

Project English and Music



STEP 1: Talk about music

Most people have a favorite song. They might like this song for different reasons: melody¹, lyrics², rhythm, topic, singer, band, instruments³ etc.

 Talk with your partner about your favorite song and explain what you like about it. The Useful phrases can help you.

USEFUL PHRASES

The song deals with/is about ...
 The song is romantic⁴/provocative⁵/funny.
 The song was in the charts –
 the singer/band won an award ...
 The band uses a lot of guitars/drums/...
 The singer has a soft⁶/strange/rough⁷ ... voice.
 The rhythm is fast/slow/ ...

STEP 2: A closer look

 a) Listen to the song *Gone going* by the American band *The Black Eyed Peas*. You can read the lyrics on the next page while you listen.

 b) In a group, interpret⁸ the song. Use these Music skills and answer the questions:



MUSIC SKILLS

You often understand what a song is about when you listen to it for the first time. Sometimes the words of songs (the 'lyrics') are very shallow⁹. But it is often a good idea to listen again and have a closer look at the lyrics – and also at the rhythm and the melody.

1. Look at the **title**. What do you think the song is about?
2. Do the **lyrics** tell you a story? What feelings are expressed by the lyrics?
3. Is there a **message** in the song? Is there a message for the listeners¹⁰?
4. What's the **melody** like (soft, repetitive¹¹ etc.)? Does it change?
5. Is the **rhythm** slow, fast? Does it change? Does it remind you of anything?
6. Do the rhythm and the melody **match** the lyrics/story (e.g. a slow, sad melody for a sad story; a repetitive rhythm and lyrics to make the message very clear)? Or is there a **contrast** between melody and lyrics (e.g. a sad story but fast, happy music)?

Don't worry if you can't explain everything. Songs are like poems¹² – they can often be interpreted in different ways.

c) Do you like the song? Why or why not? The Music skills can help you.

¹melody ['melədi] = the music of a song • ²lyrics ['lɪrɪks] = text of a song • ³instruments ['ɪnstɹəmənts] = drums, guitar, ... • ⁴romantic [rə'mæntɪk] = about feelings of love • ⁵provocative [prə'vɒkətɪv] = sth that makes you think • ⁶soft [sɒft] = not hard • ⁷rough [rʌf] = opposite of soft • ⁸(to) interpret [ɪn'tɜ:pɪt] = explain what the song means • ⁹shallow ['ʃæləʊ] = *seicht* • ¹⁰listener ['lɪsnə] = someone who listens • ¹¹repetitive [rɪ'petətɪv] = the same again and again • ¹²poem ['pəʊɪm] = work of a poet

© **Gone going by The Black Eyed Peas**

Johnny wanna be a big star
 Get on stage and play the guitar
 Make a little money, buy a fancy car
 Big old house and an alligator
 Just to match with them alligator shoes
 He's a rich man so he's no longer singing the blues
 He's singing songs about material things
 And platinum rings and watches that go bling
 But diamonds don't blink in the dark
 He a star now, but he ain't singing it from the heart
 Sooner or later he's just gonna fall apart
 Cause his fans can't relate to his newfound art
 He ain't doing what he did from the start
 And that's putting in some feeling and thought
 He decided to live his life shallow
 Passion is love for material

TIP

Use a dictionary to look up important words.

Chorus:

And its gone, gone going
 Gone, everything gone, give a damn
 Gone be the birds when they don't want to sing
 Gone, people, all awkward with their things, gone
 ...

All that money that you got gon' be gone
 That gear that you rock gon' be gone
 The house up on the hill gon' be gone
 The gold fronts on your grill gon' be gone
 The ice on your wrist gon' be gone
 That nice little Miss gon' be gone
 That whip that you roll gon' be gone
 And what's worst is your soul's already gone
 ...

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STEP 3: Look for background information

Background information helps you to understand a song: information on the singer/band, the type of music, the history of the singer/band etc.

- Do research on *The Black Eyed Peas* and answer the questions on the right.
- Why do you think they wrote the song *Gone going*?

Find out ...

- ... the name of the band members¹³.
- ... when and how their career¹⁴ started.
- ... how their career continued.
- ... what their greatest songs were.
- ... which awards they got.

STEP 4: Do a project: Your favorite song

- Prepare a presentation of your favorite song. Research it: use the Music skills from Step 2 and the ideas for background information from Step 3. Interpret the song.
- Presentation: use the Useful phrases from Step 1 to introduce the song.
- Play the song. You can put up a poster with photos/pictures to make your presentation more interesting.
- Tell the class what to listen for and play the song again to show the important points of your interpretation¹⁵.
- After all the presentations have been given, vote for the best presentation in class. Why did you vote this way?



¹³member ['membə] = someone who belongs to a group • ¹⁴career [kə'riə] = the time a band works together •

¹⁵interpretation [ɪn'tɜ:pri'teɪʃn] = noun of 'to interpret'