

## Part 2.1: General Song Activities for *American Rhythms*



## PART 2.1: GENERAL SONG ACTIVITIES FOR *AMERICAN RHYTHMS*

The instructions for the various activities used in the book are described below. **Parts 2.2** and **2.3** suggest these activities for particular songs on the *Traditional Songs* and *American Rhythms* CDs and provide accompanying materials. For your reference, an index of song units that model each activity is provided at the end of each activity section. The index includes references to additional songs and song units, which are available online at [americanenglish.state.gov](http://americanenglish.state.gov). You can use this index to locate examples of the materials that are described in **Part 2.1**. However, most of the following activities can be used with any song that you wish to teach.

### Section 1: Pre-listening Activities

Listening to new songs presents unique challenges. Before listening to a song, teachers should prepare student. Pre-listening activities can

- introduce new words or phrases that students will hear in the song
- activate students' background knowledge about a particular topic so they can better predict what they will hear
- introduce cultural references to help students understand the song
- motivate students and spark interest in the song

Pre-listening activities can be done in a variety of ways:

- class games or discussions based on particular topics
- the presentation of new vocabulary, phrases, or grammar structures
- the practice of prediction strategies based on key ideas
- the use of pictures to increase interest in the song and offer visual clues to help students understand vocabulary and themes

Included below are 13 pre-listening general activities that you can adapt to almost any song.

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The last five activities are specifically designed to use pictures (although many other activities include modifications to incorporate pictures). Many pictures are provided in **Parts 2.2** and **2.3**. You can also find suitable pictures on the Internet and in magazines and newspapers for these and other songs. Most activities require very few or no materials at all. For activities that do require specific materials, you can find examples in **Parts 2.2** and **2.3** when these activities are applied to teaching specific songs. An index of song units that model these activities is provided at the end of this pre-listening activity section (including references to additional songs and song units that are available online.)





- F. + *extension*  
 + *groups*  
 + *difficulty*  
 + *writing*  
 + *time*

**Modifications (continued)**

Instead of controversial statements, write the title of the song on the board. Divide the class into four groups and ask each group to write on large posters or sheets of paper one or two sentences predicting what the song will be about. Hang the four predictions in the corners of the classroom. Tell students to go to the corner with the prediction that they think is most accurate. After listening to the song, hold a class discussion to discuss which prediction was most accurate.

**Pre-listening 2: One Title, Several Words — Many Possibilities**

**Purpose:** To predict the content, generate interest, and introduce vocabulary for the song

**Level:** All

**Time:** 15 – 20 minutes, plus the length of the song

**Note to the Teacher:** If students make predictions in their first language because they do not have the vocabulary to express themselves, you may wish to teach them some keywords. However, limit the number of new words to approximately five to eight. (+ time)

**Preparation and Materials:** Write the title of the song on the board. Select five key content words from the song. Students will use these words to generate predictions about the song.

**Instructions:**

1. Tell students that the line on the board is the title of a song that they are going to listen to. Explain any of the words in the title that students may not know.
2. Ask students to guess what the song is about. Appoint individual students or invite all students to call out ideas. Write their ideas on the board.
3. Write on the board the five key content words that you pre-selected from the song. Ask students if they want to change their predictions. Write any new ideas on the board.
4. After listening to the song, ask students to check whether their predictions were correct.

**Modifications:**

- A. + *groups*  
 + *writing*  
 + *time*

Divide students into groups of four or five. Ask them to discuss and write down their predictions. Then ask each group to share their ideas with the whole class.

- B. - *difficulty*  
 + *scaffolding*

Write the song title on the board along with question words relevant to the song. Provide simple, short answers to these questions, and get students to suggest the plot or theme of the song. Example (for *On Top of Old Smokey*):

*Who? Someone in love*  
*Where? On top of a mountain*  
*What? She lost her true lover*

- C. - *difficulty*  
 + *scaffolding*  
 (optional)  
 + *groups*

Write the song title on the board along with question words that are relevant to the song (not all words will be relevant for every song):  
*Who? Where? What? Why? When?*  
 Ask students to think of a brief response (as in Modification B) that predicts what will happen in the song.



- D. + *difficulty*  
+ *questions*  
+ *time*

#### Modifications (cont.)

Repeat the process in Modification C above, but this time ask students to think of a *Wh*-question and then predict the answer to the question.

Example: Students might have these questions:

*Who will be the main character in the song?*

*Where will the song take place?*

*What will happen in the song?*

*Why will this happen?*

*When will the action take place?*

- E. + *groups*  
+ *time*  
+ *art*

Ask students to draw a picture of what the song might be about. Divide the students into groups of four or five so they can share their pictures and predictions with their group.

- F. - *difficulty*  
+ *materials*  
+ *pictures*

Prepare large pictures that represent the keywords to help students learn the words. Follow Steps 1 through 4 above.

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### Pre-listening 3: Swat

**Purpose:** To introduce vocabulary from the song, and make print and sound connections

**Level:** All

**Time:** 15 – 20 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity involves swatting or slapping words or pictures, and requires enough space in the classroom for students to move around. However, the activity can also be done by pointing to or circling the target item.

**Preparation and Materials:** Choose eight to ten key vocabulary words (or phrases) from the song. Add additional words that sound similar, look similar, or are related to the keywords so that you have a set of 15 – 20 words. Write all of the words on the board in random order. Provide a flyswatter or rolled-up newspaper for each team.

#### Instructions:

1. Point to each word, say the word, and have the students repeat the word after you. Explain the meaning of the words, if needed.
2. Divide the class into two, three, or four teams. Give each team a flyswatter or a rolled-up newspaper. Tell the teams to stand in lines at an equal distance away from the board.
3. Explain that you will call out a word. The first person from each team must race to the board and hit the word with the flyswatter or newspaper. The team that hits the correct word first gets a point.
4. Tell the first person to give the flyswatter or newspaper to the next person on the team and to proceed to the back of the line.
5. Call out words in random order. You can use words more than once. As the game continues, each person on the team should have a chance to swat the words. At the end of the game, the team with the most points wins.

#### Modifications:

- A. + *difficulty*  
+ *sound*  
*discrimination*

Select all of the rhyming words from the song, and choose additional words that rhyme with those words or that look similar (such as *who* and *how*). Then follow Steps 1 through 4 above.



		<b>Modifications (cont.)</b>
<b>B.</b>	- <i>difficulty</i> + <i>materials</i> + <i>pictures</i>	Hang up large pictures that represent the key vocabulary words with the word written underneath. Tell students to race up to swat the picture as you call out the vocabulary words.
<b>C.</b>	+ <i>extension</i> + <i>time</i>	Once students have learned the words, let students take turns calling out the words to swat.
<b>D.</b>	+ <i>difficulty</i> - <i>movement</i> + <i>spelling</i>	Give each group a poster or large piece of paper to write on, and tell them to write on their poster the word that you call out. The first group to write the word with the correct spelling gets one point.
<b>E.</b>	+ <i>difficulty</i> + <i>phrases</i>	Write on the board phrases or lines from the song instead of single words. This works well for songs with idioms or common phrases.
<b>F.</b>	+ <i>extension</i> + <i>difficulty</i> + <i>synonyms</i>	Create two sets of words. Set 1 has eight to ten words from the song. Set 2 has eight to ten synonyms of the words from the song. Write Set 2 (the synonyms) on the board in random order. Call out the words from the song (Set 1) and have students swat the correct synonym (Set 2).
<b>G.</b>	+ <i>difficulty</i> + <i>word forms</i>	Choose five to eight words from the song, some that have regular forms and others that have irregular forms. On the board, write many different forms of each word in random order. Include incorrect items so that students must choose between correct and incorrect forms. Example: For <i>child</i> , you could write <i>childrens children childs</i> Have students race to swat the correct word based on clues: <i>Swat the plural form of the noun 'child.'</i>  Possible features to include: plural/singular nouns, verb forms (past tense of <i>eat</i> – <i>ate</i> vs. <i>eated</i> ), comparative/superlative adjectives ( <i>shorter</i> vs. <i>more short</i> ).

## Pre-listening 4: Stanza Creation

**Purpose:** To predict the content, generate interest, and introduce vocabulary for the song, and write phrases and sentences

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 30 – 40 minutes, plus the length of the song

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may be extended over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 4): 20 – 25 minutes; Session 2 (Steps 5 – 6): 10 – 15 minutes.

**Preparation and Materials:** Choose a stanza from the song. Select eight to ten keywords for the stanza and write them on the board in random order.

### Instructions:

1. Divide the students into groups of three or four.
2. Elicit or teach the features of song stanzas: they are similar to poems; they tend to have four lines; and they use rhythm, repetition, and rhyme for coherence.
3. Explain that each group should write a stanza using all of the words or phrases on the board. Explain that they may add as many words as they like, but they must use all of the keywords on the board.



4. Give the groups 10 – 15 minutes to write their stanzas, helping them when requested.
5. When the time is up, ask groups to share what they wrote.
6. During the first listening of the song, ask students to compare their stanzas to the actual song. Discuss or comment on how similar the student's stanzas were to the original song.

**Modifications:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>A.</b> + <i>groups</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p>  | <p>To use more than one stanza from the song, write different word sets from multiple stanzas on separate sections of the board. Assign a different set to each group. You may have several groups working on each stanza. Follow Steps 1 – 6 above.</p>   |
| <p><b>B.</b> + <i>groups</i><br/>+ <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p>                                    | <p>Have groups use the whole song and create more than one stanza.</p>   |
| <p><b>C.</b> - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>scaffolding</i></p>   | <p>Use complete phrases or sentences instead of individual words. Have students combine the phrases or sentences to create the stanza.</p>   |
| <p><b>D.</b> - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>scaffolding</i><br/>+ <i>materials</i><br/>+ <i>competition</i></p> | <p>Create a worksheet of lyrics for the stanza with gaps for eight to ten words. Tell students to create versions of the stanza by choosing words to fill each gap. Give one point for each word that is used in the original gap in the stanza. (Note: this activity is similar to a gap-fill activity, but allows students to fill in the stanzas creatively rather than listening to the stanza first.)</p> |
| <p><b>E.</b> - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>art</i><br/>- <i>writing</i></p>                                    | <p>Ask students to generate ideas for the theme of the stanza based on the words on the board. You can provide all of the words for the stanza in one grouping, or create groups of words that correspond to each line in the stanza. Have students draw a comic strip to illustrate their predictions for the content of the stanza.</p>  |
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## Pre-listening 5: Unscramble the Sentences

**Purpose:** To generate interest and introduce vocabulary and grammar from the song, and write phrases and sentences

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 20 – 30 minutes, plus the length of the song

**Preparation and Materials:** Select five to eight of sentences from the song. You may choose all of the sentences from the same stanza or a set of sentences from the entire song at an appropriate level for your students. For each sentence, write the words in random order on a slip of paper. You will need at least one slip for each group of students.

**Instructions:**




1. Divide the students into small groups of three or four.
2. Pre-teach any new words from the selected sentences.
3. Explain to students that they will have to recreate a sentence from words you will give them.
4. Give each group the words from one mixed-up (scrambled) sentence. Ask each group to create one sentence using their knowledge of sentence structure and vocabulary. Students can cut apart the words and re-arrange them on their desks, or you can provide space for students to rewrite the sentences below the scrambled words.
5. When they have created a sentence with their words, ask them to write it on the board.



6. Ask the class to look at each sentence written on the board to determine if it is correct. If not, ask the class how to correct it.
7. If you are using all sentences from a stanza, ask students to recreate a complete verse of the song by unscrambling the sentences and putting the lines on the board in the right order.
8. Play the song for students to check their answers.

**Modifications:**

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|--|--|
| <p><b>A.</b> + <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p>   | <p>Create a handout with multiple scrambled sentences, and have each group unscramble all of the sentences. First, groups can compare their version with the other groups' versions and then compare their version with the lyrics of the song.</p>  |
| <p><b>B.</b> - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>scaffolding</i></p>  | <p>Give students clues about the word order and then get them to recreate the rest of the sentence. Two possible clues:<br/><i>Indicate the first and last word</i><br/><i>Group words into phrases</i></p>  |
| <p><b>C.</b> - <i>groups</i></p>   | <p>Write the words or phrases in large letters on separate pieces of paper. Hang the words/phrases on the board in random order. Ask individual students to come to the board and reposition one of the words/phrases based on suggestions from the class. Continue to invite students up until the sentence is unscrambled correctly.</p> |
| <p><b>D.</b> + <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>materials</i><br/>+ <i>pictures</i><br/>+ <i>writing</i></p> | <p>Mix written words together with pictures. Find small pictures to represent three to five words in the sentence. Include the remaining words in written form. Ask students to determine the correct word and write it underneath the picture. Then get students to recreate the sentences. Example:</p>                                  |

with  on from I oh come  my  my

## Pre-listening 6: Find Someone Who...

**Purpose:** To generate interest and introduce vocabulary for the song, activate background knowledge about the topic, and ask and answer questions

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 30 minutes, plus the length of the song

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare eight to ten *yes/no* questions. The list of questions should: 1) be about students' qualities, abilities, and experiences; 2) be related to the theme of the song; and 3) practice some of the vocabulary in the song. Write the list of questions on the board or create a handout containing the questions.

**Instructions:**

1. Introduce the activity by speaking about your own past experience(s) that relate to the theme of the song.
2. Ask students to look at the list of questions on the board or handout. Explain any new vocabulary.
3. Explain that the students will need to ask each other these questions. For each question, they must find one person who can answer *yes* to that question. Instruct the students to write the name of the person next to the question. They may not use the same person for more than one question. The first person to complete the task wins.





4. Tell the students to stand up and walk around while completing this task. Circulate among them and make sure they are asking and answering questions.
5. Announce the winner when the first student has completed the task.
6. After the game is finished, review the list of questions, asking students to speak about the classmates who answered 'yes' to certain questions.
7. Tell them to listen to the song and to circle all of the words in the questions that are also in the song.

**Modifications:**

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|---|--|
| <p><b>A.</b> + <i>large classes</i><br/>+ <i>groups</i></p>   | <p>Only prepare four to six questions. Divide students into groups of eight to ten, and carry out the activity as described above.</p>   |
| <p><b>B.</b> + <i>groups</i><br/>- <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>materials</i></p>                                   | <p>Divide students into smaller groups of four to six. Instead of writing the questions on the board, create small cards with one question on each card. Each group should have one card per group member, and each group member should have a different question</p> <p>The group sits in a circle with the cards in the center. One at a time, each group member takes a card, reads the question, and passes it to the person sitting to the right. Each student then writes an answer (<i>yes</i> or <i>no</i>) on the card before passing it to the right again. Repeat this process until the card gets back to the student who picked it from the center. That student reads the card and then summarizes the most common response to the question for the rest of the group.</p> |
| <p><b>C.</b> + <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>speaking</i><br/>+ <i>verb forms</i><br/>+ <i>questions</i></p>         | <p>Create one set of questions using the present perfect. Example:<br/><i>Have you ever ridden on the railroad?</i></p> <p>Then create follow-up questions in the past tense:<br/><i>When did you ride on the railroad?</i></p> <p>Get students to practice answering the questions using the verb tense / aspect modeled in the question.</p>   |
| <p><b>D.</b> + <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>writing</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p> <p>(optional)<br/>+ <i>groups</i></p> | <p>Provide keywords from the song, and have students form questions as they complete Steps 3 – 7 above. This activity can be extended into a second class session. Session 1 (writing questions): 15 – 20 minutes; Session 2 (Steps 3 – 7 above): 15 – 20 minutes.</p>   |
| <p><b>E.</b> - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>pictures</i></p>  | <p>Provide pictures that represent the key vocabulary items (objects or action verbs) from the song. Teach students two question forms. For example, if you use verbs from the song, you might teach questions in the following forms:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Have you ever _____?</i><br/><i>Do you like _____?</i></p>  |



## Pre-listening 7: What Do You Know About...?

**Purpose:** To generate interest and introduce vocabulary for the song, and activate background knowledge about the topic

**Level:** All

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes, plus the length of the song

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a short, fun quiz on the same topic as the song. The quiz should contain general information questions to activate students' background knowledge. The quiz could contain true/false, multiple choice, or short-answer questions. It can be read aloud or you can create a handout.

