



WE CAN WORK IT OUT

The Foundations of Civil Discourse



Inducted 1988



ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW



Inducted 1989

Democracy is built on the ability to debate, dissent and discuss. In recent years, it seems our leaders, community, families and friends have pushed the civility of discourse to its limits. This activity explains the form and function of arguments and counterarguments, the etiquette for maintaining a civil discourse, and guides an analysis of videos featuring discourse. Following the instructional portions, participants will then host a discourse of their own regarding the Grammy nominees for Record of the Year.

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WHAT IS DISCOURSE?

Simply put, Discourse is the **use of words to express thoughts, knowledge or ideas on a topic or subject**. It is how we communicate with each other whether it is an argument, conversation, debate or speech. If done civilly, there are many benefits to having a discourse with another person or group.

- Discourse allows us to think critically and gain a deep understanding.
- Having a discourse with another person invites new perspectives and views on a topic.
- Discourse encourages more effective communication between people regardless of differences or the issues in between them.



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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

To effectively communicate during discourse, one must understand the differences between **Fact** and **Opinion** to form an **Argument**.

- **Fact-** A statement that can be proven true or false. They are unbiased and tell us about the world we live in.

“The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is located in Cleveland, Ohio.”

- **Opinion-** An expression of personal views and preference. They are not necessarily based on fact or knowledge. It cannot be proven true or false.

“The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is the coolest building in Cleveland, Ohio.”



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BUILDING AN ARGUMENT

Pt. 1



Often times, discourses are people expressing different opinions. To participate in a discourse, one must understand the basics of building an argument. The 3 basic parts are: **Assertion, Reasoning, Evidence**

- **Assertion-** The “opinion” that you are trying to argue.

“The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is the coolest building in Cleveland, Ohio.”

- **Reasoning-** Why your assertion should be considered.

“This is because it has really unique shapes and is built out over the water.”

- **Evidence-** The facts that support your reasoning. This could include facts from many sources including non-fiction books, reputable media sources, and data from

“The Building won two awards for innovative architectural design in 1997 and 1998.”

