**Lyric Analysis Sample Mini-Essay**

**Sample Introduction:**

There is no more cliché question than “What is life?” However, Walk the Moon manages to breathe new life into this age-old inquiry in their song *Shut up and Dance*. Their answer is to stop questioning: living means letting go of mental control.

**Sample Body Paragraph:**

Living is done by the body, not the mind. Consider how *Shut up and Dance* begins with a command: “don’t you dare look back.” The direction refers to “look[ing] back” figuratively, not literally, as the singer is stuck in the past—and his mind. It turns out that “look[ing]” literally, and physically, is the solution, as the next instruction is to “keep your eyes on me.” The singer continues to resist, but is simply told to “Shut up and dance.” This makes his options clear: either think and do nothing or dance and live. It is only after taking the dance floor that the singer is “looked at” in return and “fe[els] it in [his] chest.” You must “fe[el]” physically in order to feel emotionally. He not only feels new love, but also seems to see his entire future laid out before his eyes. He now “kn[ows] [they] were bound to be together.” But this emotional understanding comes at the price of metal understand, as the singer found himself on the dance floor but doesn’t “know how it happened.” Whether “look[ing]” or “kn[owing]” it is clear you can only have one: the body or the mind, the future or the past. But only the meaning attached to the body can truly be considered living. Living is a present, rather than past, tense word for a reason.

**Conclusion:**

Letting go of control is not only necessary to live your life, but it was necessary for Walk the Moon to write these lyrics. Nicholas Petricca, the lead singer, found himself “in [his] head and not with it” (Americansongwriter.com). It was up to a girl in “a backless dress and some beat-up sneaks” to “pull [him] out into the moment.” And that’s what the song is about: “Encouraging people to let go of whatever it is that’s bothering you and get into your body and out of your head” (Americansongwriter.com). Moreover, that’s what the song does. It gets listeners out of their heads and onto the dance floor. Petricca views us a generation that is “scared to express ourselves” and “find it hard to hold a conversation with people across the table” (Billboard.com) But it turns out, the trick is not talk at all. It’s to shut up and dance.