

The Top 10 Ways To Enhance The Learning Experience

David James

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1. Use Background Music

Background music can break the ice. Create an atmosphere in which students feel comfortable to talk. They should feel they are not being listened to – though of course you may be listening. The music should be instrumental so that students can concentrate on their task without wanting to sing-a-long. Chakra music also works well.

2. Introduce Lesson Themes With Music

Students guess the song titles and write them on laminated card. The song titles provide clues to the theme of the lesson. This works particularly well with lessons on *Verb + Gerund/ Infinitive*

3. Create Grammar/ Use of English Tasks From Lyrics

In this activity students do the activity and then listen to check their answers. Many songs have a range of grammar points, collocations, dependent prepositions, interesting words etc. that can be exploited to make into an enjoyable learning activity. *Rolling In The Deep* by Adele is a good example.

a. Supporting Material For Discussion or Grammar Topics

Discussing finance- *The Complete Banker* by The Divine Comedy

I wish I knew how it would feel to be free by Nina Simone is excellent for discussing issues related to American history and slavery. It also provides practice of the 2nd conditional and introduces some excellent vocabulary, e.g. to **long** for something

Other grammar often featured in songs is modal verbs, e.g.

It must have been love

If you liked it then you should have put a ring on it

Rolling In The Deep - Adele

Task:

In the lyrics there are 11 questions.

- 1) Questions 1,2,4,8 and 9: choose the correct word/ collocation
- 2) Questions 3,5,6 and 7: key word transformation
- 3) Questions 10 and 11 : complete the sentence so it is grammatically correct
- 4) Listen and Check

There's a fire starting in my heart. Reaching a fever pitch
and it's bring me out the dark.
Finally I can see you 1) **brightly/ crystal/ diamond/ shiny** clear.
Go 2) **forward/ up/ ahead/ down** and sell me out and I'll lay your shit bare

See how I'll leave, with every piece of you
Don't 3) _____ the things that I will do **ESTIMATE**
There's a fire starting in my heart. Reaching a fever pitch
and it's bring me out the dark

The scars of your love 4) **speak/ remember/ show/ remind** me of us
They keep me thinking that we almost had it all
The scars of your love, they leave me 5) _____ **BREATH**
I can't help feeling

We could have had it all. Rolling in the deep
You had my heart inside your hand and you played it to the beat

Baby, I have no story to be 6) _____ **TELL**
But I've heard one of you and I'm gonna make your head burn
Think of me in the 7) _____ of your despair **DEEP**
Making a home down there as mine sure won't be shared

Throw your soul through every open door
Count your blessings
to find what you look for
Turn my 8) **sad/ unhappy/ sorrow/ grieve** into treasured gold
You pay me back in 9) **nice/ kind/ good/ well** and reap just what you sow

Now you're gonna wish you 10) **(never – meet - me)** _____
We 11) **(could - have)** it all _____
(Tears are gonna fall, rolling in the deep)
We could have had it all

Now you're gonna wish you 10) **(never – meet - me)**
You had my heart and soul in your hand
(Tears are gonna fall, rolling in the deep)
But you played it, you played it, you played it to the beat

4. Dictogloss

In this activity, the teacher reads several lines of text and the students take notes and reconstruct the text from what they hear. This works particularly well with *used to* and *would* for past states and activities, so why not use the first lines of a song that include these grammar points, e.g. *Viva La Vida* by *Coldplay*. The text may sound familiar to some students if they know the record, but that should only heighten their engagement in the activity.

*I used to rule the world
Seas would rise when I gave the word
Now in the morning, I sleep alone
Sweep the streets I used to own*

To confirm the correct text, the teacher can play the relevant part of the song.

5. Pronunciation/ Phonemic Script Practice

Remove key words from the lyrics & write them in phonemic script. Students decipher the words and insert them back in to the lyrics. They then listen to check. This can be done at individual word level, multiple words, and even to raise awareness of features of connected speech such as linking, intrusion, elision and assimilation.