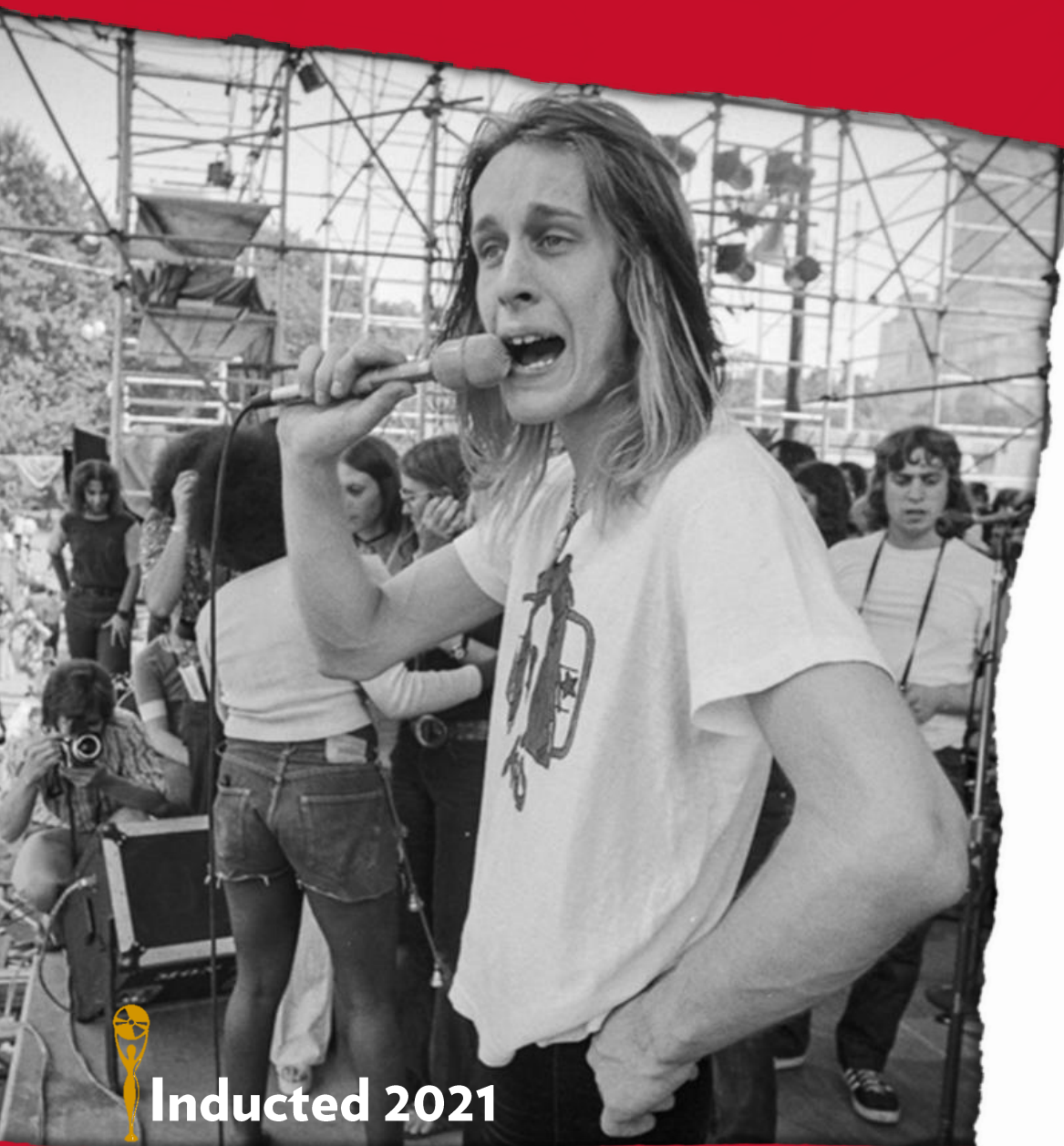


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LISTEN AND REFLECT:



In a 1996 interview, Inductee Todd Rundgren argued what he believes to be the first “rock ‘n’ roll” record. Watch the video and identify the following parts of his argument:

- What is he **asserting** that should be considered the first “rock ‘n’ roll” song?
- Identify 3 **reasons** to his argument.
- What **evidence** is he using to support his argument?