### Instructions:

1. Organize students into small groups of three or four.
2. Write the topic of the song on the board. Tell students that you are going to give them a quiz on this topic. The team that answers the most questions correctly is the winner.
3. Distribute the quiz handout or read the first question aloud to the students. Allow them time to discuss the question in their groups and decide on the first answer. Students should record their group's answer on a piece of paper. Go on to the next question.
4. At the end of the quiz, go through the questions again and tell the students the correct answers. Reward the group with the most correct answers with a prize or applause.
5. Discuss which words from the quiz might be in the song. Listen to the song to check students' predictions.

### Modifications:

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| A. | + <i>extension</i><br>+ <i>writing</i><br>+ <i>time</i>  | Tell students the title of the song. Ask groups to prepare a quiz containing three to five questions about the topic. Then groups will exchange questions with other groups and take the quiz.  |
| B. | + <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>writing</i><br>+ <i>time</i> | Create open-ended questions that require students to respond by writing one or two sentences.   |
| C. | - <i>groups</i><br>- <i>time</i>                         | Create a quiz with multiple-choice answers. Read the questions aloud and have students raise their hands to vote for the correct answer. Record the number of votes for each possible response. |
| D. | + <i>difficulty</i>                                      | Create difficult questions that require students to work together to answer them. The first group to answer a question correctly gets a point.  |

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## Pre-listening 8: Brainstorming and Mind-Mapping Vocabulary

**Purpose:** To generate interest, activate background knowledge about the topic, and introduce vocabulary related to the song

**Level:** All

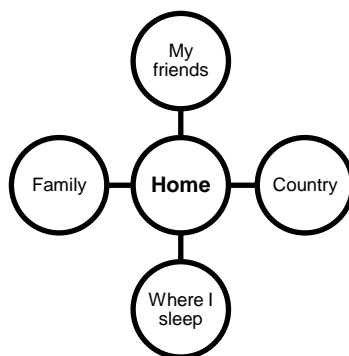
**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Choose a word, phrase, or sentence that relates to an important topic or theme from the song as the starting point for brainstorming. You can use a phrase or a line from the song, or a popular expression.



### Instructions:

1. Write the chosen word, phrase, or sentence in the middle of the board and circle it.
2. Encourage students to call out any thoughts that come to mind when they see the word, phrase, or sentence. Write the students' ideas on the board, or have students come to the board and write down their own thoughts.
3. Ask the students to look at these ideas to see if they can be grouped into subtopics. Write the suggested subtopics in smaller circles around the main idea and connect them with lines to the main circle to create a "mind map."



4. Ask the students to contribute new ideas based on these subtopics.
5. Try to extend these ideas whenever possible to include content/vocabulary connected to the song.
6. Play the song. Ask students to mark which of their ideas/words are actually in the song.

### Modifications:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>A.</b><br>+ <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>time</i>                            | Choose several words, phrases, or sentences that relate to the song. Divide students into small groups. Circulate several pieces of paper, each with different words/phrases/sentences as the starting points for brainstorming. Ask each group to write down their ideas on one paper, pass it to another group, and generate ideas for a new mind map. Continue this activity until everyone has shared ideas, and then ask each group to report on the paper that they have in front of them. |
| <b>B.</b><br>+ <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>time</i>                        | Repeat the same instructions (Steps 1 – 6 above), but let the students create their own mind maps at their desks. Then post these mind maps on different sections of the board and compare them, noting any similarities or differences.   |
| <b>C.</b><br>+ <i>materials</i><br>+ <i>pictures</i>                     | Use a picture as the starting point for brainstorming.   |
| <b>D.</b><br>+ <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>competition</i><br>+ <i>time</i>    | Divide students into small groups, and give each group the same starting point. Ask students to brainstorm in their groups for five or ten minutes. The group with the most detailed mind map is the winner.   |
| <b>E.</b><br>+ <i>extension</i><br>+ <i>competition</i><br>+ <i>time</i> | After generating the mind maps, according to the activity in Modification E, play the song and ask students to identify any ideas that they wrote down and that appear in the song. The team wins who came up with the most ideas also in the song.  |



## Pre-listening 9: Picture Predictions

**Purpose:** To generate interest and introduce vocabulary related to the song, and activate background knowledge about the topic

**Level:** All

**Time:** 15 – 20 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a large picture or a photograph related to the theme of the song and hang it on the board. Optional: you may write the title of the song underneath the picture to help students make their predictions.

### Instructions:

1. Show the picture to the students and explain that it represents a story.
2. Tell the students that together they are going to create the story.
3. Prompt the students to help them create the story. You can begin by asking them who the characters are, where they live, when the story took place, what happened first, etc.
4. Invite students to construct the story orally as a whole class, prompting them when necessary and teaching them vocabulary when needed. Alternatively, you can divide the class into small groups to write the story.
5. Tell students they are going to listen to a song about the same picture, and they should compare their story to the one they hear in the song.

### Modifications:

- |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| <b>A.</b> | + <i>groups</i><br>- <i>difficulty</i>                            | Divide the students into small groups of three or four. Show them the picture, and ask each group to create a title for the song (instead of a story) based on the picture. Ask each group to read their title aloud. The class can vote on the funniest or most creative title. Tell them the real title and see which prediction was the closest. Move on to predicting what the song is about. |
| <b>B.</b> | + <i>groups</i>   | Divide the students into small groups and tell them the title of the song. Ask the students to predict what will probably be in the picture.  |
| <b>C.</b> | - <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>art</i>                               | Give the students the title of the song, and teach them any new vocabulary words. Ask them to draw a picture to go with the song. When they finish, they can compare their pictures with the one you have.  |
| <b>D.</b> | + <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>past tense</i>                        | Use questions to prompt the students to re-tell the story using the past tense. Example questions:<br><br><i>When did the story take place?</i><br><i>What happened first?</i><br><i>What happened second?</i>  |
| <b>E.</b> | - <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>scaffolding</i><br>+ <i>materials</i> | Use several pictures to help students predict the possible content of the song, especially for longer songs or for topics that the students may not have much background knowledge about.   |



## Pre-listening 10: Can You See What I See?

**Purpose:** To generate interest and introduce vocabulary from the song, and activate background knowledge about the topic

**Level:** All

**Time:** 25 – 30 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a large picture or a photograph related to the theme of the song and hang it on the board. The picture should contain many items or details that students will find in the picture. Optional: choose a line from the song that corresponds to the picture.

### Instructions:

1. Divide students into small groups of three or four. Tell them that in each group there should be one recorder who writes down what the other students say. Ask the recorder to write the letters of the alphabet down the left side of a piece of paper.
2. Tell students that they have ten minutes to complete the alphabet list. They need one word beginning with A, one word beginning with B, one with C, and so on; however, all of the words must be in the picture you are going to show them. Any word that appears in the picture and is listed next to the correct letter will be counted as correct. They will get one point for each correct word on their list.
3. Show the groups the picture. If groups at the back of the class are having trouble seeing it, you can allow them to move back and forth between the picture and their group recorder. You can help students if they are having difficulty. (For example, students will often write 'girl' for G and or 'boy' for B, but they forget things like 'arm' for A.)
4. When time is up, tell the recorders to stop writing. Ask each group to exchange lists with another group, and ask the new group to count the number of correct words. Reward the winning group with a prize or applause.
5. Tell students that the picture relates to the song. (Optional: write the corresponding line from the song next to the picture.) Ask them to predict what the song may be about. Ask them to predict which of the words on their lists will be in the song.

### Modifications:

- |           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>A.</b> | - <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>memory</i><br>- <i>time</i> | Show the students the picture for only 45 seconds. Have all of the students in the group look at the picture. As a group, have the students make a list of all the things they remember seeing in the picture (without listing them alphabetically). You may show the picture to the students a second time, if desired.   |
| <b>B.</b> | + <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>synonyms</i>                | Show students the picture, and ask them to name as many things in the picture as possible. Then have students come up with synonyms for each of the words. The group with the most words wins.   |
| <b>C.</b> | - <i>difficulty</i><br>- <i>time</i>                    | Choose eight to twelve items in the picture for students to find. Tell the students the letters that these words start with, and have them find one word that starts with each of those letters.   |
| <b>D.</b> | + <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>word forms</i>              | Write on the board the words for eight to ten items that can be seen in the picture in both their singular and plural form. You can provide some distractors that are incorrect. For example, you might write <i>child</i> , <i>children</i> and <i>childs</i> on the board. Have students circle the correct form of the word to match whether that item appears in the picture once or multiple times. |



- E. - difficulty  
- time

### Modifications (cont.)

Create a worksheet that contains one line for each item that you want students to find. On the line, provide one blank for each letter in the word, and fill in the first letter. Ask students to find and fill in the rest of the letters. If needed, you can provide more than one letter in the word. An example is given below.

m a n \_\_\_\_\_  
b \_\_\_\_\_  
n \_\_\_\_\_ p \_\_\_\_\_  
s h \_\_\_\_\_



## Pre-Listening 11: It Could Be / There Might Be

**Purpose:** To generate interest and introduce vocabulary from the song, and activate background knowledge about the topic

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a large picture or photograph related to the theme of the song and hang it on the board. Cover the picture with about five or six strips of plain paper so that the students cannot see the picture. Optional: choose one line or phrase from the song that is related to the picture.

### Instructions:

1. Divide the students into pairs. You may need to pre-teach language forms necessary for guessing (*It might be...; It could be...; I think it is ...; I am sure there is ...*).
2. Tell students that you will show them only part of the picture, and using the language forms presented in Step 1, they should try to guess what the picture is about.
3. Remove one strip of paper so that only one part of the picture is revealed.
4. Ask students to describe what they see. Then ask them to guess what else might be in the picture based on what they can see. They can discuss their guesses in pairs.
5. Then remove another strip of paper revealing more of the picture. Again, in pairs, students can make predictions. Their predictions will become more definite as the activity continues.
6. When all the slips of paper are removed, you can then ask students to predict, based on the picture, what the song might be about. Optional: once all the slips of paper have been removed, write the line or phrase that you selected from the song on the board next to the picture. Using the picture and the line or phrase ask students to make their predictions.

### Modifications:

- A. + groups  
+ time

Instead of putting the picture on the board, cut the picture into four to six pieces. Divide the students into the same number of groups as you have picture pieces, and give each group one piece. Ask each group to guess what the picture might be without looking at the picture pieces held by other groups. Ask each group to share their guesses with the class. Then the whole class together puts the picture back together on the board. Compare the class's guesses with the re-assembled picture.





- Modifications (cont.)**
- B.** + *groups*  
+ *difficulty*  
+ *speaking*  
+ *time*
- Divide students into pairs as in Modification A. Show Student A only half of the picture with instructions to describe this half to Student B. Then have the students change positions and reveal the other half of the picture to Student B. In this way both students will have the opportunity to dictate half of the picture to their partner and to draw half of it.
- C.** + *groups*  
+ *materials*  
- *art*
- Make enough copies of the picture for each group to have one, and cut out each of the objects in the picture. Divide the students into small groups. Give one set of cut-out objects to each group. Then describe the locations of each of the objects based on the complete picture. Have the groups re-create the picture by arranging them on their desks. When they have finished, let students compare their pictures to the original.
- 

### Pre-Listening 13: How Many Questions in a Minute?

**Purpose:** To generate interest and introduce vocabulary from the song, activate background knowledge about the topic, and practice asking and answering questions

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 15 – 20 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a large picture or a photograph related to the theme of the song and hang it on the board.

**Instructions:**

- Divide the students into small groups of three. Everyone should be able to see the picture.
- Assign a different role/task to each group member. Suggested the following roles:  
**The Questioner** asks as many questions about the picture as possible in three minutes. Questions can be about anything in the picture. Examples:  
*What is the girl doing?*  
*What color is this?*  
*Why do you think the girl is swimming there?*  
**The Answerer** answers the questions.  
**The Counter** counts how many questions were asked during the time limit.
- After they have finished, students should switch roles. Repeat this activity two more times so that every student has a chance to play each role.

**Modifications:**

- A.** + *difficulty*
- Tell the Counter to count only questions when they are formed grammatically. If there is a problem with the question, the Counter should ask the Questioner to reformulate the question correctly before proceeding to the next question.
- B.** + *difficulty*
- Have the Questioner use each of the question words that you write on the board:  
*Who? What? Where? Why? How?*
- C.** - *difficulty*  
+ *competition*  
+ *time*
- Divide students into groups. Give the groups five or ten minutes to come up with as many questions as they can. The group who creates the most questions wins. Then rearrange the students in new groups, and tell them to ask one or two of questions developed by their former group. The new group members should answer them.
- 





## Index of Pre-Listening Activities for *American Rhythms* Units

### Pre-Listening Activities

<i>American Rhythms</i> Units	1. Four Corners	2. One Title – Several Words	3. Swat	4. Stanza Creation	5. Unscramble Sentences	6. Find Someone Who...	7. What Do You Know About...?	8. Brainstorming & Mind Making	9. Picture Predictions	10. Can You See What I See?	11. It Could Be / There Might Be	12. Picture Dictation	13. How Many Questions...
1. Lessons in Life	*				*A							*	
2. Champion			*E	*E		*							
3. Stronger & Stronger		*			*B			*					
4. You Made Me Laugh		*		*	*								
5. A Lot of Days Are Gone							*	*	*				
6. Good Morning, New Orleans	*D						*						*
7. Simple Down	*					*		*					
8. El Paso					*		*		*E				
9. Not Afraid		*	*E								*		
10. Can't Stop								*A	*A		*		
11. Into the Garden			*B		*A					*			
12. Hey, Little Minivan	*C		*B					*D					
13. Further Down				*	*					*A			
14. Just Like Everyday People	*A							*					*
15. The Time Is Now				*			*					*	
16. Peace		*						*D			*		
17. Supertalents		*	*A			*D							

Letters indicate which modification in the pre-listening activity applies



## Section 2: Listening Activities

After preparing students for the song with pre-listening activities, the next step is the actual listening activity. Sometimes this step is referred to as while-listening or during-listening. When using songs or listening activities, it is important that the students have a specific task to complete while listening. Students can do many things while listening that help to focus their attention on particular aspects of the songs. Among other things, students can be asked to listen:

- for particular sounds or words
- for detailed information
- for the main ideas

Teachers often wonder how many times songs should be played for students. The answer depends on your own students' needs and interests. You should play the song enough times that most students can understand at least some of it, while still keeping the students interested and focused on the song. Remember that you can play the song again during singing and post-listening activities.

