**Assessment Task for Speaking**

**Topic: English Song Broadcast**

This assessment task focuses on developing senior secondary students’ speaking skills.

This set of materials consists of Question Paper and Suggested Answers.

**Speaking Task: English Song Broadcast**

**Situation**:

Your group is organising the broadcast of some English songs during lunch time as part of the English Day activities in your school. The following is a note from the teacher-advisor giving you advice on how to prepare for the broadcast.

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| --- |
| Dear Members,  **Re: English Day Songs**  Thank you for organising the English song broadcast on the English Day. In making your choice of songs, please consider the following points:   * The songs must be in fairly simple English so that even younger students can at least partly understand (repetition of words may help). * The lyrics should be sung clearly and easy to hear. * Songs with stories are nice. * The songs should have good tunes. * The songs should be catchy and memorable. * The songs should relate to issues of interest to teenagers. * It would be nice if the songs have educational messages, but in any case they must not contain anything unsuitable or harmful. * There should be variety.   I look forward to hearing your choices.  Ms Wong |

**Part A Group Interaction**

With reference to the guidelines above, discuss what songs to broadcast and how you will present them.

You may want to talk about:

* the sorts of songs which fit the guidelines
* your suggestions for the songs
* how you will introduce the songs
* anything else you think is important

**Part B Individual Response**

A newsletter on students’ pleasurable experiences in learning English will be published, with one part featuring how English songs can play a part in learning. The Editor-in-chief is going to ask you to contribute your views to the newsletter. Answer the question.

1. Do you like the idea of learning a language through songs?
2. What are some of your favourite English songs?
3. When using songs to learn English, what kind of help will you need?
4. Which aspect of English can you learn best from songs?

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

**Suggested Ideas for Group Interaction and Individual Response**

**Part A Group Discussion**

* the sorts of songs which fit the guidelines
* Do we want to include any nursery rhymes like “Old Macdonald”?
* There are some old ballads that tell stories.
* I don’t think we can include any rap artists. They speak too quickly and use a lot of bad language.
* I know we don’t want too many love songs, but I think we should include a couple - they are what people listen to the most.
* Can we think of songs sung in English but by Asian artists? I think that’d attract attention.
* We can mix oldies and recent releases.
* I hope we can have some dreamy ballads.
* Sports lovers would be pleased if we included a football song such as Liverpool’s “You’ll never walk alone”.
* We haven’t mentioned folk songs or Country and Western songs - they often tell stories.
* We must check the lyrics of each song first to make sure there are no bad words we haven’t noticed.
* your suggestions for the songs
* Let’s use famous songs like I did it my way so that people already know some words.
* Songs by Abba are just right. They have lots of repetition and they really make people want to dance. “Dancing Queen” would be great.
* Don’t forget songs from famous films like Titanic.
* There’s a Rolf Harris’ song, “Two Little Boys”, that tells a meaningful story of friendship.
* “Lemon Tree” is certainly very catchy.
* “Tom’s Diner” is a bit difficult, but I think it’d be very popular and it would make people go and find the lyrics so they could understand it all.
* We need some up-to-date stuff or some people will mock our songs.
* Are there any suitable songs from any of the famous musicals?
* There are songs like “If I were a Boy” and “Because of You”, which repeat a particular grammatical pattern. We ought to include at least one like that.
* I think we want songs that promote a positive attitude. I suggest “Hero” and “It’s a Wonderful World”.
* What about Bruno Mars’ song, “Count on Me”? That tells people to care for one another.
* how you will introduce the songs
* Shall we have two MCs talking- a boy and a girl?
* I suppose it would take too long to read out the lyrics first.
* We could at least mention a chorus or good repeated line and tell people to listen out for it.
* Do we want to give the details of the performer, date of the song and so on?
* Are we going to ask people to sing along if they know the words?
* Are we going to do the introducing or ask the head prefects to do it?
* anything else you think is important
* We must time everything exactly so we don’t end too soon or over-run.
* Can we have a rehearsal one day after school to make sure the sound quality is right?
* Why don’t we put up notices of the lyrics of the songs we are going to play so anyone who wants to can prepare themselves?
* Where are we going to get the recordings from?

**Part B Individual Response**

* + - 1. Do you like the idea of learning a language through songs?

*Well, I wouldn’t want to do it too often, but I think it is good to have variety in English lessons. Listening to songs and finding out what they mean is certainly interesting. When the teacher plays good songs everyone is quiet and attentive. You get listening practice and learn some new words and idioms. Listening to English songs is useful for my studies and can help me have a better career. There are plenty of very good English songs, but I’m happy listening to local stars and think there is a lot of good canto-pop music. So, as I said, I like lessons based on songs but I also want some more serious lessons to prepare me for examinations and university.*

* + - 1. What are some of your favourite English songs?

*There are lots. “Don’t Cry for Me Argentina” is pretty special. It’s so full of passion. I love the idea of a deep love which survives all sorts of events. Then I like Britney Spears - she has a lot of really great songs. If I have got to choose one, it’ll be “Oops I Did it Again”. It’s the music I really like. It just makes me feel awake, alive and happy! I like grand films and musicals so some of my songs come from them. As well as Evita, there’s Cats’ wonderful “Memories”. I think of that when I am feeling down – I remember the lines I must think of a new life / And I mustn’t give in. Of course, I have seen Titanic a hundred times and know the words of songs like “My Heart will Go on”. Another song with inspiring words is John Lennon’s “Imagine”. And a very last one is “Love is in the Air” - the tune is so catchy.*

* + - 1. When using songs to learn English, what kind of help will you need?

*The first time I hear an English song, I usually cannot catch all the words so I need to hear it played more than once. Then if I want to use it for learning, I need an exercise to do while listening – filling in the gaps, or completing the lyrics from multiple-choice options. But unless it is a very simple song I will need some explanation. There are probably words I don’t know, and some of them are slang or idioms I haven’t heard before. Often pop songs tell a sort of story - nothing direct but you can work out a boy has seen his girlfriend with someone else, and she has lied to him- something like that. Help with comprehension is often needed; even when you know what the words mean you cannot always understand what’s happening.*

* + - 1. Which aspect of English can you learn best from songs?

*I guess that partly depends on the song. Some songs are useful early on in your language learning because they repeat a grammatical pattern: If I were a rich man, I wouldn’t have to work hard. But as you become more advanced there won’t be much you can learn about grammar from songs- in fact, as many are very informal and even slangy you might pick up bad habits from songs. At that stage songs are good for vocabulary – not only do you meet new words and expressions, but they are not the sort of words you meet in textbooks so they extend your range, and give you more informal English for conversation. When you listen to songs you pick up phrases, even whole lines which you can use in other places. So you become more fluent. But most of all, songs are useful for making language learning more fun!*

**END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS**