

Low-Level Learners



This packet includes...	3 WANY Jazz Chants
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JAZZ CHANTS for “We Are New York”

“Jazz chants” are poems and stories set to a strong beat that help ESL students internalize the “music” or rhythm and intonation of American English. They are a high-energy, fun way to give students practice speaking and listening, but they can also be used to reinforce grammar points and present new vocabulary. “Jazz chants” are the brainchild of Carolyn Graham, who developed the concept while she was teaching ESL at New York University.

I first used Graham’s *Jazz Chants* in lower-level adult beginner classes to help students loosen up and sound more natural. It was a logical extension to write new ones to reinforce the vocabulary, pronunciation and messages of *We Are New York* episodes.

Here are some guidelines for using a “jazz chant” in the classroom:

1. Distribute text of the chant to students.
2. Give students the opportunity to connect the storyline of the chant to the episode. Check that the students know all the key vocabulary, and pre-teach new words and phrases.
3. Read the chant out loud while students follow the text.
4. Recite the first line of the chant at normal speed; students repeat in unison. Continue this until the end of the chant, correcting pronunciation along the way. Repeat until students have it.
5. Introduce the beat by tapping, clapping, or any other method of choice, and model speaking to the beat. (Hit the first beat on the first stressed syllable.)
6. Read chant line by line, with students repeating each line, in unison, to the beat. Repeat until students have it.
7. Divide class into two groups. Start chant. Model first line with group one repeating; model second line with group two repeating. Continue this pattern throughout the chant. The overall effect is a two-part dialogue between the teacher and the students.
8. As students become familiar and comfortable with the text, they take over the dialogue, calling and answering on their own. The teacher becomes the conductor.
9. Once students have taken over the dialogue, the teacher introduces new challenges by speeding up the tempo and encouraging vocal expression.
10. Other options: groups change roles; students conduct.

“Be on Time” Chant for “The Wedding” (Attachment A)

This chant is a wrap up exercise that references two of the themes in the episode:

- Meeting at the subway at one o’clock sharp ...What does “sharp” mean?
- What do they mean by “American time”? Is “American time” different?

“Diego’s Story” for “Stay in School” (Attachment B)

- This piece summarizes the story; it’s also a good vehicle for pronunciation practice.
- Check to see if there are any words students don’t know, i.e., “terrible,” “figure things out,” “lucky.” Go over pronunciation, meaning, usage and pronunciation.

“Advice to Rosa” Chant for “New Life Café” (Attachment C)

Remind students of the chant they did about Diego in “Stay in School.” Tell them that this time they will be able to write some of a chant about Rosa. This exercise builds from a small two-phrase chant to a larger piece that the students contribute to.

- Write the following on the board:
 “I can’t do it.”
 “Yes, you can.”
- Divide students into two groups. Each group says one of the two phrases above in a round that increases in volume and tempo. Teacher keeps the beat, either by clapping, banging on the table or beating a drum. Ask students to make the repetition fun, to use an emotion when they say their phrase. Ask them to say phrases as if they were happy, nervous, surprised, upset, etc. Do this more than once, until everyone is participating and the students are speaking in unison and enjoying themselves.
- Add to the task: Refer back to the episode and the previous exercise. Elicit the things Rosa’s friends and family told her, i.e., Ming said, “You’re a cook, so cook”; Eddie said, “Try something new”; the Doctor said, “Exercise,” “Use low fat,” etc.
- Elicit a list of all the people who gave advice and what the advice was. Write it on the board. Encourage students to add more things.
- Once this is done, reorganize the chant. Again, students will be in two groups. One group will represent Rosa who says “I can’t do it.” The other group will represent Rosa’s family and friends – they will respond to Rosa by saying “Yes, you can” and giving advice and suggestions. Many of the suggestions should already be on the board following the previous exercise. See Attachment C for a model of the “Advice to Rosa” chant.
- This is a doable exercise, but it has to be modeled first. Teacher may demonstrate by playing both parts. Then teacher should ask two students to model the chant. Modify Attachment C to make it work for your group. Encourage students to act out and chant with emotion, use gestures, facial expressions, even point at Rosa.
- Guide the chant towards a happy ending, where Rosa decides she can do it and will do it.

For more information, see the original *Jazz Chants* series by Carolyn Graham (Oxford University Press): *Jazz Chants*, *Jazz Chants Old and New*, *Small Talk: More Jazz Chants*, *Grammarchants*, *Jazz Chants for Children*, *Children’s Jazz Chants Old and New*, *Jazz Chant Fairy Tales*, *Mother Goose Jazz Chants*, and *Holiday Jazz Chants*.

“BE ON TIME”

We Are New York: The Wedding

Group 1

Group 2

The clock is ticking.
I'm running late.

Be on time.
Be on time.

What time is it?
Is it late?
I wanted to be early.
It's my big break.

Be on time.
Be on time.
If you're late,
you'll blow it!
Be on time.

This happens too much!
It's got to stop!
What can I do
to be on time?

You can plan ahead
And get out of bed
And know where you're going
And know how to get there
And watch the clock
And run, don't walk

And if I do ALL of THAT,
will I be on time???

You will be if you want to be.

I want to be. I want to be.

You will! You will!

Be on time.
Be on time.

Be on time.
Be on time.

“DIEGO’S STORY”
We Are New York: Stay in School

Group 1

Group 2

Diego said he was lost in class

Lost in class

He said
Everything was Blah Blah Blah

Blah Blah Blah

Books, English, tests and more
It was hard
It was hard

It was just too hard

So he dropped out of school
and got a job

A good job?

A terrible job!

But his Uncle helped him
figure things out

Lucky Diego!
What happened next?

He went back to school
He stayed in school

He stayed in school
He stayed in school!

He stayed in school
He stayed in school!

Diego stayed in school
and did very well

Diego stayed in school
and did very well

“ADVICE TO ROSA”
We Are New York: New Life Café

ROSA

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

I can't do it

Yes, you can

I can't do it

Yes, you can

I can't do it

Yes, you can

Yes, you can

How can I change?

I am who I am!

If I can't cook my Dominican dishes,

I'm not me.

You can do it!

Yes, you can!

My cooking made me famous.

I love to eat them too.

If my recipes are bad now,

I don't know what to do!

You can do it!

Yes, you can!

You can change
what you eat.

You can change
the way you cook.

My rice and beans!

My famous cakes!

You can learn to

use less sugar,

and learn to use

less salt.

You're a cook, so cook!

Just try something new.

ROSA

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

But broccoli and turkey!
How delicious can that be?

This is all so different.
I don't know what to say.
But if I do it,
if I do it,
I can have my new café.

I'll do it!
Yes, I'll do it!
And I'll have my new café!

It's delicious when it's Rosa's.
Just make it, and you'll see.

So do it!
Yes, do it!
And have your
new café.