

U2 ONE – Teachers' Notes

Pictures of the buffalo

You could start off the lesson by getting students to look at the cover of the single. If you don't have the single you can find an image here:

https://www.u2songs.com/discography/u2_one_single

Get students in pairs to look at the pictures and describe what they see, what they think is happening and why. (it's probably a good idea to blank out the name of the song and the group) After doing some feedback, let students read the short text on the back of the CD or single cover.

The image on the cover is a photograph by the American artist David Wojnarowicz, depicting how Indians hunted buffalo by causing them to run off cliffs. Wojnarowicz identifies himself and ourselves with the buffalo, pushed into the unknown by forces we cannot control or even understand. Wojnarowicz is an activist artist and writer whose work has created controversy recently through its uncompromising depiction of the artist's homosexuality, his infection by the AIDS virus and the political crisis surrounding AIDS .

They could compare their ideas with the text and from there you could go on to talk about AIDS and how things may have changed from when the song was released in 1991.

You could also use other photos of clips from the different videos to peak learners interest and get them to predict the name of the song that they are going to listen to or what it might be about. You should be able to find some examples on the internet.

One in different languages

Students match the word one in English with its translation in the other languages. Here are the answers.

Vocabulary Pre-Teach

Students check the meaning of the words/phrases in a mono-lingual dictionary.

Listening Option 1

Students listen to the song and as they do, complete the feedback form found in Tim Murphey's book 'Music & Song' 'Song Feedback' p.90 or something similar that you design yourself.

Listening Option 2

Students listen to the song to put the different sections in order. (see task)

With the first listening I sometimes use the Jonny Cash version. You can find it on You Tube. It's different and learners might not be expecting it.

Listening, Reading & Speaking

You can get the learners to listen to the song again, this time with the lyrics in the correct order. This time I get the learners to listen to a different version, maybe the one with Mary J. Blige or by the Irish singer Colm Wilkinson. (again they are easy to find on the internet). As the learners listen and read over the lyrics get them to consider what they think the song is about. Afterwards they can discuss in pairs/groups. They can also compare the two version ad decide which one they prefer and why.

Translation Option

Students read over the lyrics and translate it into their own language.

Reading

Students read over the different interpretations of the song and discuss which one they are most convinced by and why. They should go back to the words of the song to justify their ideas. I first saw some of these texts being used by Serge Nicaudie on a CELTA training course in April 2004.

Video Clip Design

Students in pairs/threes think about what the video of the song might look like. You could then get students to watch the video. (There were actually three videos made, one in Berlin, one in a bar and the other with the buffaloes. You can find two versions, the one from Berlin and the one in the bar on The Best Of U2 - Volume 2 DVD. The one from Berlin is the most interesting to use.)

As the students watch the video they could answer the evaluation sheet taken from Tim Murphey's book 'Music & Song' 'What makes a good video' p. 115. After they have watched the video they could compare their ideas and again discuss which of the interpretations the video suggests. The video which is shot in Berlin ends with two old East German Trabants facing each other in front of the Olympic Stadium. U2's royalties from the sale of the single went to AIDS research. The band appear in drag (which they were actually worried about in that it might have been misunderstood that they were suggesting that AIDS was only a problem for a certain section of society) and the old man in the video is actually Bono's father, Bob Hewson.

DVD – Gist Listening

The script comes from a U2 documentary regularly shown on the Biography Channel <http://www.biographychannel.com>. If you don't have a copy you can always simply let the students read the script and for gist decide which of the interpretations from the previous reading the band talk about. Alternatively, you can see a link to the relevant section here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nluH51ay-A>

DVD – Vocabulary Development

Students read over the script again and match the vocabulary items with the appropriate definitions from the context. (Answers below)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
G	F	M	A	B	I	J	K	C	L	D	H	E	N

DVD – Gist Listening Optional

If you have a copy of the U2 hits DVD, one of the extra features is a documentary 'The Making Of One'. In this there is a description of the background to the song and an explanation of why the band made three different videos. It has subtitles in various languages so students could simply sit and watch if you wanted to. You can also find the clips here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BD3OyhGNIP8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5FMci7E3LM>

You can also find some extra material about the song and the album 'Achtung Baby' in the U2 documentary 'From the Sky Down'.

Speaking

The last activity is a set of questions about is about music in general and can be a great way to bring the material back to the learners' own lives.

