

sample

Teaching English using 10 songs



Sample Materials

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Edited & Illustrated by Carol Samlal



Samplers available in the series:

The Final Frontier? – English language teaching materials exploring
David Bowie's *Space Oddity*

Filthy Lucre? – English language teaching materials exploring
Pink Floyd's *Money*

Fight for your Rights - English language teaching materials exploring
Katy Perry's *Roar*

Innocence & Belief – English language teaching materials exploring
Greg Lake's *I Believe in Father Christmas*

Coming soon

Teaching Tracks – Top Ten (full coursebook)
English language teaching materials exploring ten top songs



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A fresh approach...and the inspiration behind it

This is how it all began.

Around 2010, an idea started to brew about how to revolutionise the use of songs and song lyrics in the English language classroom. I felt what was currently on offer in coursebooks and even on the internet lacked innovation, and so I sought out ways to inject novelty and variety into its use; to break free from, what I and many others view as, a 'same-old, same-old' approach to the use of this resource.

Inspired by over 20 years of using songs and song lyrics in the classroom, I felt it was time to share these ideas so that all EFL teachers could further exploit this resource's potential, making its use (and teacher's lessons) much more engaging. The intention of this approach is to challenge the existing *status quo* in the way this resource is employed, and by doing so guide and inspire teachers towards new and innovative ways of maximising the benefits that the use of songs and song lyrics in the language classroom offers.

A key feature of both this sampler book and all books in the *Teaching Tracks* series is the absence of gap-fill activities. The tendency I feel is that producers of materials are prone to fall into what I have dubbed the 'gap-fill trap'. As well as the somewhat questionable pedagogy behind gap fills, its inclusion limits, even dictates, what *can* be done and, more crucially, what *can't* be done - severely restricting the scope of the exploitation of the material.

Creating teaching and study materials without including the full lyrics within the actual materials has, in fact, been a revelation. This freedom (from the proverbial box) made exploring the possibilities of the song, its theme, the multifarious elements of the language within the lyrics, its video and associated activities, much more satisfying with extremely innovative outcomes.

Despite the ease of access of lyrics, practitioners often seem to limit the use of songs in the classroom to that of little more than a tool to change the pace of the lesson or to create a lively, fun mood. But I think songs and their lyrics have far more to offer than this. Songs are a multi-purpose text type, tailor-made for the language classroom. They are perfect as they are invariably concise, contain interesting everyday vocabulary, and are a really effective way of analysing grammar *in situ*. They are also, of course, great for listening, pronunciation, and phonetic work.

Songs are a real-life text type, excellent for analysis of informal language like slang/colloquialisms, idioms, common usage and the like. That is not even to mention their thematic use which, if the right song is chosen, can be extensive. In short, the multi-skill based materials here and in the *Teaching Tracks* series are both content and culture rich, and crucially they are authentic too.

Please feel free to visit our website www.teachingtracks.co.uk for more information about why *Teaching Tracks* is the way forward in using songs and song lyrics in the English language classroom. Feel free to leave your comments and feedback, and to pre-order the full coursebook, **Top Ten** which contains ten top songs.



Seven steps to success with Teaching Tracks materials

At *Teaching Tracks*, we believe that these materials are suitable to both experienced and novice teachers. However, to get the most from using this book, we advise reading the step-by-step guide below. By doing so, both novice and experienced teachers will be able to employ songs and song lyrics in a non-formulaic way - making for a very satisfying classroom experience for teacher and student alike.

Step 1.

Breathe, relax, clear your mind of your preconceptions – you are about to embark on a journey into the possibilities offered by using songs and song lyrics.

Step 2.

Familiarise yourself with the song. Listen to it, sing along and maybe watch the video too. Immerse yourself in it!

Step 3.

Locate the lyrics and read through them. Remember that due to issues like connected speech, the lyrics may be different from what you thought (creating what are known as *mondegreens*). So be prepared for a surprise or two.

Step 4.

Think about the song's theme/s and what language emerges from it.

Step 5.