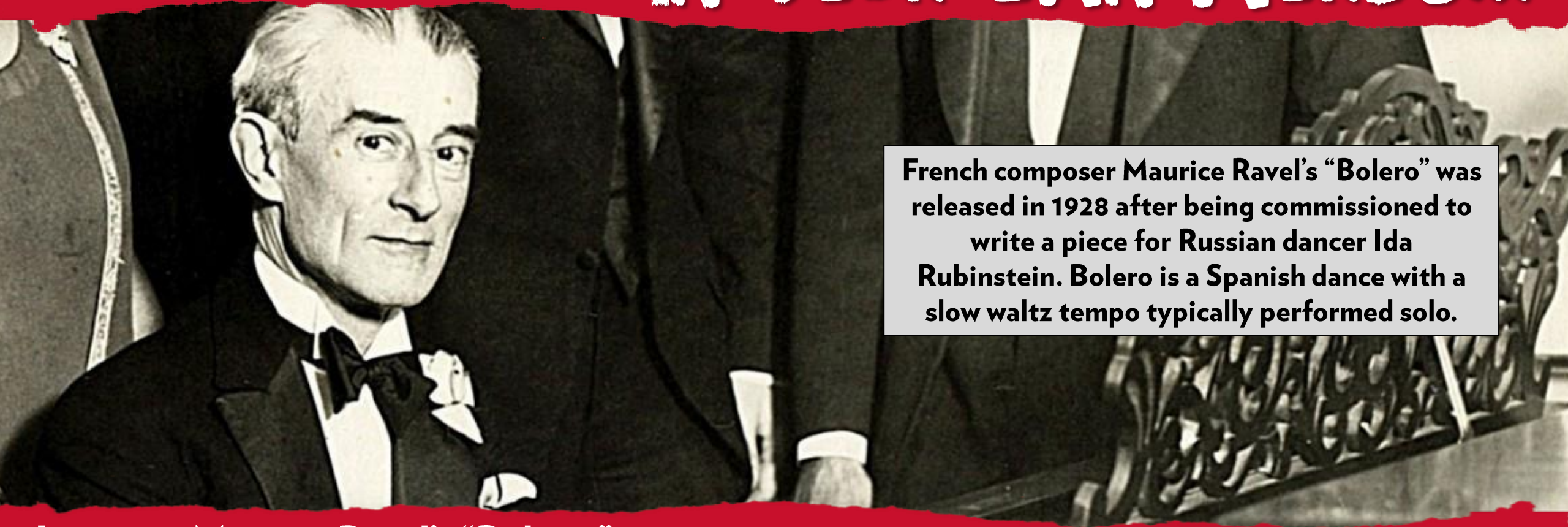


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IN YOUR OWN WORDS...



French composer Maurice Ravel's "Bolero" was released in 1928 after being commissioned to write a piece for Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein. Bolero is a Spanish dance with a slow waltz tempo typically performed solo.

Listen to Maurice Ravel's "Bolero:"

- Do you agree or disagree with Todd Rundgren's argument?
- If you agree, what are 3 reasons why you agree with him
- If you disagree, what are 3 reasons why you disagree with him?

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HOW TO REFUTE



Inducted 1987



Once an argument is presented, counterarguments are made to **refute** the assertions being made. There are five basic steps to developing a counter argument.

- **Restate**- Acknowledging the argument that is presented to you.
- **Refute**- The assertion or claim you are making. Civility of a discourse is tested because of our emotions.
- **Reasoning**- Why you objecting the original assertion or claim.
- **Evidence**- The facts that support your reasoning. This could include facts from nonfiction books, newspapers, statistics
- **Conclude**- Summing up your claim in comparison/contrast to the original claim.

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HOW TO REFUTE



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- **Restate-** “You say that the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is the coolest building in Cleveland, Ohio...”
- **Refute-** “but I believe that Cleveland Museum of Art is the coolest building in Cleveland, Ohio...”
- **Reasoning-** “Because it won a variety of awards from 2009-2015.
- **Evidence-** “Some of the awards include the outstanding achievement award for engineering (2014) and the Building of Circle Award in Cleveland (2009).
- **Conclude-** “This proves that the Cleveland Museum of Art building is the coolest building in Cleveland. “

DON'T KNOCK THE ROCK



In the 1980s, a movement in the United States was formed by legislative leaders (known as the PMRC) to monitor and censor music that they deemed to be violent, drug-related, and not appropriate for children. In 1985, Twisted Sister front man, Dee Snider went to capital hill to testify against the legislative leader's arguments for censorship.

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LISTEN AND REFLECT:



Listen to Dee Snider's argument during the 1985 Senate Hearings. Identify the following parts of his counter-argument:

- How does he **restate** the PMRC's argument?
- Describe what he **refutes** in his counter-argument.
- What **evidence** he is using to support his argument?

IN YOUR OWN WORDS...