Included below are a number of listening activities that can be used with almost any song. The amount of time required will vary depending on the length of the song and the number of times you choose to play it.

### *Listening Activities:*

Listening 1: Relax and Enjoy! .....	18
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Included activities require very few or no materials. You can find examples of activities that require specific materials in **Parts 2.2** and **2.3** of the book, where there are specific lesson menus and accompanying materials for all of the songs included on the *Sing Out Loud: Traditional Songs* and *American Rhythms* CDs. For your reference, an index of song units that model listening activities is provided at the end of this section (including references to additional songs and song units that are available online).



## Listening 1: Relax and Enjoy!

**Purpose:** To enjoy listening to the song

**Level:** All

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes (the length of the song plus time for discussion)

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare two to five questions to guide the class discussion about the song. Some questions you might ask include the following:

- *Does it seem like a happy or sad song?*
- *Does it seem to be a serious or humorous song?*
- *Do you like the song? Why or why not?*
- *Does the song remind you of any other songs you know?*

### Instructions:

1. Tell the students they are going to hear a song and that you want them to focus on how the song makes them feel and what it reminds them of.
  2. Play the song once.
  3. Have a general class discussion about the students' ideas and feelings using the questions that you prepared.
  4. After the discussion, select another activity for the second listening.
- 

## Listening 2: Mixed-Up Lyrics

**Purpose:** To listen for specific words or phrases, and make print and sound connections

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 15 – 25 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a handout that divides the song into sets of lines. Cut the sets apart. For lower level classes, you may divide the song into four or five sections, and for more advanced students, you can use every line or sentence. You may use only a section or part of the song. For the standard procedure, you will need one copy of the handout for every three students in the class.

### Instructions:

1. Divide students into groups of three.
2. Explain that you are going to give them the lyrics from the song, divided into sections. They should read through the lyrics and put the sets into the order they think is correct. Give them about five minutes to do this. Clarify any new vocabulary.
3. Tell students that as you play the song they should check their work and put the strips in the correct order.
4. Play the song two or three times so the majority of students have the strips correctly ordered. Then check their answers.

### Modifications:

- A. + *movement*  
- *difficulty*

Count how many lines there are in the song and prepare one strip of paper for each line of the song. Divide the class into groups with this number of students in each group. (For example, if the song has 15 lines, then each group should have 15 students.) Give each student one line of the song. Ask the students to stand up. Tell them that as they listen to the song they need to stand in the correct order according to their sentence and what they hear.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>B.</b> - <i>groups</i><br/>+ <i>difficulty</i></p>  | <p><b>Modifications (cont.)</b><br/>Give students a page of lyrics (or put them up on the board), with the lines out of order. Tell students to put them in the correct order as they listen to the song by numbering the lines correctly.</p>  |
| <p><b>C.</b> + <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>materials</i><br/>+ <i>pictures</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p> | <p>Find a picture to represent the meaning of each stanza. Divide students into small groups. As you play the song, pause after each stanza to allow groups to discuss which picture might represent the theme of that section of the song. You may play each section more than once, if needed. Repeat this procedure for all stanzas. Ask groups to compare the order in which they put the pictures.</p> |
- 

### Listening 3: Mixed-Up Pictures

**Purpose:** To listen for specific words or ideas

**Level:** All

**Time:** 15 – 25 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a set of large pictures related to the main ideas or keywords in the lyrics and hang them on the board in random order. Put a letter under each picture: A, B, C, and so on. This activity works best if you choose words that occur only one time in the song.

**Instructions:**

1. Show the pictures to the students. Make sure they know what the pictures represent and the correct pronunciation of any vocabulary represented in the picture.
2. Tell the students to write the numbers 1 to X (depending on how many pictures you have) on a piece of paper. For example, if you have ten pictures, students should number from one to ten.
3. Explain to the students that they are going to listen to the song, and they need to decide which picture was mentioned first, second, third, and so on. They should write the correct letter next to the number on their paper.
4. Play the song two or three times so that most of the students ordered the pictures correctly. Check their answers.

**Modifications:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>A.</b> + <i>materials</i><br/>+ <i>time</i><br/><br/>(<i>optional</i>)<br/>+ <i>groups</i></p> | <p>Divide students into groups. Photocopy and cut up the same set of pictures for each student (or each group). Follow Steps 1, 3, and 4 above and have students work individually or in groups to put the pictures in order by arranging them on the desk.</p>  |
| <p><b>B.</b> + <i>difficulty</i><br/>- <i>materials</i><br/>- <i>pictures</i></p>                    | <p>Instead of using pictures, write the vocabulary words or phrases from the song on the board in random order. Follow Steps 1 and 2 above and tell students to write down the words/phrases in the order that they hear them. You can also mix pictures and words on the board.</p>   |
| <p><b>C.</b> + <i>movement</i><br/>+ <i>groups</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p>                             | <p>Prepare copies of the pictures that students can hold. Divide the students into equal groups, each group containing the same number of students as pictures. Position each group in different parts of the room, and ask each student in the group to hold up one of the pictures. As they listen to the song, have the group members move around so that they are standing in the same order in which the pictures are mentioned in the song. At the end, compare the arrangement of each group.</p> |
- 



## Listening 4: Dictation

**Purpose:** To listen for details, and write phrases and sentences

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 20 – 25 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Note to the Teacher:** Students should not be able to view the lyrics of the song before the activity.

**Preparation and Materials:** None

### Instructions:

1. Play the song and pause after each line or couple of lines. Determine when to pause according to the pace of the song.
2. Allow time for students to write what they heard before continuing with the song.
3. After listening to the song a couple of times in this manner, ask students to check what they have written by comparing and discussing with others.
4. Ask the students to read the lines they heard, or write their lines on the board.
5. The class can then look at the board, compare what they have written, and, if there are differences, try to decide which is the correct version.
6. Play the song again so that everyone can check their work.

### Modifications:

- |           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>A.</b> | + <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>time</i>                     | Divide the students into small groups. Allow a longer section of the song to play (up to six or eight lines). Tell students to write down as much as they can understand. Then give them time to work together to recreate the lyrics.   |
| <b>B.</b> | - <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>scaffolding</i><br>+ <i>materials</i>           | Give each student a worksheet for writing the dictations. Provide some lines of the lyrics on the page, followed by a blank line for the students to fill in. This allows students to focus on producing accurate but shorter dictations.  |
| <b>C.</b> | + <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>writing</i><br>+ <i>time</i> | This activity can also be combined with Crazy Lyrics (Singing / Music Activity 8). Divide students into groups, and ask each group to come up with a new version of the song or stanza. Then, combine two groups together to listen to and write down the other group's new version of the song as it is dictated. |
| <b>D.</b> | - <i>difficulty</i><br>- <i>time</i>  | For longer songs, you may choose to use only one stanza or the chorus of the song.   |

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## Listening 5: Listening for Rhyming Words

**Purpose:** To listen for details, and recognize and discriminate between similar sounds

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 10 – 20 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a handout containing the song lyrics. Select three to five words from the song that rhyme with other words in the song.



### Instructions:

1. Write the words that you have selected on the board, pronounce them for the students, and make the students practice saying the words.
2. Tell the students that they will listen to the song and identify words that rhyme with the words you have written on the board by circling or underlining the rhyming words on their copy of the song.
3. Working individually or in pairs, have the students listen to the song and identify rhyming words.
4. Students may check their work with each other.
5. Play the song again so that everyone can double-check their answers.

### Modifications:

- |           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>A.</b> | + <i>difficulty</i><br>- <i>materials</i><br>+ <i>dictionary</i>  | Ask students to write down all of the rhyming words that they hear without looking at the lyrics. Students can also use a dictionary to check the spelling.  |
| <b>B.</b> | + <i>extension</i><br>+ <i>competition</i><br>+ <i>time</i><br><br>( <i>optional</i> )<br>+ <i>dictionary</i> | After finding the rhyming words in the song, students can try to extend their rhyming lists. Using a dictionary and/or working in groups, students can find as many words as possible that rhyme with the words on the board. This activity may be carried out as a competition to see whose list of rhyming words is the longest. |
| <b>C.</b> | + <i>difficulty</i>   | Ask students to identify all the rhyming words in the song, or all the rhyming words that occur at the end of each line of the song. Use this modification only for songs that have a limited number of rhyming words.   |
| <b>D.</b> | - <i>materials</i>  | Write the lyrics on the board. Ask individual students to come to the board to circle rhyming words as the class listens to the song.  |

---

## Listening 6: Listening Gap-Fill

**Purpose:** To listen for details

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 15 – 30 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Note to the Teacher:** Traditional listening gap-fill activities require preparation of a handout with the song's lyrics printed on it. Some of the words in the song are omitted and replaced with gaps. The teacher decides which words to remove based on whether you want the students to focus on an element of grammar or particular vocabulary words.

**Preparation and Materials:** Create a gap-fill handout using the song lyrics (you may use only part of the song). Make a copy of the handout for each student or group of students.

### Instructions:

1. Distribute the gap-fill handout. Tell students to work individually or in pairs to guess the missing words before listening to the song. Tell them to write their guesses in the blank spaces.
2. As you play the song, students check what they've written (or fill in the missing words if they have not written anything in the space).
3. After students have listened several times, ask them to compare answers with a partner.
4. Then play the song again so that everyone can double-check their answers.



**Modifications:**

- A. + *difficulty*  
- *time* Play the song once. Students may listen without guessing the missing words beforehand. Then ask them to write down the missing words as they hear the song for the second time.
- B. + *sound discrimination* Prepare a gap-fill worksheet in which each gap contains two rhyming words or two similar-sounding words. Have students listen and circle the word they think is correct. Example:  
*Send it by (mail / rail).*
- C. + *difficulty*  
+ *sound discrimination* Create a gap-fill by removing all of the rhyming words in the song.
- D. - *difficulty*  
+ *materials*  
+ *pictures* Provide small pictures that the students can use to complete each gap instead of writing. Or provide two small pictures in each gap and tell students to circle the picture that matches the word that they hear.
- E. - *materials* Write the gap-fill activity on the board, providing a number for each gap. Have students write down their answers for each gap on a piece of paper.
- F. - *difficulty* Provide a synonym or other rhyming word underneath each gap-fill line as a hint for students.
- 

**Listening 7: Musical Words**

**Purpose:** To listen for and write specific words or phrases

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 10 – 25 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Preparation and Materials:** Choose several places in the song where you plan to stop the music. If possible, write down how many seconds between each stopping place to help you stop the music at the same times the next time through. Optional: make a copy of the song lyrics for each student or group of student.

**Instructions:**

1. Tell students that you are going to play a part of the song and then stop the song suddenly.
2. Explain that they need to write down as many words as they hear while the song is playing.
3. Play the song. Have the students write down any words they hear.
4. Stop the song suddenly and tell the students to stop writing.
5. Have students call out the words that they wrote down. On the board, generate a list of all of the words they heard for that section of the song.
6. Play the next section of the song and repeat Steps 4 and 5. Repeat the procedure until you have finished the rest of the song.
7. Listen to the song a second time, again stopping at the same places. As they listen to each section, ask students to check the list on the board for each section, crossing off any words that did not appear in that section. Optional: you can provide a copy of the song lyrics to help students check the lists.

**Modifications:**

- A. - *difficulty*  
- *time* Complete this activity with only one or two stanzas (or the chorus) of the song.



- B. + *competition*  
+ *groups*  
+ *difficulty*

**Modifications (cont.)**

Divide students into small groups and let each group generate its own list of words. After listening to the song one time, have each group exchange lists with another group. Play the first section again, and tell the groups to check their lists, giving one point for each correct word. Record on the board each team's score for that section. Repeat this procedure with the remaining sections. The team with the most points at the end wins.

- C. + *groups*  
+ *main ideas*

After listening to a section of the song, divide the students in groups. Ask each group to generate a description of the theme or topic of that section of the song.

- D. + *groups*  
+ *difficulty*  
+ *main ideas*  
+ *time*

Divide students into groups and have each group write a paraphrase for each line, stanza, or section of the song.

**Listening 8: Song Bingo**

**Purpose:** To listen for specific words, introduce vocabulary from the song, and make print and sound connections

**Level:** All

**Time:** 10 – 15 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Preparation and Materials:** Choose 20 – 30 words from the song and write them on the board in random order.

**Instructions:**

1. Make sure that the students know the meaning and pronunciation of all of the words.
2. Tell the students to draw a blank 3 x 3 grid (see below) on their papers. Instruct them to write one word from the board in each square.
3. Tell them that you are going to play the song and they should cross off the words in their grids when they hear them. The first student to cross off all nine of their words should shout *Bingo!*
4. After the first student has finished, play the song once more so that the whole class can check their answers.

Example: 3 x 3 grid






**Modifications:**

- A.** + *difficulty*  
+ *verb forms* Write five to ten verbs that occur in the song on the board. Tell students to fill in their grids by choosing a verb and writing down one form of that verb (for example, the past tense or the present tense in third person singular).
- B.** + *difficulty*  
+ *time* Instruct students to draw a larger grid and use more words to fill in the grid.
- C.** + *difficulty*  
+ *phrases* Instead of using individual words, use phrases in the boxes. This works especially well for common word combinations.
- D.** + *difficulty*  
+ *definitions*  
+ *time* Tell students to select nine words for their grids. Instead of writing the word, have them write a definition for each word in the grid.
- E.** + *materials*  
+ *pictures* Do this activity using pictures. Provide small pictures for each of the words, or get the students to draw their own pictures of the vocabulary items in the grid.
- 

**Listening 9: Find the Mistakes**

**Purpose:** To listen for details and for specific words or phrases

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 10 – 20 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a handout in which a number of the words from the song's lyrics have been changed. You will need at least one copy for every three students. For long songs, you may use only part of the song or the chorus.

**Instructions:**

1. Divide students into small groups of three.
2. Tell the students that they are going to read the lyrics of a song as you play it, but there are a number of mistakes in the written lyrics.
3. Explain that when they find a mistake they should try to fix it by writing down the correct word.
4. Hand out the mistake-filled lyrics. Allow students a couple of minutes to read through them.
5. Play the song two or three times so that the students can find most of the mistakes.
6. Play the song once more to check the answers.

**Modifications:**

- A.** - *difficulty* Tell students the number of mistakes contained on the worksheet as well as the type of mistakes. Example:  
*There are two wrong words, two verb tense errors, and two incorrectly formed plural nouns.*
- B.** + *difficulty*  
+ *active/passive voice* Change a number of verbs from active into passive voice. Tell the students to rewrite the lyrics in the active voice, and then compare their revised version with the original song.
- 



## Listening 10: Did You Hear What I Heard?

**Purpose:** To listen for the main ideas and specific details

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 15 – 20 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Note to the Teacher:** Just as you can use questions for listening in class, you can use questions with songs. These can be “gist” questions that focus on the main ideas or detail questions that focus on specific pieces of information within the song. The difficulty of the questions should be tailored to your students’ age and level.