Ex's & Oh's – Elle King

Questions 1 and 6: guess the missing word

Questions 2,3,5,7-13: select the correct option

Question 4: write the missing words from the phonemic script

First, do the exercise & then listen to check

Well, I had me a boy, turned him 1) _____ a man
I showed him all the things that he 2) **not/ didn't/ no** understand
Whoa, and then I let him 3) **to go / go / going**
Now, there's one in California
4) /hu:z bɪn 'kɜ:sɪŋ maɪ neɪm/

Cause I found me a better lover in the UK
Hey, hey, until I 5) **did/made/ ran** my getaway
One, two, three, they gonna run back to me
Cause I'm the best baby that they never gotta keep
One, two, three, they gonna run back to me
They always wanna come, but they never wanna leave

Ex's and the oh, oh, oh's they 6) **h _ _ _ _** me 
Like ghosts they want me 7) **make / to make/ making /** 'em all
They won't let 8) **to go / go / going**
Ex's and oh's

I had a summer lover down in New Orleans
Kept him warm in the winter, left him 9) **freeze/ freezing/ frozen** in the
spring
My, my, how the seasons go 10) **by / out / in**
I get high, and I love to get low
So the hearts keep 11) **break / breaking / to break**, and the heads just
roll
You know that's how the story goes

Chorus

One, two, three, they gonna run back to me
12) *climbing/ climb/ to climb* over mountains

And 13) *sail/ sailing/ to sail* over seas.
One, two, three, they gonna run back to me
They always wanna come, but they never wanna leave

Review

a) 'let' is followed by *to+infinitive, bare infinitive, verb+ing*

My example

b) To escape after a crime or from a boring social event is to _____ a
getaway.

My example

c) Time goes _____. As time passes

My example

d) d) 'Keep' is followed by *to+infinitive, bare infinitive, verb+ing*. This action happens
frequently and might also annoy the speaker.

My example

Up The Junction – Squeeze

Up the junction is an English phrase that means you are in a bad/hopeless situation. This song tells the story of a boy who meets a girl on Clapham Common, which is in southwest London. The couple are in love, have a baby but in the end the girl leaves him, mostly due to his drinking.

The song is composed in rhyming & semi rhyming couplets, e.g. in 1 and 2, the weak ending of *happen* is a semi rhyme of *Clapham*. The same with *common* & *forgotten*.

Task.

Transcribe the phonemic script of the words in the box & put in their correct place in the song.

/ 'letə/	/'sʌndəɪ/	/'leɪtə/
/'hændi/	/'teli/	/meɪ bi/
/'smeli/	/tʌk ʌp/	/'bɪtə/
/sʌm 'flaʊəz/	/ɪn 'saɪd hə/	/'wɔ:kə/
/fɔ: 'fɪfti/	/en 'geɪdʒmənt/	/'səʊldʒə/
/'kɪtʃɪn/	/fe 'gɪvnəes/	/'pæfənz/

Listen and complete the spaces. The missing words are sung in connected speech.

I sing myself to sleep
A song from the a) _____
Secrets I can't keep
b) _____ the day
Swing from high to deep
Extremes of c) _____ sour
Hope that d) _____
I e) _____ pray

Drawn by the undertow
My life is f) _____ control
I believe this wave will bear my weight
So g) _____ flow

Oh h) _____ X3
i) _____ me

In sympathy

Now I'm relieved to hear
That you've been to some j) _____ places
It's hard to k) _____
When you feel l) _____
Now I've swung back m) _____
It's worse than it was before
If I hadn't seen such riches
I could live with being poor

Oh h) _____ X3
i) _____ me

Those who feel the j) _____ sadness
i) _____ me
Those who find they're touched by madness
i) _____ me
Those who find themselves ridiculous
i) _____ me
in Love, in k) _____ hate, in tears

This text has been written in phonemic script and it also shows connected speech.

/ˈpi:pələstreɪndʒ	_____
wenjəreˈstreɪndʒə	_____ , _____
feɪsɪzlʊkˈʌgli wɛnjərəˈleʊn	_____ , _____
ˈwɪmɪnsi:mˈwɪkɪd	_____
wɛnjərəˈnˈwɒntɪd	_____ , _____
stri:tsərəˈnˈivən wɛnjədəʊn	_____ , _____
wɛnjəstreɪndʒ	_____ , _____
ˈfeɪsɪsklɑ:mɑ:təvðəreɪn	_____
wɛnjəstreɪndʒ	_____ , _____
nəʊwʌnrɪˈmembəzjəneɪm	_____ - _____
wɛnjəstreɪndʒ	_____ , _____
wɛnjəstreɪndʒ	_____ , _____
wɛnjɔ: streɪndʒ/	_____ , _____

