

# How to be a hit with your students

by Martin Inthamoussú, RSA/UCLES CELTA  
e-mail: [inmir@adinet.com.uy](mailto:inmir@adinet.com.uy)

Songs and music are sometimes only used as filler or warmer activities and also as icebreakers. They are usually considered the time off of the week and students are always asking for this kind of lesson because they think they are not learning at all but just having fun. In this section I am going to show how you can use songs as an integrated part of our EFL curriculum.

You can find songs in your coursebooks that focus only on a specific grammatical or functional item. Here we will see that authentic songs can be really useful for any given purpose. Look for up-to-date material, interesting lyrics, clarity of vocals, and be clear yourself of the aim of the activity you are going to set.

Let's have a look then at the different areas in which you can use songs:

- Teaching Pronunciation
- Total Physical Response activities
- Teaching Lexis
- Words for context
- Word Order
- Cohesion
- Grammar
- Collocation
- Grammatical Functions
- Creative Writing
- Grouping and sorting vocabulary
- Topics
- Picture based activities
- Listening Comprehension
- Discussions or debates
- Filling in the blanks
- Dictation

Apart from using songs with lyrics, it is also useful to use music for different purposes: Setting the mood, setting the background for writing, relax or for sheer pleasure. And of course you can ask your students to bring their own songs to study in class. But do ask them to write and prepare the whole exercise including the key and let them be the teachers for a while!!

In this section we will also give you any lyrics you need for your lessons, or any lyrics we think can be useful accompanied by exercises that can involve any of the former mentioned areas. So, if you need a song just drop me a line and I will prepare something for you, your tailor made music lesson!!!

For this first issue, I have prepared a lesson with the song American Pie by Madonna. I hope you find it useful and I will be waiting for your suggestions. Cheers!!

## **LESSON PLAN 1**

**Song:** American Pie written by Don McClean and sung by Madonna

Level: Intermediate upwards

Time: 30 mins

Materials: Lyrics, students' worksheets.

**AIM:** To focus on pronunciation of rhyming pairs. This exercise is suitable for a song that has a good number of rhyming pairs at the end of a line.

**PREPARATION:** Print the lyrics of the song. You will notice that some words have been taken out. Those are the pairs that rhyme. Give students worksheet 1 one and ask them to guess the missing words in pairs. Then give students the lyrics of the song, worksheet 2, and ask them to guess where the words go (bearing in mind that they have to rhyme). Listen to the song to confirm/check their guesses. Sing the song!

### WORKSHEET 1

#### Rhyming Pairs

Smile      W \_\_\_\_\_

Chance      D \_\_\_\_\_

Love      A \_\_\_\_\_

Roll      S \_\_\_\_\_

Him      G \_\_\_\_\_

Shoes      B \_\_\_\_\_, N \_\_\_\_\_

Buck      T \_\_\_\_\_, L \_\_\_\_\_

Bye      P \_\_\_\_\_, D \_\_\_\_\_, R \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_

Away      P \_\_\_\_\_

Store      B \_\_\_\_\_

Screamed      D \_\_\_\_\_

Spoken      B \_\_\_\_\_

Most      G \_\_\_\_\_, C \_\_\_\_\_

### WORKSHEET 2

#### **American Pie**

A long, long time ago  
I can still remember  
How that music used to make me smile  
And I knew that if I had my chance  
I could make those people \_\_\_\_\_  
And maybe they'd be happy for a \_\_\_\_\_

Did you write the book of love  
And do you have faith in God \_\_\_\_\_  
If the Bible tells you so  
Now do you believe in rock 'n roll  
And can music save your mortal \_\_\_\_\_  
And can you teach me how to dance real slow

Well I know that you're in love with him  
'Cause I saw you dancin' in the \_\_\_\_\_  
You both kicked off your shoes [both kicked off your shoes]  
Man, I dig those rhythm 'n \_\_\_\_\_

I was a lonely teenage broncin' buck  
With a pink carnation and a pickup \_\_\_\_\_  
But I knew that I was out of \_\_\_\_\_  
The day the music died  
I started singin'

*Chorus:*

Bye bye Miss American \_\_\_\_\_  
Drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was \_\_\_\_\_  
And good ol' boys were drinkin' whiskey and \_\_\_\_\_  
Singin', "This will be the day that I \_\_\_\_\_  
This will be the day that I die."

I met a girl who sang the blues  
And I asked her for some happy \_\_\_\_\_  
But she just smiled and turned away  
Well I went down to the sacred store  
Where I'd heard the music years \_\_\_\_\_  
But the man there said the music wouldn't \_\_\_\_\_

Well now in the streets the children screamed  
The lovers cried and the poets \_\_\_\_\_  
But not a word was spoken [not a word was spoken]  
The church bells all were \_\_\_\_\_

And the three men I admire the most  
The Father, Son, and the Holy \_\_\_\_\_  
They caught the last train for the \_\_\_\_\_  
The day the music died  
We start singin'

*(chorus, repeat)*