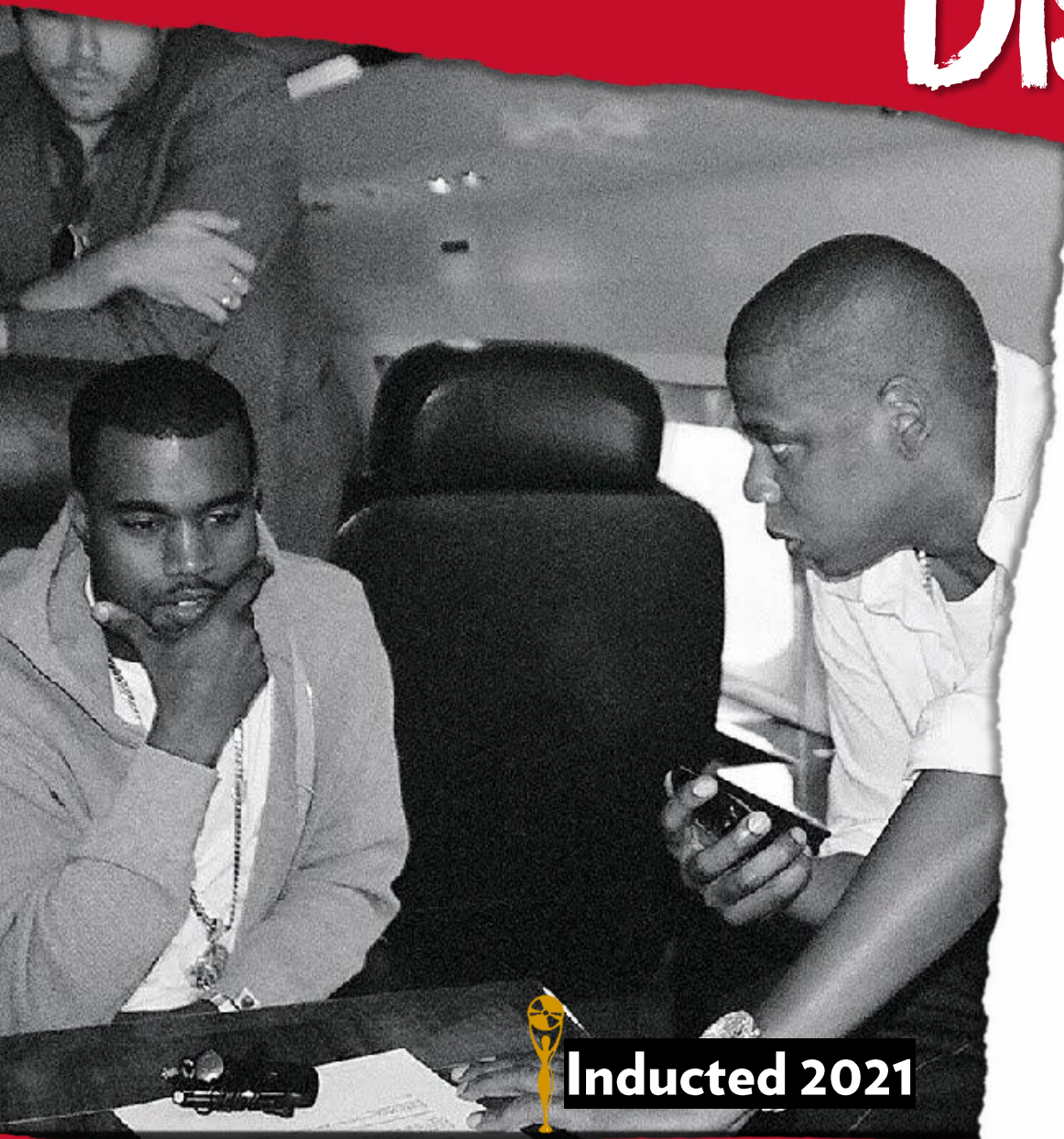
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Each student:

- Write down an assertion that you'd like to argue about your school. Everyone will add their assertions to an opaque container.
- The instructor will mix up all the assertions and you will choose one at random.
- For the assertion you drew:
 - Write a counterargument against that argument using the 5-step process outlined in this activity.

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DISCOURSE ETIQUETTE



Whether it is a formal debate or a conversation with a friend, it is important to have an understanding of respectful behavior during the discourse. In some cases, it may be important to put together ground rules for the discourse. Below is a guideline to consider when having a discourse:

- Be mindful of your reactions
- Allow everyone to speak without distractions or interruptions
- Keep the focus on the topic
- Be respectful
- Acknowledge common grounds between the arguments



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LISTEN AND REFLECT:



In the first presidential debate of the 2020 election, the candidates' behavior exemplifies a breakdown in discourse etiquette. Watch the debate and answer the following questions:

- Which guidelines did the candidates not follow?
- Was the focus of these exchanges about the topics?
- How can we prevent exchanges like these from happening in a discourse?

RECORD OF THE YEAR DISCOURSE SIMULATION



Awards of any kind are always up for debate and discourse. With a group of 2-3 students, you will be arguing for which record you believe should win the Grammy for Record of the Year.

- **In you group:**
 - Listen to the songs nominated for this year's Grammy's record of the year award. Select which one your group thinks should win.
 - Develop an argument for a discourse with other groups. Each member will develop their own unique reason with at least 3 different pieces of evidence to argue.