Questions

1. The words ‘you’re’ are pronounced in 3 different ways: These are _____, _____ and _____
2. Why do you think this is?

People Are Strange

/ˈpi:pələstreɪndʒ	<i>People are strange</i>
wenjə're'streɪndʒə	<i>when you're a stranger</i>
feɪsɪzlʊk'ʌɡli wenjə're'ləʊn	<i>faces look ugly when you're alone</i>
'wɪmɪnsi:m'wɪkɪd	<i>women seem wicked</i>
wenjə'ʌn'wɒntɪd	<i>when you're unwanted</i>
stri:tsə'ʌn'ivən wenjə'daʊn	<i>streets are uneven when your down</i>
wenjəstreɪndʒ	<i>when you're strange</i>
'feɪsɪskʌmɑʊtəvðə'reɪn	<i>faces come out of the rain</i>
wenjəstreɪndʒ	<i>when you're strange</i>
nəʊwʌnɪ'membəzjəneɪm	<i>no-one remembers your name</i>
wenjəstreɪndʒ	<i>when you're strange</i>
wenjəstreɪndʒ	<i>when you're strange</i>
wenjɔ:streɪndʒ/	<i>when you're strange</i>

Beatles – When I'm Sixty-Four Lyrics Task

- a) *First write the words from the phonemic script. The utterances are how you would hear them.*
- b) *Then put the words in to the text on the next page.*
- c) *Then listen and check*

Phonemic Script	Words	Comments & observations
/ˈgræntʃɪldrən/		<i>Elision (Omission) of /d/ in grandchildren</i>
/kʊdæsk fə mɔː/		
/biːjʊldə/		
/miːləɪn/		
/aɪləwaɪt/		
/biː hændi/		
/fɪlɪnə/		
/jɔːsɪnˈsɪəli/		
/gedʊldə/		
/ˈbɒtələwain/		
/ˈkɔːtətəθriː/		
/fərəraɪd/		

When I _____ losing my hair,
Many years from now.
Will you still be sending me a Valentine
Birthday greetings _____

If I'd been out till _____
Would you lock the door,
Will you still need me, will you still feed me,
When I'm sixty-four

You'll _____ too,
And if you say the word,
I could stay with you.

I could _____, mending a fuse
When your lights have gone.
You can knit a sweater by the fireside
Sunday morning go _____,
Doing the garden, digging the weeds,
Who _____?

Will you still need me, will you still feed me,
When I'm sixty-four

Every summer we can rent a cottage,
In the _____, if it's not too dear
We shall scrimp and save
_____ on your knee
Vera, Chuck and Dave

Send me a postcard, drop _____
Stating point of view
Indicate precisely what you mean to say
_____, wasting away

Give me your answer, _____ form
 Mine for evermore
 Will you still need me, will you still feed me.
 When I'm sixty-four

6. Narrate The Video

This is great as a warmer activity to encourage fluency, and also to practise the present and past continuous. This is a 'backs to the board' activity where half of the students sit with their back to the screen & the other half sit opposite them facing the screen and have to describe what they see in the video. The teacher then stops the video in the middle and students who have been listening must recount what they have heard. The students then swap places and roles for the second part of the video.

Higher levels may not need to be pre-taught vocabulary, but this activity can be easily differentiated for lower levels by pre-teaching key words, or by using a bingo style sheet where they tick off the verbs that they hear.

Finally, students can see the whole video to check and also to ask about vocabulary.

For the video for *So What* by *Pink*, the following vocabulary could be pre-taught, or used to tick off the verbs heard.

Which words did you hear? Tick (✓) the words that your partner used.

Verbs	✓	Nouns	✓
Sing		Tree	
Sit		Neighbour	
Drive		Guitar	
Burn		Tractor	
Jump		Shop	
Drink		bus	

7. Order The Lyrics

Give students strips of paper with lyrics from a song. Students read the lyrics & put the paper away/ in their pocket. They then aim to order themselves according to the lyrics. The students listen to check & to make any changes as they listen. This requires good student interaction & listening skills. Songs with a story work best for this activity.

8. Augmented Reality

A fantastic way of bringing a page to life. Students create work on paper and add a trigger image that activates a video, which has been created by the students. So a two dimensional poster includes a video. The application *Aurasma* is a popular tool for this.

Organising Thoughts

Planning and essay or talk can often be a cause of frustration for learners. Here are some ideas for helping them focus on the key points.

9. Message maps/ The 15 second pitch

Students pitch an idea within 15 seconds using 3 key supporting points. This focuses on identifying the important aspects, using powerful adjectives, and clear and persuasive pronunciation. Here is an example for Lush soap.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/carminegallos/2012/07/17/how-to-pitch-anything-in-15-seconds/#6f1dd1541dd9>

10. Paperslides

Students create a plan or storyboard on 6 pieces of paper. A key piece of information is written on each piece of paper. The papers are stacked and the students film themselves reading the information.

This is good for all levels. Higher levels can summarise films, events in history or even course book listenings and videos.

<https://paperslide.wikispaces.com/Guidelines>