

## Lesson Plan : John Lennon's Imagine and the Vietnam War in the 1970's

**Skills : Listening comprehension, speaking, vocabulary**

Situation of the class : Junior High school class, in the south of France, in the city of Aix-en-Provence. Students are about 17 years old and most of their classes focus on literature, history and politics. Students have studied English at school for at least 6 years. Thus students have an **advanced level**.

Class background : The English class is related to what the student would study during their history class and they would have had studied the Vietnam War in the past two weeks.

Objectives of the class : The main goal of the class is to **make the students speak on a topic supposed to be interesting for them**. This topic is also highly related to English-speaking country cultures and history. The teacher would talk in English as much as possible; the discussion of the topic is all in English. Even vocabulary explanations have to be in English, French would only be used in case of a serious problem in the understanding of something. Thus, as the students speak they also enrich their also cultural knowledge of American history. Plus, since the students are supposed to know a lot about the topic thanks to their history classes, they would be able to communicate about that. But the challenge of the task would be to do it in English. Thus, another goal of that class would be to make the students think in English.

Overview of day's activities : John Lennon – Imagine and how it can be related to the context of the Vietnam War in the US in the early 1970s.

**9:50-10:05 "Warm up"** : Teacher elicits students : What do you know about John Lennon ? The Beatles ? The Vietnam War ?

- As students raise their hands to give their answers to Teacher writes the answers on the board. Teacher elicits and makes the class discuss the context of the song, and Lennon's implications in the context.
- *Closure* : Teacher says : "Now, in order to understand Lennon's implications we are going to listen to the song."

## **Main activities :**

### **10:05-10:15**

- Teacher makes students listen to the song without the lyrics, once or twice. Teacher monitors students and ask them if they need to listen to the song a second time. Don't play the song more than twice, as it will be played again later.
- ➔ Teacher elicits students : What do you understand ? If students understand enough to, try to start discussion : teacher would ask : Why do you think John Lennon wrote that song ? Who do you think he was addressing ? (optional activity, the most important part is after they understood the entire meaning of the song)

### **10:20-10:30**

- Teacher gives students the lyrics but some words would be missing (see lyrics at the end of that plan). Teacher makes students listen to the song again and students try to fill in the blanks.
- Teacher monitors class and ask them whether they need to listen to the song again to fill in all the blanks.
- When students are done, teacher elicits class on each missing word, students are suppose to raise their hands and each one would give a missing word they understood until all the blanks are filled.
- Teacher asks students if they all understood the basic meaning of the song. Students can ask vocabulary or grammar questions if they don't understand something but teacher should always give answers in English, by using synonyms or English sentences and examples with simpler words.
- ➔ Make sure they understand everything and then discuss the implications of the song in the context, to what extent it is representative of the young people's state of mind.

### **10:30-10:50**

- Now that the students know the meaning of the song, teacher elicits them on what they understood : What is the significance of the song ? What was John Lennon's opinion on the Vietnam War ? To what extent is the song related to the Vietnam War ?
- The objective of the teacher is to make the student think and find out to what extent Lennon's song was written to oppose the War in Vietnam. In order to achieve that goal, teacher would guide the students through a commentary of the song. Teacher would suggest the hidden meaning of the different parts of the

song so that the students would find out to what extent the song is about the Vietnam War and how strongly opposed to it John Lennon was.

**Spare activities :**

Discussion on today's wars : Iraq and Afghanistan (**10 to 20 min**)

- Teacher would ask students what they know about the war in Iraq, elicits them on what they know about it and suggest that the war in Iraq have similarities with the war in Vietnam. For example, teacher would ask students what they know about the context of the war in Iraq, the reasons why it started. Then teacher would question students on the popularity of the war in Iraq, which they would compare the popularity of the war in Vietnam.

Work on modal/subjunctive : "you may say I'm a dreamer..." (**10 to 30min**)

- By using that phrase, the teacher would introduce the study of modal auxiliaries the differences between *May Might* and *Must*.

# John Lennon - Imagine

Imagine there's no Heaven  
It's easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky  
Imagine all the people  
Living for today

Imagine there's no countries  
It isn't hard to do  
Nothing to kill or die for  
And no religion too  
Imagine all the people  
Living life in peace

You may say that I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope someday you'll join us  
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the world

You may say that I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope someday you'll join us  
And the world will live as one

The words in blue would be missing on the students' copy. They will have to fill in the blanks.