

# **ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT and LITERACY SKILLS**

**☺ ♫ ☺ SING ALONG, READ A SONG! ☺ ♫ ☺**

## ***Suggestions and activities***

*for turning the songs into successful reading texts  
for emerging, beginning, and more fluent readers  
and to additionally develop and assess  
Listening, Speaking, and Writing skills*

**Linda K. Williams** For songs, more info, and resources: [Linda.BetterWorld@gmail.com](mailto:Linda.BetterWorld@gmail.com)

## **WHOLE LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES TO USE WITH ANY SONG**

*With Native English-Speakers  
and/or English as a Second Language Students*

**✓ CHORAL READING**

**✓ PAIR AND SHARE; TALK ABOUT IT!**

**✓ SEMANTIC ORGANIZERS**  
e.g., MIND-MAPS, T-CHARTS...

**✓ ROLE-PLAYING**

**✓ MANIPULATION OF TEXT**  
-- WHOLE TO PART, PART TO WHOLE

**✓ WRITING: SHARED→INTERACTIVE→INDEPENDENT**

**✓ REPRODUCTION OF TEXT**

**✓ INNOVATIONS ON TEXT**

**✓ SKIT WRITING**

**✓ STUDENT-CREATED BOOKS AND POSTERS**

**✓ READING-FOR-MEANING EXPERIENCES**

# 😊🎵😊 **SING ALONG, READ A SONG! 😊🎵😊** **FROM SINGING SKILLS TO READING SKILLS**

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## I. SING IT...

When teaching students a new song, encourage them to repeatedly listen, move, and sing.

## II. SAY IT...

Activities to develop and check rhythmic oral expression, aural comprehension, and creative oral expression by using song lyrics

### A. Rhythmic oral expression (again, coupled with rhythmic movement)

1. Learning the lyrics
2. Enjoying (and increasing familiarity with) the lyrics
  - a. Whole class/ large group
  - b. Divide class into smaller groups

### B. Aural comprehension and creative oral expression

1. Word meanings: Definitions/ meaning in context
2. Meanings of Idioms, Phrases, and Sentences
3. Comprehension of Action, Cause-and-effect, and Plot
  - a. Literal comprehension questions
  - b. Inferential comprehension questions

### C. Creative Oral Expression

1. Additional verses
2. Storytelling
3. Puppetry

## III. READ IT!: HOW TO TAKE STUDENTS FROM THE STAGE WHERE

\*THEY DON'T KNOW WHICH PAGE THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE LOOKING AT,  
TO THE STAGE WHERE

\*THEY KNOW WHICH WORD IS WHICH, and CAN READ THE TEXT WITH CONFIDENCE

### A. Key Concepts/ Principles

1. WHOLE → PART → WHOLE!
2. REPETITION!
3. "READING WITH TRAINING WHEELS"  
shared reading →  
choral reading →

**"paired prompter reading" → SOLO!**

# ☺ ♫ ☺ **SING ALONG, READ A SONG! ☺ ♫ ☺** **FROM SINGING SKILLS TO READING SKILLS -- Cont'd.**

## **B. Large or Small Group Activities**

Using whatever forms of technology / materials are available to you -- whether teaching in person / document camera / Promethean Board / and/or platforms for distance learning,

1. Display the lyrics for students to sing, read, and interact with in a variety of ways, e.g., when using a document camera, Use projected lyrics in the following ways:
  - \* First, teacher models tracking of words as class sings or reads
  - \* Then, invite student to track text with pointer on large screen as the group sings / reads
  - \* Also, on the hard copy, a student can use a card underneath each line of the lyrics as the group sings / reads
  - \* Student finds words given orally by teacher (or other student)
  - \* Ask student to find word(s) which, e.g., name ways a person can feel, tell what you can do with your hands, etc.

## **2. With Song Lyrics Sheets**

Each student can have his/her own copy (or student-illustrated song booklet)  
\* to take home to study, practice, tutor younger siblings (and/or perhaps parents, in the case of some English Language Learners [ELL's])  
\* to "have and to hold" when the school year ends; great for vacation-time reinforcement of reading and/or new language skills for ELL students.  
\* for large group or whole class rhythmic chanting, choral reading in parts, and/or Reader's Theater scripts (use highlighter pens, and

encourage students to mark their copy up with reminders of the meanings of new words)

## **C. Small Group or Tutoring Activities**

for using lyrics sheets and/or student-illustrated songbooks as reading text in a skill group or with tutors

Using song lyrics as reading text, see if students are able to track text, focusing upon...

