

Teacher's Guide for Using Songs in the Classroom



I- Setting the Stage: Before Playing Song

1- It is a nice idea to do a little groundwork before presenting the song. Students tend to react best when they can identify some familiar elements right from the start.

2- It is good not to have students looking at the lyrics during this phase, allowing them to listen more carefully.

3- Review the song you are going to present, and create a list of target words for the lesson. One approach is to choose a focus:

- a. pronunciation
- b. vocabulary
- c. grammar concepts

4- Students can listen more actively if they are listening for specific examples. Read the list of target words/phrases you want them to listen for. A vocabulary example for La Bamba would be:

marinero
arriba
gracia
una poca
cosita

5- These words can later be used to create associations and word clusters.

6- Another idea is to list several words in English, and ask them to listen for the equivalents in Spanish. An example for La Bamba is:

sailor
grace
a little
I
another

7- The whole idea is to help students attach meaning to what they hear, and encourage mental associations as they listen to the song for the first time. You may also want to talk about what they think the song will be about based on the title, or whether they have heard the song before.

II- Ready! Playing the Song



- 1- Play the song, at least 2 times from beginning to end.
- 2- Ask students to talk about what they heard:
 - a- what images did they get from the song?
 - b- did any of the words sound familiar to other Spanish words they know?
 - c- based on the rhythm and tone, what emotional state best describes the song? (you can add to this list!)

- 1- excited
- 2- jovial
- 3- melancholic
- 5- sad
- 6- dreamy
- 7- wishful
- 8- in love
- 9- hopeful
- 10- desperate

- d- which phrases stand out in the song?
- e- what is their favorite phrase or melody?
- f- which sections are the fastest/slowest?

- 3- Handouts: now is a good time to present handouts such as the following:

- a- lyrics with the target words *MISSING*
- b- multiple choice sheets; mix in words *NOT* heard in song
- c- the complete lyrics

- 4- Ask students to fill in the blanks, or select the words that were really in the song.

- 5- Introduce the targeted pattern whether it be pronunciation, vocabulary, or a grammatical element. Ask students to identify all examples of this pattern in the song.

- 6- At this point you might like to play the song again, asking students to circle or underline phrases or patterns.

- 7- Present the grammar lesson, always referring back to the lyrics when possible for examples. In La Bamba, there are several good concepts to introduce:

- a- pronunciation
- b- masculine/feminine
- c- present tense verbs
- e- 1st person future tense

- 8- Ask students how song elements remind them of things they've learned in class.

III- The Fun Part: Getting Creative with the Song!

1- Now is a chance to do fun activities related to the song. Use your imagination! Here are some ideas:



a- have a sing along

b- split the class into 2 or more groups, and have a COMPETING sing along, each group singing alternate phrases

c- create skits based on the theme or words from the song

d- have students talk about what picture they would draw to illustrate different phrases and concepts from the song

e- have them draw them! (computerized kids can look for clip art....)

f- have students write NEW lyrics to the music. It might be best to stick with only changing verbs and nouns, and keeping the basic grammatical concepts the same. This will encourage them to remember these patterns

examples: **para cantar la bamba**
 para lavar la bamba
 para llevar la bamba

se necesita un poco de ritmo
se necesita una poca de salsa
se necesita un poquito de alma

g- write your own grammar chapter! Have students create a lesson plan based on a song, to be presented in a small group

h- split the class into groups and create a dance like “La Macarena”— have a contest and vote for the winning dance

2- Talk about culture, Latin music, different music styles (like salsa, merengue, vallenato, tango, mariachi, bolero, flamenco, Andean, etc.) Ricky Martin, music videos, etc. Music can help students identify with the language more, and develop more of an interest in Latino culture. Use the opportunity to spread enthusiasm!