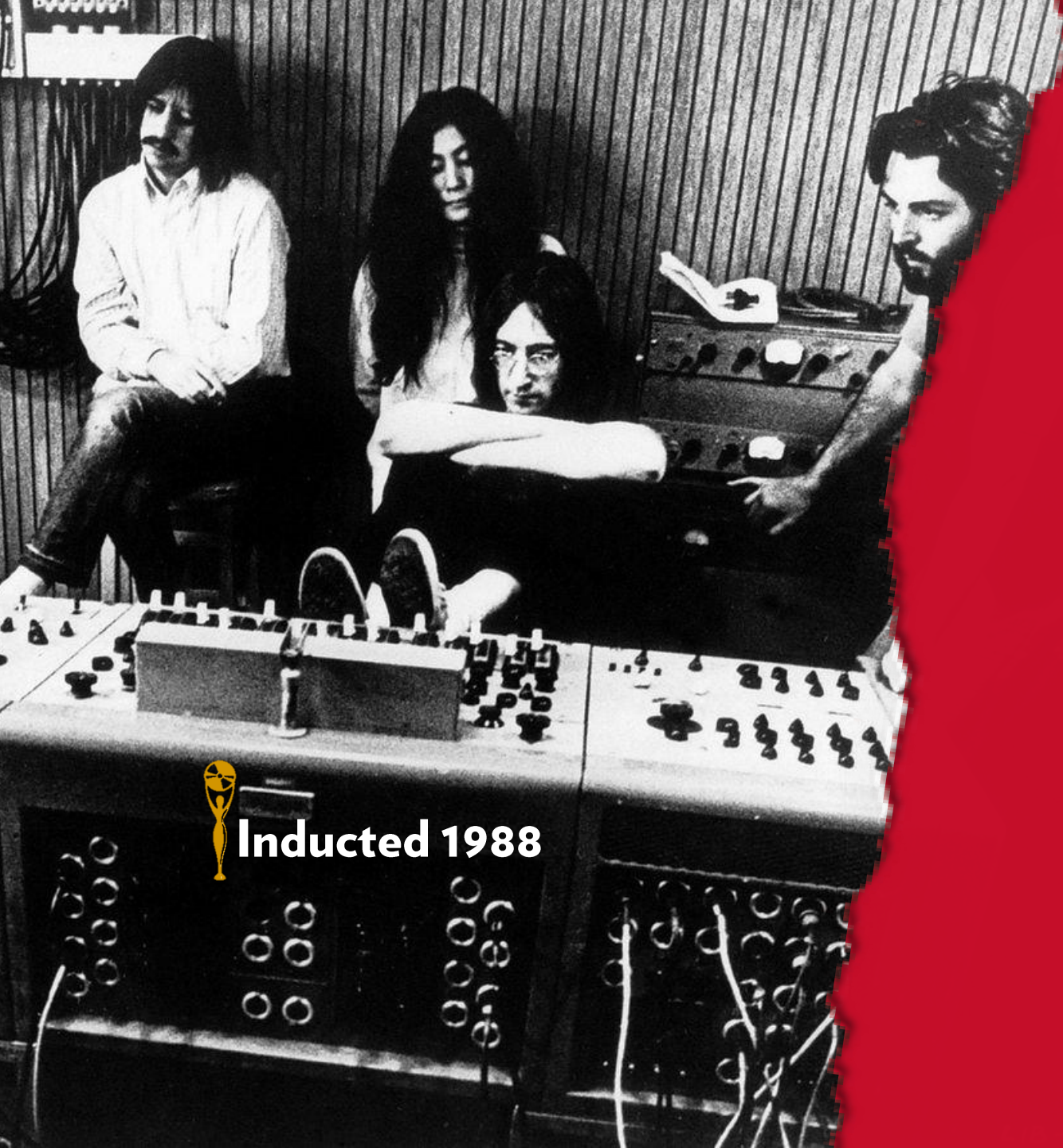
RECORD OF THE YEAR DISCOURSE SIMULATION



Discourse Simulation

- As a class, put together a list of guidelines for the discourse.
- Each group will take turns debating and arguing for which song they believe should win the Grammy for Record of the Year.
- At the end of the discourse- the class will vote to see which argument was the most convincing and therefore decide which record should win The Grammy.

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THANK YOU!

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