- appropriate page of book
- appropriate line of print
- appropriate word

Provide assistance until students are able to accurately track text with accurate

1-1 correspondence between written and spoken words as they sing or read

THEN: Focus upon selected individual words and, when ready, letter-sounds in context

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### **III. READ IT!**

#### **D. Formats/ materials/ modes of presentation and follow-up activities**

##### **1. Using the lyrics sheet as a springboard, modify the documents to create...**

- \* Larger print for K-1's
- \* Larger print: one verse or line per page for student-illustrated individual song book
- \* Huge print for posters (song charts)
- \* Huge print: one verse or line per page for student-illustrated Big Book (class/ cooperative learning group project)
- \*\* Modify lyrics sheet (also reconstruct text in Cooperative Learning Groups)
  - scrambled verses
  - scrambled lines
  - scrambled word order
  - scrambled words
- \*\* Cloze sentences (e.g., If you're angry and you \_\_\_\_ it, ...)
- \*\*+ Vowel cloze (e.g., could focus first upon just short vowels, then the long vowel spelling patterns, etc.: st\_mp...t\_k\_ )
- \*\*+ Word transposition (e.g., ...take a feet...stamp your walk):  
Have students check for meaning! See "Sense Check" on last p. of this document
- \*\*+ Letter substitution -- e.g., ...pound a jillow...count to ben:  
Again, have students check for meaning!
- \* Varied Activities to interact with key vocabulary words: e.g., select and underline, find key words multiple times, find rhyming words, use words in their in own sentences

"+" identifies 3 ideas from Nadine Haddock, San Miguel Elem., Lemon Grove, CA

##### **2. Sentence strips / cut-up sentences / Pocket Charts: Using word, phrase, and/or sentence cards or strips offer more opportunities for students to interact with the text by manipulating the words / cut-up sentences in different ways.**

*For more info, activities, and resources: Linda.BetterWorld@gmail.com*

##### **3. Recordings of the songs to accompany Sing-Alongs/ Read-Alongs**

- \* For repeated practice and enjoyment at home, share YouTube links of the Caring and Capable Kids songs with students and families  
To receive those links: Linda.BetterWorld@gmail.com
- \* Offering opportunities for students to listen to / engage with the songs repeatedly can provide reinforcement for class, small group, and/or individuals
- \* In the classroom, having students wear headsets while singing/ reading along, can provide a great opportunity for teachers to assess how accurately students are learning the lyrics!
- \* record a group or the whole class singing and/or reading the song (audio and/or video), to share and celebrate the students' enjoyment and accomplishments.

##### **4. Individual- or class-made songbooks**

- \* Little or Big Books, illustrated by students
- \* Reproduction of text, and/or innovations, even progressing to "piggyback songs" wherein students write their own verses and/or songs, using the same tune/s.

# ☺ ♫ ☺ SING ALONG, READ A SONG! ☺ ♫ ☺ READING FOR MEANING STRATEGIES

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## QUESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO ASK FOR SELF-EVALUATION (META-COGNITION) WHEN READING ANY TEXT:

**How well did I do on the following...?**

### SENSE CHECK

Did I make sure that what I read made sense to me?

Did I understand what I read?

When I came to an unfamiliar word, did I read ahead to get clues?

If I read something that didn't make sense to me, did I go back and  
discover the problem?

If I still didn't understand it after re-reading, did I get help?

### GOT THE PICTURE?

Did I make a mental picture of what I read?

Could I describe that mental picture to someone?

If my mental picture went fuzzy or blank, did I re-read that section and have success  
in making a better mental image?

If my mental picture was still fuzzy or blank after re-reading, did I get help?

### SONG / BOOK BACK-TALK

Did I do some (or all) of the following as I read?

\* react to the text

\* make predictions

\* think about how the characters felt

\* think about how I would have felt or acted in those situations

\* evaluate the decisions and actions of the characters

\* wonder about why things happened or characters acted the way they did

\* remember experiences I have had that were similar, or in other ways relate the text  
to my own life

### **SONG / BOOK BACK-TALK STARTER ideas:**

"If I were him/her...,"

"I wonder...,"

"I felt \_\_\_\_\_ when...,"

"\_\_\_\_\_ in the story / song reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_,"

"If I were the author, I..."