**Preparation and Materials:** Write two or three questions about the main idea, theme, or story of the song. If you wish, prepare some additional questions focusing on the details of the song. Write the questions on the board, or prepare a handout containing the questions.

### Instructions:

1. Tell the students that as you play the song, they should try to answer the questions on the board.
2. After the song is finished, ask the students to compare their answers in groups of three or four.
3. Play the song again, if needed.
4. Let the students work in groups and then check the answers with the whole class.
5. If an answer is wrong, help the students to understand *why* it is not correct.
6. If you have additional questions about specific details, use the same procedure.

### Modifications:

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| A. | - <i>difficulty</i>  | Focus on main idea questions only.  |
| B. | + <i>difficulty</i>  | Focus on detail questions.  |
| C. | + <i>difficulty</i>  | Focus on inference questions.   |
| D. | + <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>extension</i><br>+ <i>questions</i><br>+ <i>time</i> | Divide students into groups and give each group a copy of one stanza from the song. Have each group develop two or three questions for another group to answer. |



## Index of Listening Activities for *American Rhythms* Units

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Letters indicate which modification in the listening activity applies



## Section 3: Singing / Music Activities

Singing along to a song newly learned is not only fun, it can also be educational and pedagogically sound. Students not only practice using grammatical chunks of language and pronouncing new words, they also become more familiar and comfortable with rhythm and stress in English. In turn, this may help their intonation skills. Thus, it is recommended that teachers include class time after the listening activities for students to sing the song.

Some teachers may feel awkward asking students to sing in class, however, and some students really do not like singing and do not want to sing in front of others. Here are some ways that you can help students to relax and enjoy singing:

- Encourage students to tap their fingers on the desk to practice the rhythm, as other students sing.
- Ask students to listen and lip sync (move their lips according to the lyrics without actually singing).
- Refrain from asking students to stand up front. Allow them to stay at their desks to sing.
- Direct students to sit in a large circle with their backs to the center of the circle and their faces looking outward. Students will not be able to see the other students and may be less self-conscious about singing.
- Give students small instruments, such as drums or shakers, to focus on while singing. Instructions for making several simple instruments are provided in this section.
- Allocate different movements to go with different lyrics, such as swaying back and forth when they hear the word 'wind.'
- Ask students to draw pictures to accompany the words in the song and hold up the correct picture when they sing that word.

By having the students focus on something else, such as playing an instrument or doing particular movements, students are less likely to be nervous and will enjoy singing.

Included below are nine singing activities that you can adapt to almost any song. Instructions for making four homemade instruments are also included in this section.

### *Singing / Music Activities:*

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Although most of the activities included here require very few or no materials, students may feel more comfortable singing if they can see the lyrics to the song written on the board or on a handout. Thus, the lyrics to each song on the *Sing Out Loud: Traditional Songs* and *American Rhythms* CDs are included on the second page of each song unit in **Parts 2.2** and **2.3** so that they may be photocopied as handouts.

Examples of activities that require specific materials appear in **Parts 2.2** and **2.3** when these activities are applied to specific songs. For your reference, an index of song units that model these activities is provided at the end of this section (including references to additional songs and song units online).



## Singing 1: Sing Along With Me

**Purpose:** To practice pronunciation and intonation

**Level:** All

**Time:** 10 – 20 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Note to the Teacher:** This technique is especially useful in lower level classes or in mixed ability classes. Sometimes students can become overwhelmed with the pace of a song and lose their place. If this happens, it can be difficult for them to catch up. Having the teacher indicate on the board where they are in the song can help.

**Preparation and Materials:** Write the lyrics on the board or on a large poster.

### Instructions:

1. Practice singing the song with the students. While singing, use a large stick, ruler, or your hand to point on the board to the words as they are sung so that students don't lose their place in the song.
2. If some students learn the song quickly, they can come to the front and point to the words on the board. Different students can take turns.

### Modifications:

- |           |                                      |  |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>A.</b> | <i>- difficulty</i><br><i>+ time</i> | If the melody of the song is a bit difficult, start by humming it. Ask the students to hum along as you hum the first time through the song. The second time work with them on singing the refrain and hum the remaining verses. Next, depending on the difficulty of the song, you may introduce one or two verses.   |
| <b>B.</b> | <i>+ groups</i><br><i>+ time</i>     | Depending on the song, you can divide the students into call-and-response groups where one group or person sings a line and the other group responds with the next line. For example, in the song <i>Billy Boy</i> , one group could sing the mother's lines and the other group could respond with Billy's lines. This approach also works well when there is repetition in the song. |
| <b>C.</b> | <i>- time</i>                        | For long songs, sing only one stanza or section of the song. Alternatively, you can sing along with the chorus each time it appears in the song.   |
| <b>D.</b> | <i>+ groups</i><br><i>+ time</i>     | If the song contains long lines, divide students into groups and assign each group one or two lines to sing.   |
- 

## Singing 2: Disappearing Song

**Purpose:** To practice pronunciation and intonation, and to recall words and phrases

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 20 – 30 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity involves singing the song multiple times and asking students to recall words that you have erased from the song's lyrics. The number of words that you choose to erase and the pace with which you remove them will depend on the length of the song, the difficulty of the lyrics, and the level of your students. You do not need to erase a high percentage of words for the activity to be engaging and challenging. For long songs, stop after Step 4 while 50% of the words still remain.



**Preparation and Materials:** Write the lyrics on the board.

**Instructions:**

1. Practice singing the song with the students, line by line.
2. Erase approximately 10% of the words. Draw a blank space under each erased word. Practice singing the song again with the students. Make sure that they can remember and sing the missing words.
3. Erase another 10% of the words and follow the procedure in Step 2.
4. Erase an additional 20 to 30%, so that only about 50% of the words remain. Practice singing the song again.
5. Finally, erase an additional 20 to 30% so that about 20% of the words remain. Sing the song one final time.

**Modifications:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>A.</b>    - <i>difficulty</i><br/>      + <i>materials</i><br/>      + <i>pictures</i></p> | <p>Erase only key content words from the song. Replace the written form of the word with a picture of the word to help students remember the word.</p>   |
| <p><b>B.</b>    + <i>groups</i><br/>      + <i>materials</i><br/>      + <i>time</i></p>         | <p>Divide students into groups of four or five. Give each group a copy of a different stanza of the song. Ask groups to decide which words to delete from the song by cutting the word out or by coloring over words with a pen or marker. Then tell the groups to exchange stanzas and sing their new stanza.</p> |
| <p><b>C.</b>    + <i>groups</i><br/>      - <i>difficulty</i></p>                                | <p>Divide students into groups. Give each group one or two lines to sing.</p>  |
- 

### Singing 3: Old Song, New Song

**Purpose:** To explore the rhythm of words

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 40 – 55 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may be extended over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 5): 25 – 30 minutes; Session 2 (Step 6): 15 – 25 minutes, depending on how many groups there are.

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a handout with the lyrics of the song, or write the lyrics on the board.

**Instructions:**

1. Discuss with the students what types of music they like and which ones are currently popular, such as rap, hip hop, jazz, and so on. Talk about the special features of these types of music.
2. Divide students into groups of three to five based on their favorite types of music. You can have more than one group for each type.
3. Give students the lyrics. Play the song (more than once, if necessary) and ask students to follow along with the lyrics.
4. Tell the students that you want them to sing the same song with the same words, but in the new genre. Students may use the lyrics to help them learn the song.
5. Divide the students in groups to discuss their ideas and prepare their song. You may wish to give them time to practice either in class or as homework.
6. Ask each group to sing in their new song style for the class. You can encourage the groups to teach the other students their new song style. Students could vote on the best new version.



**Modifications:**

- A.** + *difficulty*  
+ *creativity* Instead of changing the type of music, tell students to adapt the lyrics and explain how they should change the song. For example: to 'make it more fun,' 'make it happier,' or 'make it sadder.' Each group can be encouraged to sing their new song for the group.
- B.** + *creativity* Ask the students to think of their favorite singer or to think of a very famous singer. Tell the students in the group to practice singing the song imitating their famous singer. Example: Sing the song like Michael Jackson might have sung it.
- C.** - *difficulty*  
- *time* Have students complete this activity just using the chorus or another section of the song.
- D.** + *difficulty*  
+ *creativity*  
+ *time* Instead of changing the type of music or individual words, the students could write a new stanza for the song. Have them develop a sequel to the story told by the song. Then write a new stanza to tell that story.
- 

**Singing 4: One Theme – Many Songs**

**Purpose:** To create a song, and practice pronunciation and intonation

**Level:** 3 and above    **Time:** 60 – 75 minutes (depending on the number of songs to be performed)

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may extend over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 2): 25 – 30 minutes; Session 2 (Step 2): 15 – 20 minutes; Session 3 (Steps 4 – 5): 20 – 25 minutes (depending on the number of songs to be performed).

**Preparation and Materials:** None

**Instructions:**

1. Divide students into small groups of four.
2. Tell the students they should work together to write original lyrics for a two-stanza song related to the theme of the song they just learned. They can use the same melody or choose a different one; however, they should avoid using the same words that were in the song they learned.
3. Give the students time to rehearse their songs.
4. Have each group perform their song. Depending on the level of the students, they can explain why they chose those lyrics and melody.
5. This activity can be made into a contest with the students in the class voting for the best song. Applause or a small reward can be given to the winning group.

**Modifications:**

- A.** + *difficulty*  
+ *rhyming* If the original song contains many rhyming words, tell students to find and use words that rhyme as they compose the lyrics for their new song.
- B.** + *scaffolding*  
+ *materials* Create a handout that will help guide students in the creation of their stanza. Include information such as how many lines to create, and how many syllables the students should use in order to mimic the stress pattern in the melody of the original song.



- Modifications (cont.)**
- C.** + *scaffolding* Provide students with a list of words or phrases as a “bank” to help them generate ideas for the new lyrics. This bank can be provided on a handout, or you can generate the word bank as a class by brainstorming possible words that are related to the theme of the song and writing them on the board. Elicit nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that students can use.
- D.** - *time* Ask each group to create one new line for the new song. Then, as a class, combine the lines into a stanza.
- 

## Singing 5: Show Me the Word

**Purpose:** To make print and sound connections, and learn vocabulary from the song

**Level:** All

**Time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Provide paper or cards for the students to write words on. Choose approximately 20 words for the students to focus on and write them on the board.

### Instructions:

1. Divide the students into small groups. They will divide the words among them. Example: for a group of five, each student will have four different word cards.
2. Have students copy the 20 words onto 20 separate pieces of paper or cards. Tell them to distribute the words so that each student has an equal number of word cards.
3. Tell the students that the class will sing the song as they sit in their groups. Whenever students hear and sing any of the word on their cards they need to raise the corresponding card above their heads.
4. Play the song and ask students to sing along, raising their words whenever they sing those words.
5. To make it more competitive, you could select a class judge to watch the groups and make sure they raise the correct words.

### Modifications:

- A.** - *difficulty*  
+ *materials*  
+ *art* Select only ten different words. Distribute two words to each student. Tell the students to draw a picture of the two words assigned to them. Then play the song and follow Steps 3-4 above.
- B.** + *phrases* Instead of individual words, you can provide phrases for students to write down, sing, and hold up.
- C.** + *movement* Students need to position their chairs around the room, spreading out so that they can easily jump up and sit back down. As students raise the word cards above their heads, they also jump in the air with their cards. Have a judge determine which students can do this the fastest.
- D.** - *difficulty*  
+ *materials*  
+ *art* Prepare a large picture to represent each word that you write on the board. Hang the picture on the board next to the written word. Have students copy the word, draw a similar picture, or do both on their word cards.
- 





## Singing 6: Your Moves

**Purpose:** To learn vocabulary from the song, and represent word meanings with actions

**Level:** All

**Time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Choose a set of 10 – 15 keywords or phrases from the song that can be represented with motions or gestures. If a few words are repeated often in the song, then choose fewer keywords or phrases. Prepare a handout containing the lyrics of the song or write the lyrics on the board. Circle the keywords that you have selected. For long songs, you may choose to use only one stanza, one section, or the chorus of the song.

### Instructions:

1. Give students a handout of the lyrics or show them the lyrics on the board.
2. Elicit possible motions that could be associated with each keyword or phrase. Example: Possible motions for the word *tall*
  - a) *students reach their hands up straight toward the sky, or*
  - b) *students hold one hand up at eye level with the palm facing the floor*
3. After the students have suggested a number of different mimes for the keyword or phrase, then ask the class to choose the one they like the best.
4. Practice that mime and then go on to the next keyword until each keyword has a mime. Practice all of them so that students can remember them.
5. Play the song and have the students sing along and do the correct mime when they hear the word or phrase.

### Modifications:

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| A. | + <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>time</i>  | Go through the song line by line and have students offer an interpretation of the meaning of the lines or stanzas. Ask students to think of a mime or series of mimes to represent those interpretations. Play the song and get students to perform the mimes. |
| B. | + <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>competition</i><br>+ <i>time</i> | Divide students into small groups that need to come up with their own mimes for the selected words. Ask each group to perform their version of the song, and let the class vote on the best performance.   |
| C. | + <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>competition</i><br>+ <i>time</i> | Choose two groups to compete against each other. Then have students perform the mimes at the same time and vote for the group that performs the correct mimes most often.  |
| D. | - <i>materials</i>  | If students have sung the song before, write the keywords or phrases on the board (without providing a handout with the lyrics). Follow the steps above to elicit movements, and then sing the song, pointing to each phrase on the board as it is sung.       |

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## Singing 7: Drum and Instrument Circles

**Purpose:** To explore the rhythm of words

**Level:** All

**Time:** 10 – 30 minutes (depending on the length of the song)

**Note to the Teacher:** Instructions for making four homemade instruments, which can be used with this activity, follow these instructions. Instruments can be made during a class period before you want to sing the song.



**Preparation and Materials:** Collect and bring in different types of drums or other rhythm instruments (such as can and bottle shakers, rattle sticks, rain sticks, and bottle xylophones). If this is not possible, then students can clap their hands or tap on the desks.

**Instructions:**

1. Ask students to stand or sit in a circle. Give each one a drum. If there are not enough drums, they can share or some students can clap their hands or tap on the desks.
2. Provide a model of how the song can be sung with the beats by tapping out a few words or a line of the song. Focus on the coordination of word stress and the drum beats. Ask the students to repeat the model back to you using the instruments.
3. Go through the song one time, pausing periodically to allow students to get back together.
4. As the students become more comfortable with the idea of coordinating the stress and beats, you can introduce different speeds and rhythms.
5. After practicing, sing the song one more time and have students play the drums or instruments while they sing. If you wish, ask students to take turns being the drum circle leader.

