

SESSION 4: WRITING A PROTEST SONG

Age range: 7–11 years

Outline Learners will begin with a recap on some of the aspects of inequality which they explored in Sessions 1, 2 and 3. Building on the plans which they made in Session 3, learners will work in groups to write verses for a protest song. They will then sing their verse or the whole song (including the verses written by other groups), and plan how this could become a public performance.		
Learning objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To summarise what has been learnt so far about inequality. To use knowledge, creative writing and musical skills to write own lyrics. To develop teamwork skills to plan and give a performance. To use critical thinking skills to assess issues. 	Learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will write lyrics for a protest song about inequality. Learners will give a performance of their own song. Learners will think about how to perform the song in front of others. 	
Key questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have we learnt about inequality so far? How can I use a song to tell other people about this? What are the best words to use to fit in with the music and to express what I want to say? 	Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Backing tracks for “This Little Light of Mine” and “I Wish I Knew How it Feels to be Free”. 	
Curriculum links		
England English: writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners should identify purpose of writing, plan their writing and write about real events. Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners should perform solo or in an ensemble, using their voice with increasing control and expression. Learners should compose music for a range of purposes. 	Wales Literacy: writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt structures in writing for different contexts. Music: performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing with increasing control of breathing, posture, diction, dynamics, phrasing, pitch and duration. Plan and make decisions about which music to perform and how to perform it. Music: composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate ideas and emotions through music. 	Scotland English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am learning to use language and style in a way which engages and/or influences my reader. ENG 2-27a Music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspired by a range of stimuli, and working on my own and/or with others, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through musical activities. EXA 1-18a / EXA 2-18a I have experienced the energy and excitement of presenting/performing for audiences and being part of an audience for other peoplehole song (including the vers. EXA 1-01a / EXA 2-01a



Session outline

Starter (10 minutes)

Recap quiz: true or false line

- Ask learners to stand in a line at the back of the classroom. Explain that you will read them some statements and that they need to put their hand up if they think they are true. If they think they are false then they should keep their hands down.
 - If learners are right about a statement then they should take a step forward. The winner is whoever reaches the front of the classroom first.
 - Read these statements to learners, one by one, following the above procedure. Note that if you are working with 7-9 year olds, you should stop the quiz after statement 4.
1. Having a mobile phone is a human right.
 - False. A mobile phone is an example of something we want rather than need.
 2. “This Little Light of Mine” was known as a Freedom Song.
 - True. Freedom Songs expressed people’s feelings and intentions during the Civil Rights Movement and were sung at protest marches.
 3. The Civil Rights Movement was about the right to equality for all, regardless of race.
 - True. Civil Rights protesters were calling for black Americans to enjoy the same opportunities as white Americans and to be treated equally.
 4. Protest songs are a way of showing your support for the government.
 - False. Protest songs are a way of speaking up against the government and calling for change.
 5. In Chile, Victor Jara sang protest songs about poorer people’s rights to land.
 - True. Some of Victor Jara’s songs drew people’s attention to the fact that poor people were often forced to leave the land they lived on and farmed.
 6. Racial inequality is still a problem for many indigenous communities in Latin America
 - True. Indigenous people in Latin America are often poorer than other races.
 7. Bolivia has never had a president from an indigenous community.
 - False. Evo Morales became president in 2006 and was the first president to come from an indigenous community.
 8. Land owned across the world is divided up evenly and fairly.
 - False. Many large companies own vast amounts of land and people are often evicted from the places where they live as they are denied legal rights to the land they live on.



Differentiation

Make it harder: You could use this opportunity to reflect as a class on the inequalities which learners feel are present in their own school environment, and to discuss any issues which they feel still need to have more awareness brought to them. For example, learners could explore their school’s policy on racial equality and decide whether it is working.

Activity 4.1 (30 minutes)

Writing a protest song

- Remind the class that musicians have used songs to tell people about injustice as a form of protest and that this could be a good way to spread the message about the issues which they have learnt about.
- This is also an opportunity for learners to reflect on their own relationships– particularly on how they might treat those from different ethnic or social backgrounds.
- Split the class into small groups and ask them to write a verse of a song based on the themes which they highlighted at the end of Session 3.
- Use the tune of “This Little Light of Mine”, which they learnt in Session 1, as the melody for their lyrics. A simple example could be:

People in the USA
Stood up for equality
People in the USA
Stood up for equality
People in the USA
Stood up for equality
So blacks and whites have the same opportunities

Or, for 9-11 year olds who have completed session 3:

People in Bolivia
Want to keep their land
People in Bolivia
Want to keep their land
People in Bolivia
Want to keep their land
And to keep it they must really take a stand

- Bring the class back together and ask each group to share their verse. Work as a class to put the different verses in order, to form a full class song. Write these up on the board for everyone to see.

Make it harder: Use the tune of “I Wish I Knew How It Feels To Be Free”.

Activity 4.2 (15 minutes)*Song performance*

- Use the backing tracks and ask the class to sing the new lyrics to the song. This could be done all together or with smaller groups singing their own verses.

Plenary (5 minutes)*Planning a public performance*

- Discuss with the class where else they could perform their song to spread their messages about inequality. How could they make sure that as many people as possible heard it? Could they sing their song in an assembly or perhaps organise a small event?

Further ideas

- Use the [Oxfam Gig Maker Guide for Schools](#) to get some ideas about putting on a concert for your protest song performance and raising vital funds for Oxfam

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