



BLOOMSBURY INTERNATIONAL

Learning English with Songs

How to improve your English pronunciation,
vocabulary and grammar with songs.



How to learn English with songs

Do you enjoy listening to music? Do you have many English songs in your music collection? Why not start using these songs to help improve your English language skills?!

In your English language classes, your teacher might sometimes play songs and ask you to answer questions about them. You might think this is a relaxing or fun part of the lesson, but it is actually an excellent method to improve your English. There have been many professional studies comparing language learning to music and there are, in fact, many similarities. Firstly, they are two of the main ways in which we communicate and express ourselves. We use the same part of our brain for language and music and it is very common for musical people to also be good at learning languages.



Communication can be broken down into 3 categories:

- verbal language (the actual words we say)
- body language (eye contact, hand gestures etc.)
- intonation (the tone of your voice, speed and volume)

Did you know that only 7% of communication involves verbal language? (That's why it is sometimes extremely difficult to understand what someone means in an email or text message!) 55% of communication is body language and 38% is intonation, the part of language that relates most to music!

How will learning English through songs help me?

Using songs is a really great way to improve your pronunciation and grammar, and you are likely to learn and remember new vocabulary and idioms.



Pronunciation:

Singing along with your favourite English songs will help you to learn how to pronounce English words correctly and will also help to reduce your accent. You will learn more about the rhythm of sentences and how to link your words together when you speak.

Vocabulary:

Listening to music will help you to learn more vocabulary quickly. You are also more likely to remember new words and English expressions if you listen to them in a song than if you read them or learn them in your English class (especially if you sing along!).

Grammar:

You might think that grammar needs to be learnt in a very structured way but listening to music will help you to remember grammar patterns and learn how to use grammar correctly in everyday conversation.

How can I improve my English with music?

There are a few different ways that you can use music to help with your English studies. Just listening to music on your iPod while you're walking to work will probably help to improve your pronunciation, vocab and English listening skills, but there are exercises you can do which will help you even more!

1. Choose an English song with lyrics that you can hear clearly (preferably one that you haven't heard before).
2. Listen to the song with your eyes closed and try to work out the theme of the song from the lyrics and the expression in the singer's voice (is the song about love? Has the singer been hurt? Is the singer happy?)
3. At this stage, you could listen to the song again and write down any words or phrases that you hear (whether you understand them or not).
4. Find the lyrics online (type the song name and artist into Google and you should be able to find the lyrics easily).
5. Listen to the song again and read the lyrics at the same time. Did you guess the theme of the song correctly?
6. Look up any words or phrases you don't understand in a dictionary and write them down.
7. Listen to the song a few times while you read the lyrics and when you feel comfortable, start to sing along.
8. Save the song onto your iPod and listen to it while you are travelling to work or school. The more you listen and sing along, the easier it will be to remember the vocabulary and grammar!

There are many websites with songs and exercises for English learners. One example is <http://www.esolcourses.com/topics/learn-english-with-songs.html>. On this website, there are many English songs with exercises and instructions.

You can also use music to help you remember new vocabulary or grammar. If you have a list of new words or phrases and their meanings, try to turn it into a song or a rhyme – it is much easier for our minds to remember the lyrics of a song than just a list of words!

Try these tips and I'm sure you will see an improvement in your English language. Why not ask your English teachers to include music and songs in their English classes too?!



Improve your English with songs - Exercise

Search on YouTube for a song called 'When I'm 64' by The Beatles. Listen to the song and fill in the gaps below. This song will help to improve the simple future tense. Check your answers by searching for the song lyrics on Google.

When I get _____, losing my _____, many _____ from now,
Will you still be sending me a valentine, _____ greetings bottle of _____?

If I'd been out till _____ to three, would you lock the _____,
Will you still _____ me, will you still _____ me, when I'm sixty-four.

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

I could be handy mending a fuse, when your _____ have gone.
You can _____ a sweater by the fireside, Sunday mornings go for a _____.

Doing the _____, digging the weeds, who could _____ for more?
Will you still _____ me, will you still _____ me, when I'm sixty-four?

Every summer we can rent a _____ in the Isle of Wight, if it's not too dear,
We shall scrimp and _____
Grandchildren on your _____, Vera, Chuck, and Dave.

Send me a _____, drop me a line, stating point of view.
Indicate precisely what you mean to _____, yours _____, wasting away.

Give me your _____, fill in a _____, mine for evermore,
Will you still _____ me, will you still _____ me, when I'm sixty-four?