**Modifications:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>A.</b> + <i>materials</i>                  | Invite students to bring in their own rhythm instruments from home on the day you wish to sing the song. You can sing the song along with your new class orchestra.   |
| <b>B.</b> + <i>materials</i><br>+ <i>time</i> | Before the song lesson, do a separate lesson on making instruments. Give different sets of directions to different groups on how to make simple instruments. Photocopy the example directions on the following two pages. Either bring in the materials that the students need or ask them to bring in materials from home. Finally, after the instruments have been constructed, the groups can play them while singing along. |
| <b>C.</b> + <i>difficulty</i>                 | Have some students follow the steps above while others sing along with the song.  |
- 



## Homemade Instruments

### Instrument 1: Can and Bottle Shaker (Maracas)

#### Materials:

- An empty metal drink can or plastic/glass bottle
- Small pebbles, dried beans, or uncooked rice
- Paper
- Tape



#### Instructions:

Wash out the can or bottle and let it dry completely. Put a small number of pebbles (or dried beans or uncooked rice) in the bottle. Cover the top or the hole with your hand. Shake it and listen to the sound. Decide whether you need to add more pebbles/beans/rice. Cut the paper into a circle large enough to cover the top of the can or bottle. Place the paper circle on the top and tape it into place to seal the pebbles/beans/rice into your shaker. Decorate the outside of the shaker with pictures or stickers.



### Instrument 2: Rattle Stick

#### Materials:

- Six metal bottle caps
- A stick, approximately 6 – 12 inches (about 15 – 30 centimeters) long
- One large nail and three small nails
- A hammer
- Markers or paint to decorate the stick (optional)



metal bottle cap

#### Instructions:

Using a large nail, hammer a hole into the center of each bottle cap. Next, using a smaller nail, fasten two bottle caps (smooth sides facing each other) on the side of the stick near one end. The two caps should be nailed in loosely so that they rattle in a similar fashion to the bells in the picture. Then nail the next two bottle caps under the first set (so that they are not touching the first set), and nail the final two under that. If you wish, decorate the handle of the stick.



### Instrument 3: Rain Stick

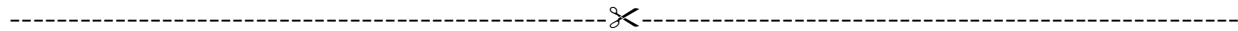
#### Materials:

- One cardboard tube, any length
- 20 – 30 nails that are as long as the diameter of the tube
- One to two cupfuls of dried beans or pebbles
- Fabric and paper to cover the ends and the outside of the tube
- Glue
- Tape



#### Instructions:

Starting at one end of the tube, gently hammer or push nails into the spiral seam of the tube. The nails should go across the tube to the other side, but they should not stick out the other side. Turn the tube and continue pushing in nails following the spiral pattern. If the tube does not have a seam, push the nails along the length of the tube in a spiral pattern (pictured at the right). The nails should be about one-half inch or one inch apart. Cover one end of the tube with paper and tape it closed. Pour enough beans or pebbles into the tube to fill it about half way. Cover the other end of the tube with paper and tape it closed. Now wrap the entire tube in paper or fabric and glue it down so that the nails do not come out. Slowly tilt the rain stick back and forth. Listen to the beans or pebbles pouring past the nails, like rain on a metal roof.



### Instrument 4: Bottle Xylophone

#### Materials:

- Five or six glass bottles
- Water
- A stick or spoon to tap the bottles



#### Instructions:

Put a different amount of water into each bottle to create six distinct sounds. When you tap each bottle you can produce a different tone.



## Singing 8: Crazy Lyrics

**Purpose:** To explore the rhythm of words, use different parts of speech, and think about why words are appropriate and inappropriate in particular contexts

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** This works well as a follow-up or extension activity after students have practiced singing the song using one of the other activities in this section.

**Preparation and Materials:** Provide each group with a “crazy lyrics” handout. To create a crazy lyrics handout, first underline a number of keywords (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) in the lyrics of the song. Under each underlined word, write its part of speech. Then erase or white out the actual word so that you have lyrics with blank spaces with the part of speech printed under each blank. Example:

A \_\_\_\_\_ was in her mouth; a \_\_\_\_\_ was in her eye.  
(noun - thing) (noun - thing)

I said “I come from \_\_\_\_\_; Susanna, don’t you \_\_\_\_\_!”  
(noun – place) (verb)

### Instructions:

1. Divide the students into groups of four and assign one recorder per group. Give a copy of the crazy lyrics to the recorder and tell him/her *not* to show the paper to the other members of the group.
2. Tell the recorder to ask the other group members to suggest the different parts of speech or types of words that are missing. Example:  
*Give me a noun, a thing, and one team member says cat;*  
*Give me another thing, and another team member says banana;*  
*Give me a place, and one member says France; and*  
*Give me a verb, and one member says teach.*

The recorder then writes the words the members say into the appropriate blanks. For the example above, this could be:

*A cat was in her mouth; a banana was in her eye.*  
*I said I come from France; Susanna, don’t you teach!*

3. The recorder can now read the new crazy song to the group.
4. Play the song so that the group can practice singing the new crazy song. If they wish, encourage the groups to sing their crazy songs for the whole class.

### Modifications:

- |           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>A.</b> | - difficulty<br>+ scaffolding<br>- time   | Provide students with a list of potential words to use in the song. Include 20 – 30 potential words, and make sure to include several words for each of the types of words indicated on the crazy lyrics handout.  |
| <b>B.</b> | - difficulty<br>+ materials<br>+ pictures | Provide pictures that students can use to complete the new song. Pictures can either be provided in the blanks, or on a separate handout.  |
| <b>C.</b> | + difficulty<br>+ verb forms              | Remove the verbs from the song. Underneath the blank line, write the tense in which the verb should occur. You can change the tense requirement to make the lyrics seem funnier. Or you can practice forming plural/singular and present/past tense verbs. |



## Singing 9: The Halls Are Alive With the Sound of Singing

**Purpose:** To write and perform dramatic dialogue

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 50 – 70 minutes (more time may be necessary for rehearsing and performing, depending on the number of groups)

**Note to the Teacher:** A musical is a dramatic play with songs in it. Examples: *The Sound of Music*, *West Side Story*, *Cats*, and *The Lion King*. This activity may extend over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 3): 20 – 25 minutes; Session 2 (Steps 4 – 5): 30 – 45 minutes.

**Preparation and Materials:** Make a copy of the song's lyrics for each group or write the lyrics on the board.

### Instructions:

1. Write the word 'musical' on the board and ask students what it means. Discuss or explain the concept and list any famous musicals that they know. Teach (or model!) the phrase and idea of "bursting into song."
2. Tell students that they are going to write a short three- to five-minute play. Make sure students have a copy of the lyrics. They must use at least six lines from a song they have learned in class and integrate those lines into their play. Tell them that when they are finished writing the play they will perform it for the class. They will speak the new lines that they wrote and sing the lines they used from the song.
3. Divide the students into small groups of four or five. Allow them time to write their play. Help them with their different drafts.
4. Give the students time to rehearse their plays during or outside of class.
5. Ask each group to perform their musical for the class. The other classmates can listen and evaluate the musical based on some agreed criteria. Examples: the funniest, most creative, most carefully pronounced, most dramatic, etc.

### Modifications:

- |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| <b>A.</b> | - <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>mime</i><br>- <i>time</i> | Lower level classes can be encouraged to create a melodrama based on the song. Each group can mime what is happening during the story that the song tells. Take turns having one group of students sing the song while another group performs their mimes.  |
| <b>B.</b> | - <i>music</i>  | This activity can also be done as a play instead of a musical. Select a main theme from the song that would lend itself to different dramatic interpretations. Example: a girl breaking up with her boyfriend. Ask the students in groups to write a short skit on the theme, to practice and perform it for the rest of the class. |



## Index of Singing / Music Activities for *American Rhythms* Units

### Singing / Music Activities

<i>American Rhythms</i> Units	1. Sing Along With Me	2. Disappearing Song	3. Old Song, New Song	4. One Theme — Many Songs	5. Show Me the Word	6. Your Moves	7. Drum and Instrument Circles	8. Crazy Lyrics	9. The Halls Are Alive With the Sound of Singing
1. Lessons in Life	*	*B			*A				
2. Champion		*		*	*B				
3. Stronger & Stronger	*C		*B						*
4. You Made Me Laugh		*	*					*	
5. A Lot of Days Are Gone	*C	*					*		
6. Good Morning New Orleans	*B	*	*						
7. Simple Down	*				*D	*A			
8. El Paso	*			*B			*		
9. Not Afraid	*D			*					*
10. Can't Stop	*B					*	*		
11. Into the Garden	*C		*C			*			
12. Hey, Little Minivan	*C				*			*	
13. Further Down			*	*C				*	
14. Just Like Everyday People	*		*					*	
15. The Time Is Now	*			*		*			
16. Peace		*			*		*		
17. Supertalents	*B, C			*C			*		

Letters indicate which modification in the singing activity applies



## Section 4: Post-listening Activities

While it is possible to stop after doing only pre-listening, listening and singing activities, it can be very valuable to extend the instructional sequence to include a number of post-listening activities to increase the educational value of the song. These activities can focus mainly on one skill (speaking, writing, or reading), or they can integrate several skills.

The post-listening activities included in this book are divided into three main sections: 1) Speaking, 2) Reading, and 3) Writing. Although these activities are categorized by one particular skill, they often integrate multiple skills.

The post-listening activities below can be used with almost any song. Select several activities from these sections based on your student's needs and interests. Experiment by using different activities with different students, different levels, and different songs. Most of the activities require very few or no materials. If they do require specific materials, you can find them in **Parts 2.2** and **2.3** of the book, which provides specific lesson menus and accompanying materials for the songs on the *Sing Out Loud: Traditional Songs and American Rhythms* CDs.

### Section 4.A: Post-listening – Speaking Activities

Activities to practice speaking are important in helping students use English for communicative purposes. The activities in this section are intended to give students a communicative task that allows them to produce extended spoken language. While some activities ask students to produce spontaneous speech, other allow for more planning time and scaffolding before students are expected to speak.

Included activities require the students to rely upon and practice a range of critical thinking and personal interaction skills, such as working together to make choices, to find out and summarize classmates' opinions, and to be creative with language.

Following are five activities that students can do to practice their speaking skills. An index of model units is provided at the end of this section.

*Post-listening – Speaking Activities:*

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## Post-listening - Speaking 1: What Do YOU Think?

**Purpose:** To ask and answer questions, and summarize and present information

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 40 – 50 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may be extended over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 4): 20 – 25 minutes; Session 2 (Steps 5 – 8): 20 – 25 minutes.

**Preparation and Materials:** Pre-teach the ideas of surveys and results. Explain the purpose of a survey, the types of questions to be asked, and how to calculate and present results.

### Instructions:

1. Divide the students into small groups of four or five.
2. If needed, review what a survey is, which involves asking a set of questions to a large number of people and then summarizing the answers in some sort of visual chart, diagram, or list.
3. Tell the students that they are going to conduct a class survey based on the song (or based on music in general). Tell them that in their groups they will need to write at least five questions. You may need to help by giving them some suggestions. (See examples below.)
4. Tell the students that they can work together in groups to write the questions, but that every student will need a copy of the questions. Give the students 10 – 15 minutes to plan their survey and write their questions.
5. When the groups are finished preparing questions, tell the students that everyone in the group must now ask four or five other students (depending on the class size) to answer the questions.
6. Make sure students write down their answers carefully.
7. After the students have finished, get them to sit back down in their original groups. Tell them they will present their findings to the class (either orally or visually by means of a poster). You may wish to teach language related to presenting findings. Examples:  
*six out of ten students...; the majority of the class likes...;*  
*most of the students...; 20 percent of the students felt...*
8. When they are ready, allow each group to make an oral presentation or display their posters.

### Some sample survey ideas:

1. Personal opinions about the song. Example questions:  
*Did you like the song?*  
*How did it make you feel?*  
*Why did you feel that way?*
2. The theme of the song. Example questions for the theme *love*:  
*Have you ever had your heart broken?*  
*How many times?*  
*Are you romantic?*
3. Their general tastes in music. Example questions:  
*Do you like pop music?*  
*Which pop musicians do you like?*  
*What's your favorite song?*

### Modifications:



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>A.</b>    - <i>movement</i><br/>          - <i>time</i></p>                                       | <p>Have groups pair up and exchange questions. After Step 4 above, put two groups together. Each member of Group A should ask a member of Group B one of the prepared questions and write down each person's response. Then Group B asks Group A one question. Continue to ask and answer questions in this manner.</p>  |
| <p><b>B.</b>    - <i>movement</i><br/>          - <i>time</i></p>                                       | <p><b>Modifications (cont.)</b><br/>Get students to develop multiple-choice survey questions. Have the groups take turns coming to the front of the classroom to ask their questions. Have the class choose responses by raising their hands. After all groups have asked their questions and recorded the answers the class gave them, allow the groups five minutes to summarize their results. Finally, ask each group to present their results orally.</p> |
| <p><b>C.</b>    - <i>difficulty</i><br/>          - <i>time</i></p>                                     | <p>Prepare the surveys for the students. Distribute them to the groups, who will use these surveys to ask questions, summarize results, and eventually make an oral presentation.</p>  |
| <p><b>D.</b>    + <i>extension</i><br/>          + <i>charts/graphs</i><br/>          + <i>time</i></p> | <p>Have students prepare (during class or as homework) charts or graphs that display their survey results for use in an oral presentation.</p>   |
- 

## Post-listening - Speaking 2: Act the Part

**Purpose:** To practice pronunciation and intonation, and use critical thinking skills to resolve a problem

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 25 – 30 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** It is not necessary for every group to perform their role-play in front of the class. Groups can work on their own trying to solve the problem and then report on what they discussed.

**Preparation and Materials:** Choose a situation that is related to the theme of the song, and that contains some sort of problem that the students need to resolve through their chosen roles. Prepare a set of cards that describe a situation in which the students might find themselves and possible roles the students will play when solving the situation.

### Instructions:

1. Briefly introduce the situation that will be the focus of the role-play.
2. Tell students that they will be divided in groups and each member of the group will be assigned a different role.
3. Divide the students into groups according to the number of people in the role-play. For example, if there are three roles, the class should be divided into three groups.
4. Distribute the role cards so that everyone in the same group has the same role card. For example, if you have roles for *mother*, *daughter*, and *father*, then you will have all of the *mothers* in one group, all of the *daughters* in a second group, and all of the *fathers* in a third. Give the students time to discuss their roles and to brainstorm things they might say.
5. Have the students in each group count off so that each student is assigned a number. Then tell all of the 1's to sit together, all of the 2's to sit together, all of the 3's, and so on. In this way there will be one person representing each role in each new group. For example, one group would contain one *mother*, one *daughter* and one *father*.
6. Give the students a specific amount of time to conduct the role-play.



- Remind them again of what the situation is and what problem or issue they are trying to resolve.
7. Each person acts according to his or her role as they discuss the situation or problem. Go around monitoring the groups and helping them if they have any difficulties.
  8. When the time is up, lead a class discussion that focuses on the situation or problem. Ask each group if they resolved the problem and how they resolved it.

