

How to Use the Songs

What follows is a suggested way of introducing and using the songs in the class. Feel free to use your creativity and modify the lesson according to your students' needs and your teaching style!

General sequence for songs in the Musicapaedia™ series:

Focus

1. Introduce some “set” or “focus” activity to get them to anticipate the theme or vocabulary in the song (the weather, descriptions of people, friends, family, etc.). This may simply be a review of the vocabulary or grammar points that you are currently studying.

Play the song--students write down all recognizable words

2. Have students take out a sheet of paper. Tell them that you will play the song once (or twice), and that they should write down all the words that they already know, or recognize (translation optional). A variation is for them to hear the song once without having to write anything down, simply to get a “feel” for it (“non-threatening”).

Play the song again--hand-out “cloze” text; students fill in blanks.

3. Now play the song again (at least twice, three times recommended for Spanish I/II), and have students fill in the words they hear that have been blanked-out on their handouts. (Only words that students have probably already been exposed to* have been omitted.) A “word bank” is provided at the bottom of the cloze sheet; cover them when photocopying if you feel that they could “get” them without such help; you can introduce them after the first listen so as to homogenize everyone's comprehension potential, or even stretch out this challenge until after the second listen. For the *last* listen (whether it's the second or third time), you should expose the missing “cloze” words, so that everyone can ultimately succeed, crossing the finish line together with unanimous 100% comprehension.

Also provided is a “vowel” cloze sheet of the song. Students fill in the missing vowels. Quickly going over the five vowels aloud before hearing the song greatly improves student success.

(At this point, depending on level, you could ask a few of the simple “yes-no”/ “either-or” questions provided with the packet; or you may ask them later on.)

Play the song--identify “target” items in the text

4. Now that they have the complete, correct text in front of them, have students hear the song again, this time marking target vocabulary such as verbs, verb tenses, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, theme vocabulary, etc. For example: circle all clothing items; underline all verbs in the present tense “yo” form; or, underline all words they recognize (or don’t recognize). The possibilities are nearly endless. The beauty of this exercise is that it guarantees that students will focus on the text. “Active searching” is one of the most pedagogically *high-yield* and *intense on-task* activities; as teachers, we can all attest that students naturally and almost universally *love* solving problems if the criteria are simple and clearly understood (“underline all articles of clothing”), and success is perceived as swift and likely.

For Músicapaedia™ LEVEL I, here are some suggested target items to search for in the text (if simultaneously searching for more than one category of things, offer more than one way of marking--i.e., underlining, circling, squaring, asterisks/dots, etc.):

¿Cómo es?--adjectives describing people; nationalities; professions; the verb ser in any of its manifestations...

¡Hola mi amigo!--verbs conjugated in nosotros form; yo; tú; nouns (things)...

¿Dónde Está mi Gato?--adverbs of place; verb infinitives (-ar, -er, -ir); “house” nouns...

La Naturaleza--feminine adjectives/masculine adjectives/adjectives that don’t indicate their gender; nouns of nature; rhyme schemes; consonant or assonant rhymes...

Un Pobre Vagabundo--family members; verb infinitives (-ar, -er, -ir); personal “a”...

Cuando Hace Frío--clothes; colors; weather; nosotros or yo conjugations...

Oral questions--“closed-” or “open-” ended

5. Ask students the questions provided (or elaborate your own), or provide them for your students to do in communicative pairs.

Oral questions--Students create and ask questions of each other (optional)

6. Students volunteer to ask questions of their classmates--or of the teacher--about the song content. S/he who answers creates and asks the next question. Before starting, provide 3-5 minutes for everyone to conceive and script a question to ask.

Written and oral exercises (provided), in class or at home--question/answer, fill in, match, categorize, list, multiple choice, crossword, label, create, etc.

7. In class, these may be done in pairs, groups, or individually, to your teaching style; or they may be given as homework. There are so many that probably you will use some in class and some as homework.

Karaoke performance

8. A wonderful culminating experience is for students to *memorize (or sight read the words of) the song* and sing it for the class (or at an assembly or club meeting!) with the instrumental background, or “karaoke” version that immediately follows the song on your tape. Feel free to duplicate the tape for a student who wishes to rehearse the song at home. You may also give credit to those who simply recite the lyrics from memory. If your students create a good video to any of these songs, write me and maybe we can release it. *Contest! Make videos, submit them, win royalty!*

Illustrate the song

9. Some songs lend themselves to illustration. Students can create storyboards by either drawing, or pasting “found” images, to accompany each lyric line or verse to illustrate the action in the song. This is a very creative way for the student to show comprehension while displaying and/or developing artistic talents.

Mime

10. Student(s) can create and perform a visual narrative of the song, if the song is the “story” type.

Music Video

11. If your school has not only video cameras but video editing resources, students could form cooperative learning teams and produce a video of the song. Tasks involved are: storyboard writer, cameraperson, actor(s), videoeditor, and whatever other roles are required.

In-class dramatization

12. Lacking video equipment, or simply for the homespun, low-tech preference which makes this activity *available to all at no-cost-but-the-time-invested*, students could “perform” the song as a group, with a director/(actor), actors, and stage director.

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