemed to be a big factor for girl’s infatuation with the band. One girl from Brooklyn was completely ecstatic when the Beatles left the terminal. “‘They’re different.’ She sighed, ‘ They’re just so different. I mean all that hair. American singers are soooo clean-cut.’” (Gardner). According to Donald White, an author from the Boston Globe, the

bands identical hairdos make them look like shaggy mushrooms. He also states that the Beatles started fads in music as well as grooming and clothing across the country.

“ The Beatles have caused traffic tieups and police headaches wherever they have made personal appearances. They have started a new round of swooning among Britain’s girls. They have caused a new wave of spending on clothes and records by the country’s prospering teen-agers,”. Donald White also says that the streets are full of teenagers dressing like Beatles, wearing suit jackets, narrow bottomed trousers and high heeled boots. The Beatles weren’t just a typical boy band; they were from Liverpool which made them a lot more appealing to the United States fans. The Beatles were featured on many television shows throughout their musical career. They were on the Ed Sullivan show many times. They were also on the Jack Paar show. On the Jack Paar show they performed their song “ With a Love Like That, You Know You Should Be Bad”. “ Mr. Paar showed some newsreels of assorted British young women in a varying repertory of appropriate paroxysms, a ritual that on occasion has tied up London Airport and led to other traffic jams”.

The Beatles were so popular in London specifically, that there was a ballet inspired by them. “ The Beatle Saga provided a footnote to ballet history at the Prince Charles Theater tonight when the Western Theater Ballet gave the world premiere of the first Beatle Ballet, ‘ Mods and Rockers’”. The ballet featured some of the Beatles compositions but they were rearranged to fit a jazz quartet and harmonica. The title of the ballet was “ Mods and Rockers”. The ballet focuses on teenagers. “ The ‘ mods’ are youths who wear high-

button, collarless 'Beatle' jackets; the 'rockers' dress in black leather". "

The British Invasion has helped re-invigorate American musical thinking and activity". Robert Shelton, author for the New York Times, discusses how there are many categories of rock 'n' roll. The Beatles played a big part in contributing to the different categories of rock 'n' roll as well as being a huge influence in the music industry.

The Beatles music changed over time. In the early years, they were writing songs about love and being adolescents, and they changed toward the later years when their music became more mature. "The Beatles' overarching textual nostalgia assists us in exploring the remarkable musical arc that characterizes the band's progress from such adolescent-oriented love songs as "I Saw Her Standing There" and "I Want To Hold Your Hand" through the more verbally mature "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)" and the unabashed nostalgia of the symphonic suite that marks the zenith of their career,". Kenneth Womack says "The Beatles unashamedly believe in a form of moral center that exists in a sharp contrast with postmodernism's subjective elevation of personal and cultural malaise." Basically saying, they Beatles weren't afraid of what they believed in. They were modernists and their stance was one of the factors behind their lasting popularity and influence in culture.

Michael Adams discusses John Lennon and Paul McCartney after the Beatles. John Lennon released three albums with Yoko Ono while McCartney released his self-titled album and a few others. "Lennon gets the most attention in *Composing Outside the Beatles* because he was more productive during this period and because his life was more controversial, with his marriage to Ono



and his involvement in anti-war and other political activities". Most journalists try to remain objective when discussing the Beatles. Overall, the Beatles music will be around forever because they were so popular. Their songs are featured in commercials and various television shows and movies. They are just as popular today as they were back in the sixties.

Where are the Beatles now? Well after their break up, Lennon, McCartney, Harrison and Starr all released solo albums in 1970. Sometimes, their solo albums would include the other members of the band. Ringo Starr's album "Ringo" was the only solo album to include compositions and performances by all four band members, even if they were on different songs. On December 8th 1980, in New York City, John Lennon was shot and killed. The Beatles were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988. Harrison and Starr attended the ceremony along with Yoko Ono, Lennon's widow, and his two sons. McCartney decided not to attend due to differences between the Beatles. Harrison died from lung cancer on November 29th 2001 There is a Cirque Du Soleil show called Love featuring the Beatles songs, which premiered in 2006. As of January 2012, Ringo Starr released his sixteenth studio album. He is currently seventy one years old. Paul McCartney is still very active in the music industry.

For example, he was honored by Barack Obama with the Gershwin Prize for his contributions to popular music, performing at the 54th Grammy Awards, and headlining at Super Bowl XXXIX (39). He is now sixty nine years old and married Nancy Shevell, on October 9, 2011. Even with two of the band members gone, their legacy will be around for a very long time. The Beatles greatly influenced not only just the music industry, they influenced the entire

world. People wanted to be the Beatles; they would buy similar clothes and get their hair cut just to look like them. People still listen to their music today. A movie called "Across The Universe" was released in 2007 focusing mainly on the Beatles songs. The cast on the television show Glee have sung many songs by the Beatles. The Beatles music is now featured on iTunes. Many music artists have covered the Beatles songs. People around the world will continue to listen and perform the Beatles music.

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This article discusses how there was a ballet created in London inspired by the Beatles. It talks about the Ballet, and how the costumes are related to the Beatles. It also talks about the director of the ballet and his inspiration for the ballet.

Barnes, Clive. "Teenage Craze Inspires Ballet." New York Times, December 19, 1963. Accessed February 27, 2012. Historic New York Times.

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Gardner, Paul. "3,000 Fans Greet British Beatles: 4 Rock 'n' Roll Performers Hailed by Teen-Agers 3,000 Screaming..." *New York Times*, February 8, 1965. Accessed February 29, 2012. *Historic New York Times*.

This article talks about when the Beatles first arrived in New York. There were many teenagers at the airport just waiting for them to get off the plane. I found this article to be helpful because it shows how famous the Beatles were in America even though the US citizens had only heard various songs from the Beatles. This article also discusses how the Beatles went on the Ed Sullivan Show twice in the same month, performed in Washington, and gave two shows at Carnegie Hall.

Gould, Jack. "TV: It's the Beatles (Yeah, Yeah, Yeah): Paar Presents British Singers on Film." *New York Times*, January 4, 1964. Accessed February 29, 2012. *Historic New York Times*.

This article is about the first time the Beatles played a complete song on television. It discusses their popularity and how whenever they are on television and people see them, the fans go crazy. They started calling the Beatles craze, Beatlemania.

Lewis, Frederick. "Britons Succumb To 'Beatlemania.'" *New York Times*, December 1, 1963. Accessed February 27, 2012. *Historic New York Times*.

This article is about how popular the Beatles are in Britain. This article is helpful because it shows the popularity of the band in Britain rather than in just the US. It talks about how they played in clubs in Hamburg and are now playing at big concert halls. It also discusses that the rise of the Beatles was the end of the American music domination in Britain.

Neary, John. "The Magical McCartney Mystery." *Life*, November 7, 1969, 103-104.

This article had the announcement of the Beatles' breakup. It was really helpful to see what was happening at the time of the break up. Paul McCartney had disappeared for a while and people had no idea what had happened. It gave me a look into McCartney's mind.

Shelton, Robert. "The Beatles Will Make the Scene Here Again, but the Scene Has Changed." *New York Times*, August 11, 1965. Accessed February 24, 2012. *Historic New York Times*.

This article is more about the Beatles and the culture of their music. It talks about the British Invasion and its influence as well as little facts about the Beatles. It talks a lot about the Beatles songs and where they were influenced to write the songs.

White, Donald. "Beatles Scourge Spreads." *Boston Globe*, November 22, 1963.

This article talks about the Beatles and how they influenced their fans. Their fans wear clothes like the band and style their hair like the band. I think this is a common fad among teenagers.

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