**Modifications:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>A.</b>    - <i>difficulty</i><br/>                 + <i>scaffolding</i><br/>                 + <i>materials</i><br/>                 - <i>time</i></p> | <p>Give the students a partially completed script or skit to use in the role-play.</p>   |
| <p><b>B.</b>    - <i>difficulty</i><br/>                 + <i>scaffolding</i><br/>                 + <i>materials</i></p>                                    | <p>Provide simple sentences/phrases that students should try to incorporate into the role-play in a creative way. You can use lines/phrases adapted from the song or develop your own.</p> |
| <p><b>C.</b>    + <i>extension</i><br/>                 + <i>time</i></p>  | <p>Have several groups perform their role-plays for the class. Then hold a class discussion about the similarities and differences between the role-plays.</p>                             |
| <p><b>D.</b>    + <i>difficulty</i><br/>                 - <i>materials</i><br/>                 + <i>creativity</i></p>                                     | <p>Do not provide role cards. Instead, briefly describe the roles orally and allow students to develop the roles in their groups.</p>  |

**Post-listening - Speaking 3: Small Group Discussion and Summary**

**Purpose:** To think critically and express opinions

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 25 – 35 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** The quality of class discussions often depends in part on the quality of the questions. Make sure that the questions you select are not too difficult for your students. If students do not have sufficient language to discuss the topic, they will not be able to complete the task.

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare discussion questions that are related to the theme of the song and write them on the board.

**Instructions:**

1. Divide the students into small groups of four or five. A larger group will make it difficult for all students to contribute to the discussion.
2. Tell the students their task is to discuss the questions. You can assign them all of the questions or assign different questions to different groups.
3. When all groups have finished their discussions, the teacher can ask each group to comment on one aspect: the most surprising opinion, the funniest opinion, or the similarities and differences among groups.

**Modifications:**



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>A. + <i>extension</i><br/>+ <i>summary</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p>                           | <p>Select one member of each group to record the group's comments. That person will make a summary report to the whole class after all questions have been discussed. When all groups have finished their discussions, ask the students who were appointed to give summaries to speak to whole class. You may limit the oral summary to one or two questions so that the summaries do not become too long. The teacher and other groups can comment on the opinions that were expressed by members of other groups.</p> |
| <p>B. + <i>equal participation</i></p>  | <p><b>Modifications (cont.)</b><br/>Give each student in the group three small slips of paper. When someone speaks, that person must put one of their slips of paper into the middle. Whenever a student has used up their three slips, then he or she is not allowed to speak again until the other group members have also used up their three slips of paper.</p>  |
| <p>C. - <i>difficulty</i><br/>- <i>time</i></p>   | <p>Create controversial statements with which students can agree or disagree instead of open-ended discussion questions. Students are to explain aloud why they agree or disagree with these statements.</p>  |
| <p>D. + <i>extension</i><br/>+ <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>questions</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p> | <p>Give students a topic and have groups develop their own discussion questions. Then these questions are exchange among groups. Proceed to follow Steps 1-3 above.</p>   |
- 

## Post-listening - Speaking 4: Silly Story

**Purpose:** To tell stories, and practice using new vocabulary in sentences

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 15 – 20 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Choose 15 – 18 key content words from the songs (either verbs or nouns) and write them on small cards. Each group of five students will need one set of cards.

### Instructions:

1. Divide students into groups of five. Have them sit around a table or move their desks to face each other. Place the pack of cards face down in a stack on the table or desk, so that the students cannot see the words.
2. Tell the students that they are going to tell a story using the words on the cards. The first person in the group selects the top card and makes up a sentence using that word. Example: If the word is *rain*, the first student might say, *Once upon a time a little girl was walking in the rain.*
3. The second person then selects the next card. That person must continue the story by making up a sentence using the word on the card. Example: If the word is *yellow*, the person might say, *The little girl was wearing a yellow coat.*
4. Students continue telling the circle story until they have gone through all of the cards.
5. At the end of the activity, you can ask a few groups to tell what happened in their stories.

**Modifications:**



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>A. + <i>extension</i><br/>+ <i>writing</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p>                                 | <p>Ask the students to write down their stories. Post all of the stories on the walls around the classroom. Ask the students to read the other stories and vote on which one is the best, the funniest, or the most creative.</p>   |
| <p>B. - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>scaffolding</i><br/>+ <i>materials</i><br/>+ <i>pictures</i></p> | <p>Include both a small picture and the written word on each card.</p>  |
| <p>C. - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>writing</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p>                                | <p>Give each group a smaller set of words. Have students write down their sentences/short stories. Have each group share their short story. Then, as a class, come up with transition sentences that link all of the short stories together into one longer story.</p>  |
| <p>D. + <i>humor</i></p>  | <p><b>Modifications (cont.)</b><br/>To make a really silly story, have the first student follow Step 2 above. Then, have the second student choose a card, but this time they must <i>repeat</i> the sentence that the first student came up with, replacing one word in the sentence with the word on the card. Repeat until all of the word cards have been used, and a really strange story results.</p> |

## Post-listening - Speaking 5: I'd Like to Ask You About...

**Purpose:** To ask and answer questions

**Level:** All

**Time:** 40 – 50 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may be extended over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 3): 20 – 25 minutes; Session 2 (Steps 4 – 5): 20 – 25 minutes.

**Preparation and Materials:** None

### Instructions:

1. Initiate a general class discussion about the characters in the song:

*Who are they? Male or female? Old or young?*

2. Ask the students which character they think is the most interesting. Write that character's name on the board. If the character doesn't have a name in the song, then elicit an appropriate name for the character.
3. Divide the students into pairs. Tell them that they are radio reporters and they are going to interview the song character for a popular radio show. Tell them to compose between eight and ten questions to ask the character. Give the students about 15 minutes to do this.
4. When they are finished, tell one student in the pair to be the reporter and the other student the character to be interviewed. Instruct the reporters to stand up, walk around the room, and find one 'sitting' character to interview. The reporter should sit with their new partner, and together the new pair carries out the interview with one student asking the questions and the other student answering as if he/she were the song character.
5. If you like, at the end, ask the students to go back to their original pairs where they can switch roles and the characters have a chance to be the reporters.

**Modifications:**



- A.** - *difficulty*  
- *time*      Generate the questions as a whole class instead of having students create the questions in pairs.
- B.** - *difficulty*  
- *time*      Have students come up with only four or five questions.
- C.** - *movement*  
- *time*      Divide students into groups of four to six students instead of pairs. Have groups generate the questions. Then, have one member of each group serve as the radio reporter, and assign each of the remaining students a character from the song. Complete the interviews in the small groups without moving the reporters.
- D.** + *extension*  
+ *difficulty*  
+ *writing*  
+ *time*      Have each group write a report that summarizes how different characters responded to the questions.
- 



Index of Post-listening – Speaking Activities for *American Rhythms* Units  
Speaking Activities

<i>American Rhythms</i> Units	1. What Do YOU Think?	2. Act the Part	3. Small Group Discussion	4. Silly Story	5. I'd Like to Ask You About
1. Lessons in Life				*	
2. Champion		*			
3. Stronger & Stronger				*	
4. You Made Me Laugh				*	
5. A Lot of Days Are Gone				*	
6. Good Morning New Orleans	*B				
7. Simple Down			*		
8. El Paso					*
9. Not Afraid			*		
10. Can't Stop		*B			
11. Into the Garden					*
12. Hey, Little Minivan	*				
13. Further Down			*		
14. Just Like Everyday People				*	
15. The Time Is Now		*			
16. Peace				*B	
17. Supertalents	*C				

Letters indicate which modification in the speaking activity applies



## Section 4.B: Post-listening – Reading Activities

In **Parts 2.2** and **2.3** of the book there are short readings that accompany each song on the *Sing Out Loud: Traditional Songs* and *American Rhythms* CDs. These readings are based on the history of the song, its composer or singer, a theme related to ideas in the song, its musical genre, or a combination of these topics. The level of the readings varies; most of those that accompany the *Sing Out Loud: Traditional Songs* units are suitable for students at Level 2 (see page 7); others (especially those included in the *Sing Out Loud: American Rhythms* units) may be more appropriate for Level 3 and above. If you think the reading text is too difficult for your students, you might either find a different reading passage related to the theme or simplify the reading task.

As with listening activities, when introducing a reading text to students it is very beneficial to use a pre-reading activity. Pre-reading, like pre-listening, can help students practice their prediction strategies, introduce them to particular vocabulary and cultural references, and give them a specific reading task. Some of the pre-listening activities in the book may be adapted to pre-reading activities, or you may wish to develop your own.

Following are five activities that students can do while reading the texts. You may try a variety of these activities, however, the specific texts related to each song on the *Sing Out Loud: Traditional Songs* and *American Rhythms* CDs found in **Parts 2.2** and **2.3** may also be used for general comprehension-based activities. An index of model units is provided at the end of this activity section.

### *Post-listening – Reading Activities:*

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## Post-listening - Reading 1: A Range of Questions

**Purpose:** To read for factual details, and to combine, infer, evaluate, and reflect on information in a reading text

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 20 – 40 minutes, depending on the length of the reading text

**Note to the Teacher:** Many teachers give students comprehension questions to answer while they are reading a text. However, it is important to give students a range of question types so that they practice different critical thinking skills. Examples of question types:

- **focusing** on one piece of factual information: *How old is Tom?*
- **combining** several facts from the reading to get one answer: *Who is older, Tom or Bob?*
- **inferring** the answer based on the text: *Tom was caught stealing. Based on the rest of the story, what punishment do you think he received?*
- **evaluating** parts of the texts: *Do you think the description of the brothers was good?*
- **relating** the text to one's own personal experience or opinion: *What would your mother do if she caught you stealing?*

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a number of questions based on the reading text. Include at least one question of each type above. Make a copy of the reading text for each student.

### Instructions:

1. After doing a pre-reading activity, write the questions on the board. Ask students to read through the questions. They do not need to copy them.
2. Set a time limit for the students to read the text and answer the questions. Students can work individually on the questions.
3. When they are finished, divide students into pairs or groups of three to check their answers together. Give them sufficient time to compare their answers.
4. Go through the answers with the students. When they give incorrect answers, help them to understand why they are incorrect.

### Modifications:

- |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| <b>A.</b> | + groups<br>+ difficulty<br>+ questions<br>+ time | Divide students into groups. Ask students to read the text, and create their own comprehension questions based on the text. Have groups exchange and answer each other's questions. After all groups have answered one other group's questions, the class can discuss a few of the questions. |
| <b>B.</b> | - difficulty<br>- time                            | Create true/false or multiple-choice questions.   |
| <b>C.</b> | - difficulty                                      | Provide hints along with the questions that indicate where in the text students should look for the answers. Example:<br><i>look at paragraph 2</i>   |
| <b>D.</b> | + difficulty<br>+ materials<br>+ writing          | Put the questions on a worksheet. Give students the worksheet and have them write short answers to the questions.   |



## Post-listening – Reading 2: Main Ideas and/or Specific Details

**Purpose:** To write and answer questions that focus on main ideas and details

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 30 – 40 minutes in class (part of this activity can also be given for homework)

**Note to the Teacher:** To read for the “gist” means to search for the main ideas. There may be one overall main idea plus separate paragraphs may have their own main idea. To read for detail is to find specific information within a text. Details give support to the main ideas. A main-idea question asks about the general ideas of a text or paragraph. Example: *Why have many wild animals become extinct?* A detail question is much more specific and often can be answered with a name, a date, or a fact. Example: *How many buffalo were killed by the frontiersmen who settled the Great Plains?*

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare copies of a short reading text related to the theme of the song.

### Instructions:

1. Explain to students the difference between a main-idea question and a detail question.
2. As a homework assignment, tell students to write questions based on the reading text. Two or three of the questions should be about main ideas and four or five questions about specific details.
3. In class, have students exchange their questions with classmates. Tell them to answer the questions they received, and encourage them to discuss their answers with whoever wrote the questions.

### Modifications:

- |           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| <b>A.</b> | - <i>time</i>  | Assign the above activity, but in class, choose a number of students to write one main-idea question and one detail question on the board. Then ask the rest of the students to think of answers for the questions while they are reading.   |
| <b>B.</b> | + <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>time</i>   | Divide the class into small groups of four. Ask each group to write eight questions for the text: three main-idea questions and five detail questions. Have each group exchange their questions with another group. Give them time to answer the new questions. Pass the papers back to the original groups to correct the answers.                    |
| <b>C.</b> | - <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>scaffolding</i>                                  | Provide one question of each type as a model for students.   |
| <b>D.</b> | + <i>extension</i><br>+ <i>groups</i><br>+ <i>materials</i><br>+ <i>time</i> | Prepare a handout with three to five main-idea questions, three to five details questions, and three to five questions of some other type. Divide students into groups, and have students choose two main-idea and two details questions to ask another group. Have students explain why they think each question is a detail or a main-idea question. |



## Post-listening – Reading 3: Jigsaw Reading

**Purpose:** To summarize information presented in texts, speak and listen in order to present information, practice note-taking, and collaborate as part of a team

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 50 – 60 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** A jigsaw reading activity begins with the separation of a text into sections or paragraphs, which are handed out to different groups to read. Each group reads a different section of the text. (Jigsaw readings are not the same as scrambled readings in which a text is cut up and one group has all of the pieces to put together.) This activity may be extended over several class sessions. Session 1 (first grouping): 25 – 30 minutes; Session 2 (second grouping): 25 – 30 minutes.

### Preparation and Materials:

I. *Copies of the Paragraphs.* Divide the number of students in the class by the number of paragraphs in the reading to figure out the number of copies of each paragraph you will need. Example: If you have 28 students in your class and the reading text has four paragraphs ( $28 \div 4 = 7$ ), you will need seven copies of each paragraph.

Label the copies of each paragraph with corresponding numbers and letters in the following way: Copies for Paragraph 1 should be labeled 1-A, 1-B, 1-C, 1-D and so on; for Paragraph 2, 2-A, 2-B, 2-C, 2-D, and so on. Label the other paragraphs in the same way.

In this activity, students are assigned to groups two separate times: the first time, all of the students in one group will read the same paragraph together (for example, all Paragraph 1 or all Paragraph 2). Students should not be able to see the other paragraphs of the text while they are reading their paragraph.

In the second grouping, students form new groups that contain one student from each of the previous groups so each group member represents a different paragraph. Thus, each student in the group has a different paragraph to explain (from the first grouping) to the rest of the group. In the end, everyone understands the whole reading.

II. *Note-taking Forms.* Students will need to make a note-taking form for this activity. Tell students to take a sheet of paper and divide it into sections by drawing lines to separate the page into the same number of sections as the number of paragraphs. They should use one section for their notes about their own paragraph, and one section for each of the other paragraphs that they will learn about in the second grouping. Example:

Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2
Paragraph 3	Paragraph 4



## Instructions:

### First Grouping:

1. Divide the class into groups. There should be the same number of groups as there are paragraphs in the reading. Example: If there are three paragraphs, then there should be three groups; if there are four paragraphs, then there should be four groups, etc.
2. All of the students in the group receive the same paragraph from the reading. Example: All of the students in Group 1 are given Paragraph 1.
3. Instruct students to read their paragraph and to write summary notes in the appropriate space on the note-taking form they made.
4. Tell them to identify and define three to five keywords in their paragraph, so that they will be able to explain these words. Students can help each other to complete this task.
5. Emphasize to students that they will each be responsible for sharing the information and words from the paragraph. The group must be sure that each member has adequate notes and can speak about the ideas in that paragraph.
6. As students move to new groups for the second grouping, the teacher should take the paragraphs away from them so that they must rely on their notes.

