

A Cool Way to Warm Up the Audience: Song of the Day

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Need a way to really get your students' attention at the beginning of class? Want to display your fabulous sense of humor? Try starting class with a Song of the Day. For every class meeting I pick a song that relates to some aspect of that meeting. Most of the time I choose something that is connected to the topic. For example, the Beatles "When I Sixty-Four" for the first class period on pensions, "Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered" for days when we do a really tough topic, or "Jailhouse Rock" if we are looking at fraud. Other times the song relates to the weather. On a below zero winter day, I'll play "Heat Wave". Or the song might relate to a holiday or something happening on campus. It is fun and gives me something to chat about with early arrivals prior to the start of class. This learning strategy works best if you have a technologically enhanced classroom and can play the song through the sound system hooked up to the computer.

Method

I try to get to class as early as I can to get set up. I start the song using the repeat function so that it plays a few times through before class starts. While it is playing I chat with students, mentioning the title and the tie to the day's topic.

Technology

Obviously, you need a technology-enhanced classroom. The system I use includes a computer, wall mounted speakers, and plug-in cables for a laptop or USB device. You can play the song through the use of network files, a laptop loaded with the songs, or plugging in your iPod.

Key Points to Remember When Picking Songs

- Choose well-known songs
This is more difficult than it sounds because of generational differences in defining *well-known*.
- Choose songs with clearly understandable lyrics
- Puns usually go over well
- Mix up the artists—even if Willie Nelson is the greatest, students start to groan after the third Willie song of the day
- If you're completely at a loss, ask for suggestions

Suggested Songs

Topic/event	Songs
First Day of Class	Ninety Nine and a Half Won't Do (a Gospel song or Creedence Clearwater) Daydream Believer Getting To Know You (King and I) Dream the Impossible Dream Theme from Rocky Teach Your Children (Crosby, Stills and Nash) Only The Strong Survive Back To School Again (Four Tops)
Exam Days	Help (Beatles) Think (Aretha Franklin) Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered It's Now or Never I Say a Little Prayer Climb Every Mountain If Only I Had A Brain (Wizard of Oz) Stayin' Alive (Bee Gees) With A Little Bit Of Luck (My Fair Lady) Did You Ever Have To Make Up Your Mind (Lovin Spoonful)
Return of Exam	Yesterday (Beatles) I Should Have Known Better Nothing I Can Do About It Now (Willie Nelson) Don't Think Twice, It's All Right Sumthin' Stupid (Frank and Nancy Sinatra) Paint it Black (Rolling Stones) I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues (Elton John) High Hopes Put On A Happy Face
Big Project Due	Midnight Hour A Hard Days Night It's Too Late (Carole King) Time is on my side Night and Day Help Me Make It Through The Night Give Me Just A Little More Time All Through The Night Midnight Special (Creedence Clearwater) Oh What A Night (Four Seasons) It's Late (Ricky Nelson)
Weather	Blue Skies Heat Wave

	Button Up Your Overcoat I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm Get Off My Cloud Blowin' In The Wind Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head Oh What A Beautiful Morning (Oklahoma) Sunny Stormy Weather Let The Sunshine In (Hair) Singin' In The Rain Baby It's Cold Outside
Last Day of Class	So Long (Sound of Music) It's Over (Roy Orbison) It Was A Very Good Year It's All Over Now (Rolling Stones) Oh Happy Day Toot, Toot, Tootsie Goodbye (I've Had) The Time Of My Life (Dirty Dancing) Hi Ho Hi Ho (Dwarfs from Snow White) After The Ball Auld Lang Syne So Long It's Been Good To Know Ya'
Moving to a New Topic	The Times They Are A Changin' This Could Be The Start Of Something Big
Day Before Break or Holiday	Let The Good Times Roll On The Road Again Tomorrow (Annie) Beautiful Isle of Somewhere Hawaiian, Mexican, Caribbean songs We Gotta Get Out Of This Place (Animals)
Team Work	Centerfield With A Little Help From My Friends All I Really Want To Do Is Be Friends With You Where You Lead I will Follow (Carole King) All My Rowdy Friends (Hank Williams)
Fraud	Jailhouse Rock Folsom Prison Blues I'm Sorry (Brenda Lee) Lyin' Eyes (Eagles) Your Cheatin' Heart Shame, Shame, Shame Can't Help Myself (Four Tops) I Fought The Law Suspicious Minds (Elvis Presley)
Internal Control	I Walk The Line Beat It (Michael Jackson)

	<p>Got My Mojo Workin' (Etta James)</p> <p>Johnny B Goode</p> <p>It's All Right</p> <p>Ain't Misbehavin'</p> <p>Chains</p>
Revenue/Sales	<p>If You've Got the Money, Honey</p> <p>Penny Lane</p> <p>Three Coins In A Fountain</p> <p>Who Will Buy (My Fair Lady)</p> <p>Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours</p>
Bad Debts	I Can't Get No Satisfaction (Rolling Stones)
Expenditures	<p>Can't Buy Me Love</p> <p>Big Spender</p>
Pensions	<p>When I'm 64</p> <p>Pennies From Heaven</p>
Taxes	<p>They Can't Take That Away From Me</p> <p>The Taxman</p>
Payroll	<p>Nine to Five (Dolly Parton)</p> <p>Take This Job And Shove It</p>
Holidays	<p>My Funny Valentine</p> <p>Monster Mash</p> <p>Stars and Stripes Forever</p>
Inventory	<p>Rikki Don't Lose That Number (Steely Dan)</p> <p>634-5789</p> <p>Just In Time</p>
Long Term Assets	<p>Little Red Corvette (Prince)</p> <p>Mercedes-Benz (Janis Joplin)</p>
Accounting Process	<p>Do You Believe In Magic (Lovin' Spoonful)</p> <p>ABC (Jackson Five)</p> <p>The way you do the things you do</p>
Financial Statements	<p>Wishin' and Hopin' (Dusty Springfield) when discussing meeting forecasts</p> <p>Money (That's What I Want)</p> <p>Thirty Days (Chuck Berry)</p>
Liabilities	You Really Got Me (The Kinks)
Contingencies	<p>Leavin' It All Up To You</p> <p>You Never Can Tell (Chuck Berry)</p>
Leases	<p>We Can Work It Out</p> <p>Fur Elise</p>
Bonds	Any theme song from a James Bond film
Depreciation	Multiplication (Bobby Darin)
Very Difficult Topics	<p>State of Confusion (The Kinks)</p> <p>Get Ready (The Temptations)</p>

Student Feedback

In the three terms I've used this technique, I haven't had one negative comment on my evaluations. I don't ask anything specific, but include the following question:

Please indicate characteristics and behaviors of the instructor that you found most helpful to your learning. Give specific examples if possible.

Resulting in the following responses relating to song of the day:

- The song of the day made class more exciting to come to as well
- she was fun. she always had a song of the day.
- the music she play at the beginning of the class :)
- I really liked the song of the day... at first it was weird but it really did make the class start off in a fun way