

A–Z of teaching young learners: Songs and chants

What and why?

The songs and chants on the Songs and Stories cassette or CD have been specially written for the course. They give the children more listening practice, but also help them practice new structures and vocabulary in a memorable and meaningful context. Once the children have learnt a new song or chant, it is a good idea to repeat it as an introductory or closing activity in the next few units.

Practical ideas

- You could ask the children to make a 'shaker' in one of your first lessons with them – see Extra activities page T83 in the Teacher's Book Level 1. The shaker, a cardboard tube filled with dried beans, can be used each time they are learning or singing a song. They shake the shaker to provide rhythm and this helps them to learn the melody of the song or chant. For apprehensive or shy children, the shaker can offer security.
- Some children are not naturally musical or perhaps are slightly deaf. They may respond better to being allowed to hum or 'la la' the tune to help them learn the melody and can then add the words later.
- When the children know a song or chant, ask them to work in pairs to sing/chant it together – perhaps taking one alternate line each. If they want to, some pairs can then perform the song or chant in front of the class.
- For many songs and chants children can work in pairs facing each other. They can clap their own hands to the rhythm, then clap right hand to right hand and left hand to left hand with their partner.
- Children often like to sing or chant when they are standing in a line with their hands on the waist or shoulders of the person in front of them. This helps them learn the rhythm and any movements involved.
- Where possible, you can encourage the children to make up new words for the song or chant.