### Second Grouping:

1. Ask students to move to their second group by finding the other students who have the same capital letter printed on their copy. All of the A's sit together, all of the B's sit together, and so on.
2. Instruct the students who read Paragraph 1 to begin. They should explain their paragraph and vocabulary to the rest of their groups. As students are explaining paragraphs, the others in their group take notes in the space provided on their note-taking form, in the box for Paragraph 1.
3. Next the students who read Paragraph 2 should speak, then the students with Paragraph 3, and so on.
4. When everyone in the group has finished speaking, each student should have a complete set of notes that summarizes the reading.
5. Next are several options: You could lead the class in a discussion of the reading and highlight keywords that aid in understanding it. You could ask students to write a summary of the reading based on their notes. You could give students a quiz about the reading and see which group took the best notes.

## Modifications:

- |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| <b>A.</b> | <i>+ scaffolding</i><br><i>+ make decisions</i>                   | This jigsaw reading activity could be used as a decision-making task. Tell students that you need to make a choice about something.<br>Example:<br><i>What type of car should you buy for your family?</i><br><i>What is the best way to stay healthy?</i><br>Use a series of paragraphs that give information about different items or options, and ask students to complete the jigsaw task as described above. Once everyone in the second grouping has completed the set of notes, ask the groups to make a recommendation and state reasons. |
| <b>B.</b> | <i>- difficulty</i><br><i>- time</i>                              | Provide a partially completed outline or summary for each paragraph. This will help students to identify the information they need to summarize.  |
| <b>C.</b> | <i>- difficulty</i><br><i>+ scaffolding</i><br><i>+ materials</i> | Provide three to five questions to each group in the first grouping. They should try to answer these questions for their paragraph. Then in the second grouping, have the groups use the answers to those questions to create their summary.  |
| <b>D.</b> | <i>+ extension</i><br><i>+ writing</i><br><i>+ time</i>           | Have all of the students use their complete set of notes to write a full summary of the text either in class or as homework.  |



## Post-listening - Reading 4: Our Land, Your Land

**Purpose:** To think critically, make connections between the reading and the world, practice comparative adjectives, and develop an understanding of geography

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 40 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity works well with readings that contain information about places or geographical features, but may not be appropriate for readings without this type of information. Examples of reading texts that work well with this activity: see the units for *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* and *Down in the Valley*.

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare maps of the United States and your own country. Gather information about the geographical features of both countries. Get students to read the text for comprehension.

### Instructions:

1. Ask students to circle any references to geography that they can find in the reading, such as mountains, rivers, or plains. (Students should have already read the text for comprehension.)
2. Draw a basic outline of a map of the United States on the board. Ask students to copy it and to draw the geographic features from the reading onto the map. You might also tell them about other features of U.S. geography.
3. Then ask the students to draw a basic outline of their own country and put in the main geographic features.
4. Review comparative language, such as *The U.S. has longer rivers than our country; Our country has a bigger desert than the U.S.*
5. Divide students into small groups and ask them to see how many comparisons they can make between the two maps. You can ask them to find both similarities and differences.

### Modifications:

A. + *history*

Some of the readings in **Part II** focus on U.S. history. After reading the text for comprehension, ask the students to circle any references to historical dates. Put these dates on the board and ask students what was happening in the U.S. at that time. Then ask them about the history of their own country. Ask them to explain what was happening in their country at the same time.





## Post-listening - Reading 5: Reading Groups

**Purpose:** To practice reading comprehension skills, conduct research, think critically, and collaborate as part of a team

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 45 – 50 minutes in class (groups may need much more time outside of class)

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity can be used throughout the course. Choose a different group of students to carry out this activity for different songs throughout the year. Allow the assigned group one week to prepare before the presentation.

**Preparation and Materials:** Assign this project as a group activity. Students may need materials such as colored pens/markers, glue, and paper for making posters.

### Instructions:

1. Divide the class into small groups of five or six.
2. When you want to use a reading in class, select one group to prepare for that reading. On the day that you use the reading, it is their task to be the “reading teachers”. A different group will be assigned for the next reading.
3. Assign a different role/task to each member of the group. Suggested roles are as follows:

**The Leader** introduces the activity and moderates the presentation. The Leader monitors the time and makes sure that class members participate.

**The Historian/Geographer** presents background information about the reading. Depending on the reading, this could be historical, cultural or geographical information.

**The Wordmasters** look up keywords and teach the new vocabulary to the class. They write sentences or draw pictures to illustrate the meanings of the words.

**The Questioners** create reading comprehension questions based on the reading. After the Wordmasters and the Historian/Geographer present their information to the class, then the Questioners write the comprehension questions on the board. The class reads the text and tries to answer the questions. After that the Questioners call on students to answer.

**The Discusser** creates discussion questions related to the reading. These questions should elicit students’ opinions about the reading and the topic. The Discusser and the Leader organize the rest of the class into small groups to complete the discussion.

### Modifications:

- A.** - *difficulty*  
- *time*
- To make this an in-class activity only, divide the class into groups. Give each group one paragraph from the reading, and within each group assign roles according to Step 3 above. For an in-class activity, have the Historian/Geographer present a summary of the paragraph rather than background information, and the Questioners and the Discussers come up with one or two questions. Once groups are ready, go through the text one paragraph at a time.
- B.** - *difficulty*
- Divide students into five groups, one group for each of the five roles described above. Assign each group one of the roles. Have the groups work together to complete the tasks described above. In the following class, divide students into new groups that contain one person for each role. Have each group go through and discuss the reading with each person leading the discussion about their assigned topic/role.



## Index of Post-listening – Reading Activities for *American Rhythms* Units

<i>American Rhythms</i> Units	Reading Activities				
	1. A Range of Questions	2. Main Ideas/Specific Details	3. Jigsaw Reading	4. Our Land, Your Land	5. Reading Groups
1. Lessons in Life		*			
2. Champion	*D				
3. Stronger & Stronger			*A		
4. You Made Me Laugh					*
5. A Lot of Days Are Gone				*	
6. Good Morning, New Orleans					*
7. Simple Down		*			
8. El Paso	*D				
9. Not Afraid		*			
10. Can't Stop					*A
11. Into the Garden		*			
12. Hey, Little Minivan			*A		
13. Further Down		*			
14. Just Like Everyday People		*			
15. The Time Is Now					*A
16. Peace	*D				
17. Supertalents	*D				

Letters indicate which modification in the reading activity applies





## Section 4.C: Post-listening – Writing Activities

Writing in a foreign language offers unique challenges for many students, but it also offers an opportunity to focus explicitly on language forms along with the functions that those forms serve in real communicative situations. The writing activities included in this book can be completed by students individually or working together to produce a short text. Each of the activities below asks students to focus on a particular communicative task. While some activities are more creative, others require students to conduct background research, form critical opinions, summarize and present information, or use language to communicate with individuals outside the classroom.

As with listening, when introducing a reading text to students, it is very beneficial to use a pre-writing activity. Pre-writing can help students plan before they carry out the writing task, introduce them to particular vocabulary and cultural references, and give them a specific writing task. You may be able to adapt some of the pre-listening activities in Section 1 as pre-writing activities, or you may wish to develop your own.

Following are six activities that students can do to practice their writing skills in a communicative task. An index of model units is provided at the end of this section.

### *Post-listening – Writing Activities:*

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Post-listening – Writing 2: I Think This Song Rocks!.....	57
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## Post-listening – Writing 1: Songwriter Histories

**Purpose:** To write short narratives in the past tense

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 40 – 50 minute

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may be extended over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 5): 25 – 30 minutes; Session 2 (Step 6): 15 – 20 minutes.

**Preparation and Materials:** None

### Instructions:

1. Divide students into pairs or small groups of three. Ask them to brainstorm some ideas about the mood of the song: *happy, sad, joyful*, and so on. Ask them to explain why they feel that way.
2. Then ask the students to brainstorm about the songwriter: age, personality, background, and so on.
3. Finally, ask the students why they think the songwriter wrote this song. Example prompts:  
*He was sad about...*  
*She was angry about...*  
*He was happy that....*
4. Tell the students that they are going to write a short story about the life of the songwriter before he/she wrote the song.
5. Give the students time in their groups to discuss their ideas and write their stories. You may wish to review the past tense with them and chronological connectors such as:  
*first*                      *next*                      *after that*                      *finally*
6. When the students are finished, post the stories on the walls of the classroom for other students to read, or have the groups read their stories aloud. You can give a round of applause or a small reward for the funniest or most clever stories.

### Modifications:

- |    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
| A. | + <i>prediction</i>   | Alternatively, students can write about the songwriter and what happened after the song was written.   |
| B. | + <i>prediction</i><br>+ <i>future tense</i><br>+ <i>conditionals</i> | Pretend that the song is brand new. Ask students to write a story about what will happen as a result of the song, both in the world and to the songwriter.                                       |
| C. | - <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>scaffolding</i><br>+ <i>materials</i>     | Provide a comic strip or picture that could represent the sequence of events that led up to the writing of the song. Ask students to write a story or the dialogue to accompany the comic strip. |
| D. | + <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>research</i><br>+ <i>time</i>             | As homework, assign students to research the songwriter outside of class. Have them bring in this information to use in writing their stories in groups.   |

---

## Post-listening - Writing 2: I Think This Song Rocks!

**Purpose:** To critically evaluate a piece of music, and write a short, persuasive review of the song.

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 40 – 50 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may be extended over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 5): 30 – 35 minutes; Session 2 (Step 6): 10 – 15 minutes.



**Preparation and Materials:** Gather information about song reviews. Prepare a list of topics related to the theme of the song, its musical genre, or types of instruments used in the musical arrangement.

Examples:

- *Types of instruments*
- *Adjectives about music*
- *Nouns about music*

**Instructions:**

1. Divide students into groups of three. Each group needs one recorder, who takes notes while the other students speak. Tell the students that you are going to shout out a topic, and they need to make a list of all of the words they know on that topic in two minutes.
2. When the students are ready, shout *Types of instruments*. The recorders in the groups should write a list of instruments while the other students make suggestions.
3. After two minutes, shout *STOP* and ask the groups to count how many words they have. Continue with a second race, this time shouting *“Adjectives about music”* and a third race, *“Nouns about music.”*
4. You can reward the team with the most words after each race or the total words after all of the races.
5. When the races are finished, ask each team to write five to ten of their words on the board. Check that the students know the meanings of these words.
6. Put the word “Review” on the board and tell the students what a song review is. Explain that a review normally follows the following pattern:
  - *(Name of Singer’s) new song (Title) is (strong opinion).*
  - *Four to six sentences to justify the writer’s opinion about the song; details about the song characteristics, such as the lyrics, beat, rhythm, melody, instruments, vocals, and so on.*
  - *Concluding remark or prediction.*
7. In their groups ask students to listen to the song again and then write a review (see example below). Groups can share their reviews with other groups, or post reviews on a class bulletin board.

**Example of a song review:** *Jippney Sears’ new song “Thistle” is absolutely delightful. The funky and hypnotic mandolin introduction is fabulous, while the thumping bass beat makes you want to jump up and dance. The lyrics, written by Bob Jones, are both clever and cynical. Even with her typically thin vocals, Sears delivers them with style. “Thistle” may well make people reevaluate Ms. Sears and is sure to top the charts all year.*

**Modifications:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>A.</b> - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>scaffolding</i><br/>+ <i>materials</i></p> | <p>Provide a partially completed review, along with a bank of descriptive words that can be used in the review. Ask students to complete the review by choosing descriptors based on their opinions of the song.</p> |
| <p><b>B.</b> - <i>difficulty</i><br/>+ <i>scaffolding</i><br/>+ <i>time</i></p>      | <p>Pre-teach phrases that help students express their opinions about the song. Examples:<br/><i>I like this song because...</i><br/><i>This song sounds...</i></p>   |



## Post-listening – Writing 3: Paragraph Posters

**Purpose:** To write cohesive paragraphs, and represent ideas visually

**Level:** 2 and above    **Time:** 100 – 130 minutes (students may do some preparation outside of class)

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may be extended over several class sessions:

Session 1 - learning about paragraph type (Step 1): 30 minutes

Session 2 – writing (Step 2): 30 – 40 minutes

Session 3 - poster preparation (Steps 3 – 4): 20 – 30 minutes

Session 4 - poster display (Step 5): 20 – 30 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a topic related to the song. (optional) Gather crayons or markers, old magazines, glue, and poster paper. Prepare a model paragraph for the students to study.

### Instructions:

1. Tell the students what kind of paragraph you wish them to write: descriptive, persuasive, classifying, and so on. Present the features of this paragraph type by analyzing model paragraphs, working on topic sentences, and looking at the language typical of that paragraph type.
2. Describe a particular topic related to the song. Ask students to write the type of paragraph for that topic that you have been discussing. Example: students could write a descriptive paragraph about their hometowns or a classification paragraph about types of pollution.
3. When finished, students create posters using pictures from magazines or their own drawings. They can glue their paragraph onto the poster or write it directly onto the poster.
4. Instruct students to write their names only on the back of the posters.
5. Ask students to put their posters on a classroom wall. Give students a reading task, such as guessing the poster's author or choosing the best paragraph poster. Criteria for recognizing outstanding paragraphs can be determined by the teacher. Example: most creative, best written, best use of vocabulary, etc. Tell the students to walk around the room, read the paragraphs, and complete the task.

### Modifications:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>A.</b> + <i>groups</i>                             | Have students write the paragraph and make the poster in groups. When the poster is displayed, tell half of the members of the group to stand by the poster and explain its content to their classmates while the other members of the group move around the classroom and look at the other groups' posters. They can then switch roles. |
| <b>B.</b> - <i>space</i><br>- <i>time</i>             | Have students write out their paragraphs on paper instead of posters. Divide students into small groups, and have each student read his/her paragraph to the group.   |
| <b>C.</b> - <i>difficulty</i><br>+ <i>scaffolding</i> | As a whole class generate ideas for the content for the paragraph. Then have students write paragraphs individually or in small groups.   |
- (optional)  
+ *groups*



## Post-listening – Writing 4: Story Extensions

**Purpose:** To write creative narratives

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** 45 – 55 minutes

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity may be extended over several class sessions:

Session 1 (Steps 1 – 6): 25 – 30 minutes

Session 2 (Steps 7 – 8): 20 – 25 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** Prepare a handout with the lyrics of the song or write them on the board.

### Instructions:

1. Divide the class into three groups: A, B, and C.
2. Make sure students understand the meaning of the lyrics.
3. Decide, with input from the students, who the main characters in the song are and give them names, if they do not have any in the song.
4. Individually or in pairs, tell students in Group A to write a narrative paragraph about something that could have happened to the characters *before* the events described in the song.
5. Individually or in pairs, tell students in Group B to write a narrative paragraph about what *did* happen to the characters according to the song.
6. Individually or in pairs, tell students in Group C to write a narrative paragraph about what could happen to the characters *after* the events in the song.
7. Assemble new groups with one student from Group A, one from Group B, and one from Group C. Have them read their stories to each other in sequence. Some of the story combinations may be humorous, while others may seem nonsensical.
8. Ask them to make changes so that they have one coherent story. Then invite one or two groups to share their combined stories with the class.

