

Interacting with songs

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Songs are ...

powerful conveyors of

- Culture
- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Language in different registers
- Personality

great stimulus for learners to

- Review, use opinion language
- React in different ways
- Develop listening confidence
- Hear and practise phonics
- Listen to, and read the lyrics
- Spot and select - high frequency vocabulary / specialist expressions
- Manipulate grammar, adapt text

Opening music

- Use the entry time of the class to play some music from a Target Language background simply to set the scene, to remind pupils of the sounds of the language and its intonation, to convey the important cultural message that other countries have their own popular, folk and classical musical traditions.
- Later, use this 'opening music' as a focus for the starter activity, to train the class to be listening for repetition or for words they should recognize

Culture starter

- Use a famous piece of (instrumental?) music, especially if you are wanting to calm the class down as they arrive – a short piece of information about the piece or its composer on the screen can provide a focus for reading or translation work at this key point of the lesson.

Music and movement

- Learners simply 'conduct' the music , carefully matching the cadences which the teacher can reinforce when talking about intonation
- Learners use gestures, movement or signs that match with the lyrics to help them remember the sounds of words: *Heads and shoulders* is a classic example but they can devise others
- Learners *raise a hand* (for example) when they hear certain key words
- Learners practise lipsynching with a selected song, focusing on the mechanics of how their mouth produce the sounds of the language

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse

- Performers spend much of their time rehearsing – and so do language learners
- Use a performance as a model to encourage the class to think about : memorising, being expressive, using body language and tone.
- Extract a repeated pattern of words (e.g. a question or a verb form) to rehearse speaking with. Ask the class to build new sentences with that form of words as they try saying it in different ways . (Example : in French , Christophe Mae ‘Il est ou, ... *le bonheur?*’. Learners vary the noun.

Phonic links – making the sound/spelling link

- Use the lyrics (often available on the Internet, sometimes available as sub-titles) and ask learners to join in with saying words you highlight ; listen out for problems they have – often with silent letters / accents or other diacritic marks / diphthongs .

Choose 5 words

- The class listens to a song and each student notes down 5 words in the target language they think they hear. Build up a list / word cloud on the screen.
- After a suitable gap, the teacher reminds the class of a song they've heard, and shows some key phrases/lines from the song in a random order. The class sorts the lines into the order they think they recall, then listens to the song and corrects the sequence.

Phonic links - dictation

- Once the class has heard /seen a song a few times , ask them to follow the written lyrics as they listen, and to focus on a particular section (e.g. the chorus).
- Subsequently dictate the words of that section for them to write down as accurately as possible – giving them time to listen/ review in their heads.

Eurovision

- The annual Eurovision Song Contest presents an opportunity for us to encourage learners to hear foreign language songs, and review them – in the style of the television competition.
- An example format is here : <http://all-literature.wikidot.com/dataentry:eurovision> along with suggestions of how to build the linguistic progression from year to year.

What's on my playlist

- From an Internet playlist, copy the first 5 (or so) titles into **in a randomized order**, e.g. for this Spanish list: www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9Fn7pmOjqw
- *Con fuego*
- *Devuelveme la vida*
- *Ya no*
- *Duele el Corazon*
- *Hundred miles*
- The class listens to the 5 clips (without seeing them as the titles are shown!) and works in pairs or triads to assign the titles they think match what they hear. They might hear the title or a key word if it is sung, or listen for a genre that seems to match the title, or use a process of elimination or just make a guess! (This is a learning activity and not a test.)

Musical tongue-twister

- The strategy here is to use the stimulus of the song to focus on particular sounds and their pronunciation, rather than the sense of the words.
- Give the class (all, or part of) the lyrics only (without having heard the song) for them to apply their knowledge, and rehearse in pairs or triads getting the sounds and intonation right. (They will need a sense of what sort of song it is, but not a full translation) French example :
- <http://all-literature.wikidot.com/dataentry:rongrakatikatong>
- In their groups they then compete to see who can say the lyrics most quickly; with partner(s) listening out for errors
- They then compete against the original performer in the recording.

Where to find useful songs

- Ask your colleagues, at ALL meetings or other CPD events, in a Facebook forum or via other social media
- Ask your pupils or students
- Search the internet and select
- If you make a playlist, please share it through info@ALL-Languages.org.uk and I will add it here

Interacting with songs

- Review - opinion language
- React - listening, physical response
- Challenge - Lipsynch, tongue-twister
- Rehearse - Singalong – performance, phonics, intonation
- Spot / Select - high frequency vocabulary / specialist expressions
- Adapt text - grammar
- Enjoy

Songs are ...

- made to be repeated
 - supportive of memorisation
 - mood-appropriate or mood-changing
 - good to move to / with
 - for performance
 - language in a context
 - everywhere in contemporary life
 - often cultural icons
- there for the exploiting!