



Mama, will you buy me a banana?

Traditional, arr. Rachel Wadham

This Irish ditty is great fun and develops listening skills by working in groups. Group 1 is singing the part of the cheeky little boy and Group 2 is the flustered mother!

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| YEAR GROUP | YEAR 3, YEAR 4 |
| PARTS | UNISON IN TWO GROUPS |
| SONG STYLE | CALYPSO RHYTHM, WORLD MUSIC |
| RANGE | WITHIN A FIFTH |
| CURRICULUM | PERFORMING SKILLS, AURAL MEMORY, LISTENING SKILLS, TEAMWORK |

Getting started

- Try a few warm up activities (see activity 2).
- Listen to the performance track. Each verse is very similar, but encourage students to signal which verse they are at as they listen.
- Allow students to move to the beat of the music to help reduce any body tension.

Learning the song

- Start with everyone learning the call and response on the first verse. Even though the tune is simple it's a good basis for everyone to know it well so they feel confident singing in either group.
- Break the class into two groups, each taking a part and then swapping over.

Developing music making

- Think about the different characters in the song. How would a child sound if they were asking for something - whiney? Sweet and innocent? How about the mother - impatient? Grumpy? Each group should try to sing in character and be able to hear the difference between the two parts.
- Experiment with adding percussion as a backing to the song.
- How about writing alternative lyrics? Go around the group and ask for suggestions for what else Mama could buy e.g. Mama, will you buy me a new football?!



Mama, will you buy me a banana?!

Verse 1

Group 1

Ma, Ma, will you buy me a, will you buy me a, will you buy me a

5 Ma, Ma, will you buy me a, will you buy me a ba - na - na?

Group 2

9 Yes yes, I'll buy you a, I'll buy you a, I'll buy you a

13 Yes yes, I'll buy you a, I'll buy you a ba - na - na?

Verse 2

Group 1

Ma Ma, will you peel the skin? Will you peel the skin? Will you peel the skin?
Ma Ma, will you peel the skin? The skin of my banana.

Group 2

Yes, yes, I'll peel the skin, I'll peel the skin, I'll peel the skin
Yes, yes, I'll peel the skin, the skin of your banana

Verse 3

Group 1

Ma Ma, do you want a bite? Do you want a bite? Do you want a bite?
Ma Ma, do you want a bite? A bite of my banana

Group 2

Yes, yes, I'd like a bite, I'd like a bite, I'd like a bite
Yes, yes, I'd like a bite, a bite of your banana

Verse 4

Group 1

Ma Ma, you greedy thing, you greedy thing, you greedy thing
Ma Ma, you greedy thing, you've eaten my banana



Learn Grow Island debate

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| Aim: | Pupils will discuss in role the arguments from different groups of people that feel that they should have ownership of the land and to see how this affects small farmers and their livelihoods. They will think about fairness and future sustainability. |
| Time: | 1-1.5hrs |
| Resources: | A4 plain paper – one each; role cards – one set per group of 4/5; grow island power point |

Encourage students to discuss where they think bananas are from e.g. Northern Australia, Costa Rica, Kenya, Honduras, Nicaragua, Windward Islands, Kenya, Tanzania, Philippines, Thailand, India. Highlight that bananas are grown in the Caribbean, where *Bassez down* and *Mama, will you buy me a banana?* were originally from, and that many of these countries are islands.

Pose the question: if you had your own land, what would you use it for? Encourage pupils to think about 5 uses for the land for things they would like to do, e.g. playground, meeting place, cinema etc. and think of 5 ways to use the land to get things they need, e.g. food and shelter. As a class work out 5 fundamental needs.

Now tell pupils to pretend that the class owns a small island, and all the pieces of paper in the class represent the land on this island. Re-stress the idea that there are competing demands for the land.

Set the context that most of the people living on the island grow their own food on the land to eat, or sell food to buy food from elsewhere.

Explain the role cards. There are different groups of people on the island who all want to use its land. Pupils are going to pretend to be these different people, and have a **debate to decide how their piece of land is used.**

Give each group (of 8 pupils) a set of role cards, so that each person has one of the following roles:

- 2 Government representatives, who have decided to sell the land
- 2 farmers, who believe they are entitled to the land and want to keep it to grow crops to eat locally (themselves or other locals)
- 2 business people from a rich country who wants to buy the land as an investment
- 2 business people representing a multinational company who wants to buy the land to grow crops for export



Explain they are going to have a debate in role over what happens to their piece of land (the piece of paper). Give each pair 5-10mins to determine how they will approach the debate, using the argument template sheet if they wish.

Prompt pupils to consider ways they could influence people to get what they want, e.g. by making deals, or spending money.

Ask each group to have a debate, and decide who will determine how the land is used. Pupils should have realised that the **Government** has the power to decide this. Therefore the farmer, business person and representative of the multinational company must **persuade the Government** why they should allocate the land to them. The Government representatives must decide who they would allocate the land to. NB: Allocating land most simply means selling it, but can also include renting, leasing, etc.

As a whole class, ask all of the Government representatives who they allocated their land to and make a tally to see how many farmers, business people from rich countries and multinational companies bought the land. Ask each of the Government representatives to **explain their choice** to the class.

Presumably, most of the Government representatives will allocate their land to the multinational company or the business person. Using the tally, refer back to the island. Get them to imagine what the island will be like now.

Think Going further

In their groups, (reminding them they are **no longer in role**) give them some time to think about:

- Who will be better off on the island now?
- Who will be worse off on the island now?
- How will the islanders meet their *5 fundamental needs* now? How will they meet their *5 fundamental needs* in the future?
- Is this a fair situation?

Feedback ideas. In general, does each group think they will be better or worse off? Prompt pupils to consider whether food production for the islanders will be a problem.

Check pupils have spotted that if the rich businessman or the multinational company end up with the land, either nobody or fewer people will now be able to farm the land to get income. Even if income is made by the multinational company selling produce to other countries, only some people will have this money. How will other people get food?

Lastly go over what they found fair or unfair. What was the root cause of this unfairness?



Prompt pupils to think about ownership, power and money, and why resources such as land are contested in this way. Do they think this is like real life? Would the outcome and impact be different if Grow Island was a **poor** country or a rich country? Why might that be?

Explore ideas of power in the **Power-Shift** activity. This will give pupils an interactive understanding of how the different actors within the global food system can help make it fairer, and consider the actions they can take.

[Teachers Guide](#)

[Activity Sheets](#)

[Power point presentation](#)

Act Send a song

Perform *Bassez down* or *Mama, will you buy me a banana?* – this could be in a key stage/whole school assembly or even in a special after school concert.

Make a recording of the performance on an audio recorder, webcam, video camera or mobile phone.

Download the file on your computer and burn it to a CD. If you don't already have the appropriate software you can do this from the Sing Up website in collaboration with MixPixie. Visit singup.mixpixie.com for more information.

As a class, write to your local MP and send the CD/DVD of your performance. Explain that you are singing to show your support for farmers such as those on Grow Island and ask them to write a letter to the UN or World Bank to show their support.

[You can also use the action planning resource to decide with the class what they feel is the best action to take](#)





Labelling bananas – St Vincent
Abigail Hadeed/Oxfam