### Modifications:

- |           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
| <b>A.</b> | - <i>groups</i><br>- <i>time</i>            | Instead of putting students from different groups together, students in each group can write stories individually and then share their stories with their group members. They can then select the group's best story and have its author read it to the rest of the class. |
| <b>B.</b> | + <i>competition</i><br>- <i>difficulty</i> | Divide students of three. Have every group write only about what will happen <i>after</i> the song. Tell the students to post their paragraphs on the wall so that everyone can vote on which paragraph has the best ending.   |
| <b>C.</b> | + <i>songwriter</i>                         | If the song does not have a clear main character, have students write the narrative about the songwriter or singer of the song.  |

---

## Post-listening – Writing 5: Guest Musicians / Speakers

**Purpose:** To generate interest in music and the arts, host a guest in the classroom, and write invitations and thank-you letters

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** 120 – 170 minutes (for the complete activity; much less if only parts of the activity are completed)

**Note to the Teacher:** The complete activity will extend over a period of time and should be divided between several class sessions:



- Session 1 - writing the invitation (Steps 1 – 3): 30 – 40 minutes
- Session 2 - preparing for the guest speaker (Steps 5 – 7): 30 – 50 minutes
- Session 3 - guest speaker (Step 8): 30 – 40 minutes
- Session 4 - writing thank-you letters (Step 9): 30 – 40 minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** If possible, identify a musical guest from your community who might agree to come and speak to the class in English. You should speak to potential guests before initiating this project. Prepare sample invitations and thank-you letters.

**Instructions:**

1. Ask the students to brainstorm a list of musical guests that they would like to invite to speak to the class. These musicians should be real people in the community or country who might possibly come. You may wish to add to the list one or two people who you know will definitely come.
2. Divide students into groups of four, and tell them to select one person from the list.
3. First, they need to send the person an invitation. Teach the correct format for writing letters of invitation. (See notes and examples below.) Show the students some examples and discuss salutations, content, and complimentary closings. Each group should write a letter of invitation to their chosen person. Help the students to find the addresses and mail the letters.
4. Wait for any responses!
5. If a group gets a positive response, instruct the class on how to introduce a guest speaker. (See notes below.) Discuss the parts of an introduction including the opening, providing biographical information about the speaker, the welcome, and the time limit.
6. Divide students into pairs and tell them to interview each other briefly. Then get them to practice introducing one another to the whole class. Decide which student will introduce the guest speaker.
7. Divide students into small groups. Tell them to brainstorm questions they would like to ask the guest. Each group should make a list of around five questions. They may practice asking each other these questions.
8. Invite the guest to come to class and have the class ask their questions after the presentation.
9. During the next class, teach the correct format for writing thank-you letters. (See notes and examples below.) Show the students some examples and discuss salutations, content, and complimentary closings. Assign each group write a thank-you letter to the speaker and deliver these letters.

**Modifications:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>A.</b>     - <i>time</i><br/>          - <i>difficulty</i></p> | <p>Have the students complete Steps 1 – 3 (writing the invitation), but do not send the invitations. Choose someone they will pretend to invite. Ask students to research or brainstorm information about that person to use in their invitations. All students or groups can write invitations to the same person, or choose different people.</p> |
| <p><b>B.</b>     + <i>creativity</i></p>                             | <p>If you can find the mailing addresses of internationally famous musicians, then you can ask students to invite these people to come. Although it is highly unlikely that a famous musician will accept the invitation, their publicist might send a photo or a letter thanking the students for the invitation.</p>                              |
| <p><b>C.</b>     + <i>role-play</i></p>                              | <p>If you are unable to have a musician come to class, you could complete the activity as a role-play. The teacher or another student could pretend to be the musician.</p>   |
| <p><b>D.</b>     + <i>extension</i><br/>          + <i>time</i></p>  | <p>Gather information about different ways to send invitations (for example, by email, letter, postcard, poster). Discuss with the students when each type of invitation might be appropriate. Divide students into groups, and have each group write/create a different type of invitation.</p>  |



## Notes for the Teacher

This section includes some general information about the form and content of invitations and thank-you letters, in addition to information about hosting a guest speaker in the classroom. While brief examples are included below, additional examples can be found online.

### ***Invitation letters***

Invitation letters consist of three parts: a greeting or salutation, the body of the message in which you explain the invitation and give the details of the event, and a closing. (Sample provided below).

Salutations:

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr./ or an honorific title depending on the person's position or occupation

Body of an Invitation:

We would like to invite you to the (name of school) to speak to (the specific class) about (topic of the presentation) and / or to perform (name of musical work) for (the specific class).

Our school is located at (address) and a student will meet you at the entrance on the day of your presentation.

If you are able to accept our request, please reply by sending a confirmation to (person) at the address above or by telephoning (person) at (phone number).

Closing:

Thank you very much for considering our invitation.  
(Signature)

**Sample invitation letter:**



Jackson Heights High School  
123 Jackson Road  
Trent, VA 22200

*November 12, 2XXX*

*Mr. George Peters  
567 Jones Road  
Trent, VA 22200*

*Dear Mr. Peters,*

*We would like to invite you to the Jackson Heights High School to speak to Grade 9 English class about your musical career. If possible, it would be wonderful if you could also perform one of your songs for us.*

*Our school is located at 123 Jackson Road in Trent. A student will meet you at the entrance on the day of your presentation.*

*If you are able to accept our request, please reply by sending a confirmation to Ted Jacobs at the address above or by telephoning our teacher Ms. Brown at 799-2345.*

*Thank you very much for considering our invitation.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Ted Jacobs and Barry Bailey*

### ***Introducing a Speaker***

When introducing a speaker, it is customary to tell the audience about the person's current work and provide them with any background information that the audience would find interesting or the speaker would like them to know about.

In preparation, the person who introduces a speaker should contact him or her in advance of the appearance to obtain that information.

Another thing to keep in mind is that a good introduction is usually brief; thirty seconds to one minute is considered an appropriate amount of time.

Commonly used phrases for introducing someone:

*It is my pleasure to introduce (name of speaker).*

*I am delighted to introduce (name of speaker).*

*I am honored to introduce (name of speaker).*

(Brief details about the speaker).

*Please join me in welcoming (name of speaker). [applause]*

*Please help me to welcome (name of speaker). [applause]*

### ***Thank-you Letters***

Thank-you letters should also include a salutation and a closing. The body of the letter should be personalized to the guest speaker and thank them for coming to the class. (Sample provided below).

Salutations:

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr./ or an honorific title depending on the person's position or occupation,

Body of a thank-you letter:





Thank you very much for your fine performance for/excellent presentation to (the specific group) at our school on (date of performance or presentation).  
(Some details about the performance or presentation).  
We appreciate your willingness to come to our school and hope that you will be our guest again.

Complimentary closings:

Sincerely,  
(Signature)

Yours sincerely,

Very truly yours,

**Sample thank-you letter:**

*December 3, 2xxx*

*Dear Mr. Peters,*

*Thank you very much for your fine performance and your excellent presentation to our Grade 9 English class at Jackson Heights High School on December 1<sup>st</sup>.*

*We loved hearing you sing and listening to your stories. We especially liked the story about when you were young and had to walk to school with your brother.*

*We appreciate your willingness to come to our school and hope that you will be our guest again.*

*Thank you again. It was a great day for us!*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Ted Jacobs and Barry Bailey*



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<i>American Rhythms</i> Units	Writing Activities				
	1. Songwriter Histories	2. I Think This Song Rocks!	3. Paragraph Posters	4. Story Extensions	5. Guest Musicians/ Speakers
1. Lessons in Life			* C		
2. Champion	*				
3. Stronger & Stronger	* A				
4. You Made Me Laugh	*				
5. A Lot of Days Are Gone		*			
6. Good Morning, New Orleans	* C				
7. Simple Down				* B	
8. El Paso	* C				
9. Not Afraid				*	
10. Can't Stop					* A
11. Into the Garden			*		
12. Hey, Little Minivan				*	
13. Further Down		*			
14. Just Like Everyday People				*	
15. The Time Is Now					*
16. Peace			* A		
17. Supertalents			*		

Letters indicate which modification in the writing activity applies



## Section 5: Extended Classroom Approaches

If your students find it fun, motivating, and rewarding to use songs in their English classroom, you may want to involve them more comprehensively in planning and carrying out instruction using songs. The activities in this section are extension activities that invite students to take a leading role in researching, introducing, and presenting songs to their classmates.

These activities work best after your students have become familiar with using songs in the classroom. While many activities require more time for students and teachers in terms of pre-class preparation and in the classroom, you and your students should find them rewarding and engaging. They can be used throughout the year, and different groups of students can be asked to help with activities for different songs, giving each student a change to participate.

### *Extended Classroom Approaches:*

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## Extended Classroom Approaches 1: Using a Skit as a Hook

**Purpose:** To generate interest in the song, and practice pronunciation and intonation

**Level:** 2 and above

**Time:** Preparation time with individual students – 45 minutes to one hour  
Time allowed for performing the skit in class – five to ten minutes

**Preparation and Materials:** The main preparation for this activity requires that the teacher meet with the students who will perform the skit before class to prepare and rehearse the dialogue. The teacher should prepare a list of keywords from the song to include in the dialogue.

### Instructions:

1. Choose two students to be the actors in the skit. Before class, meet with the students and introduce the song to them. Let them listen to the song, and then brainstorm ideas for a skit that focuses on some aspect of the song. Examples:
  - General theme of the song*
  - Genre or style of music*
  - History of the song or song writer/performer*
  - Specific ideas that are represented in the lyrics*
2. After an idea has been selected, draft a dialogue with the students who will be performing. The dialogue should have two speaking parts and contain between 14 and 20 lines (an equal number of lines for both actors). The skit should contain keywords taken from the song and even some of the lines from the song.
3. Depending on the level and age of the students, give them a day or two to rehearse the skit as a homework assignment.
4. Before listening to the song, have the students perform the skit at the start of class.
5. Introduce the song by making comments about the skit in relation to the theme of the song.  
Possible ways to make connections between the skit and the song:
  - ask students to make predictions about the song and the themes that will be in it based on the skit
  - divide students into small groups and ask them to summarize the skit, focusing on questions like *who, what, where, why, and when*
  - give students one or two lines from the song that relate to the skit and ask them to interpret what those lines might mean

### Modifications:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>A.</b> + difficulty | The number of actors and the length of the dialogue in the skit may increase depending on the students' proficiency level.              |
| <b>B.</b> - difficulty | Lower-level students can use mime or limited vocabulary to introduce the concepts from the song rather than a skit with scripted lines. |



- C.** + *groups*  
+ *vocabulary*
- This activity can be an activity for the whole class. Divide the students into groups of four or five. Tell them the theme of the song and give them five or six vocabulary words from the song to include in their skits. Tell them that they need to write a very short skit (three or four minutes long) on this theme involving all of the students in their group. Perform the skits. You may have the class vote on the best skit. Then follow Step 6 above.
- D.** - *difficulty*  
+ *writing*
- (*optional*)  
+ *art*
- Modifications (cont.)**
- Instead of preparing a spoken skit, the students can work in small groups to create a comic strip or short illustrated story. Give students a series of pictures related to a theme in the song, and tell them to write the dialogue to go along with the comic. Or you can have students both draw the comic and write the dialogue. After they complete the comic, have students read the comic aloud to the class. Then follow Step 6 above. This activity can be completed by two students as in the basic activity, or in conjunction with Modification C.
- E.** + *difficulty*  
- *time*
- Provide the dialogue/skit for students. Leave blanks in the dialogue that can be filled with vocabulary items from the song. Have students select words to complete the dialogue, practice, and then perform the skit during class as described above.

## Extended Classroom Approaches 2: Song Groups

**Purpose:** To conduct research, present information, and collaborate as part of a team

**Level:** 3 and above

**Time:** Explain the task — 20 – 30 minutes  
In-class presentation — 20 – 30 minutes (plus preparation time outside of class)

**Note to the Teacher:** This activity can be used throughout the course. Choose a different group of students to carry out this activity for different songs throughout the year. Allow the assigned group one week to prepare before the presentation. You may want to give the group the reading text provided in Part II of this book to help them research the song.

**Preparation and Materials:** Assign this project as a group activity. Students may need some materials, such as colored pens/markers, glue, and paper for making posters.

### Instructions:

1. Select a group of five or six students to prepare a presentation to make before the whole class. A different group can do the next song.
2. Assign a different role/task to each member of the group. Suggested roles are as follows:

**The Leader** introduces and moderates the presentation, which might involve writing on the board or giving directions.

**The Teacher** designs a listening task for the students to do when listening to the song. This task could be answering particular questions, writing down certain words, or performing certain actions.

**The Verse Selector** chooses a favorite or interesting line(s) from the song, explains the message of the line(s), gives examples to illustrate the meaning, and discusses why he/she chose these lines. This student should also help to define new



vocabulary in the song.

**The Culture Explorer** finds out about the song's role in past and present American culture and tells the class what they have learned.

**The Performers** sing the song for the class in their choice of singing style. They can then explain why they chose that particular style. (This could include the whole group, or just one or two students.)

3. On the day you plan to teach the song in class, allow the group to lead the presentation by introducing the song, explaining the verses and culture, giving the listening task, and listening to the song.

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### Extended Classroom Approaches 3: American Pop Star

**Purpose:** To perform and listen to a variety of songs, and build confidence in language skills

**Level:** All                      **Time:** 40 minutes or more, depending on how many students volunteer

**Note to the Teacher:** In this activity students perform a number of different songs in class in a competition format. This activity works best after the class has learned several songs. If many students want to participate, you can hold several American Pop Star competitions throughout the school year. This activity may be extended over several class sessions. Session 1 (Steps 1 – 2): 10 – 15 minutes; Session 2 (Steps 3 – 7): 30 – 40 minutes.

**Preparation and Materials:** If possible, obtain a microphone or device for amplifying the voices of the singers.

**Instructions:**

1. After students have learned to sing a number of different songs in class, tell them that the class is going to have an American Pop Star competition. Ask students to volunteer to sing the songs in front of their classmates. Each volunteer should choose their favorite song to perform. It could be one of the songs they learned in class or another song in English that they know. You will need between five and ten volunteers to take part in the competition.
2. Explain that there will be a preliminary competition; the students will sing their favorite songs and their classmates will vote for the two best renditions. Later, the winners of this contest will compete in a final singing competition.
3. On the day of the performances, students in the audience vote by secret ballot for their favorite singers. Set the criteria ahead of time. They could be *quality of performance, singing the correct lyrics, and originality*. Students can be involved with selecting the criteria.
4. Hold the competition. The two highest vote-getters win the semi-final round of the contest and move on to the final to be held later in the academic year.
5. Later in the semester, repeat this procedure with a new group of songs.
6. Finally, the winners of the preliminary rounds compete in a final competition. At end of the final round, students vote by secret ballot for the three best renditions.
7. Awards may be given to the three top finalists.