Look through the 'activity breakdown' synopsis - it'll give you a good overview of the approach to the song and an idea of the linguistic possibilities emanating from it. It offers suggestions about when to first use the song, the lyrics, and the video - crucial for the logical staging of activities.

Step 6.

Read through the detailed teacher's notes and think about whether you are going to use all or just some of the activities. Take time to brainstorm ideas as to how you are going to implement these activities to suit *your* students. What will *they* like? What will challenge *them*? Make the materials your own by thinking about how you would adapt them to your regular style of teaching. In other words – mix it up!

Step 7.

Use with confidence. Remember you are doing something that your students will love. Don't ever forget - songs are a great text type with real pedagogic purpose.

Contents

The contents of this sampler book (outlined below) are taken from the student's materials and cover a wide range of activities, skills and songs. These innovative, engaging and pedagogically sound materials highlight the diversity of what is on offer.

Page 6 Speaking & Writing	Prediction and discussion from <i>A Hero in my Eyes</i> ELT materials based on REM - <i>Everyday is Yours to Win</i>
Page 7 Grammar	Reporting direct speech (direct v indirect speech) from <i>The Final Frontier?</i> ELT materials based on David Bowie – <i>Space Oddity</i>
Page 8 Vocabulary	Running dictation match up (kinaesthetic activity) from <i>Fame...and all that goes with it</i> ELT materials based on Just Jack - <i>Starz in their Eyes</i>
Page 9-10 Phonetics	Sounds from nouns from <i>Fight for your Rights</i> ELT materials based on Katy Perry – <i>Roar</i>
Pages 11 - 13 Reading	Homelessness in the UK from <i>Down and Out?</i> ELT materials based on Ed Sheeran – <i>The A Team</i>
Page 14 Listening & Vocabulary	Listening and analysis. Imagery in <i>Roar</i> from <i>Fight for your Rights</i> ELT materials based on Katy Perry – <i>Roar</i>
Page 15 Writing	Research - the Glastonbury Festival/views on London from <i>Appearance & Reality</i> ELT materials based on Lily Allen - <i>LDN</i>
Page 16 Multi-Skill	Moral Dilemmas...what would you do? from <i>Filthy Lucre?</i> ELT materials based on Pink Floyd – <i>Money</i>



Speaking & Writing

(from *A Hero in my Eyes* ELT materials based on **REM** - *Everyday is yours to Win*)

Prediction and discussion

You are going to look at a song called *Everyday is yours to Win*. What might a song with this title be about?



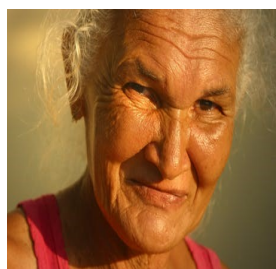
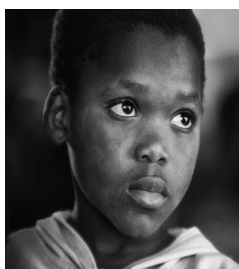
Who would you consider to be a hero?

What is a hero like?

What does a hero look like?

Which of these people below could be heroes?

Write some example sentences to tell their stories . Use cautious language.



Grammar

(from *The Final Frontier?* ELT materials based on David Bowie - *Space Oddity*)

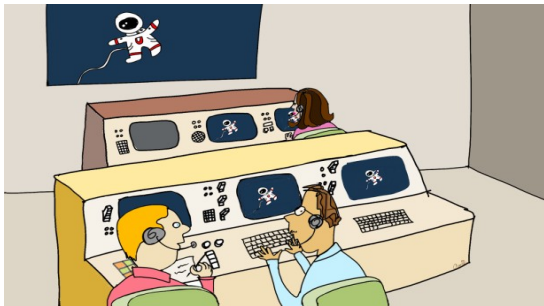


Reporting direct speech

(direct vs indirect speech)

The song is, for the most part, a conversation between 'ground control' and 'the spaceman'. Although no quote marks are used it is direct speech.

Using the lyrics, find the direct speech in the song write it down and rewrite it in indirect speech from the viewpoint of the other speaker so that the conversation is reported.



What the Controller said to the Major

"You've really made the grade"

The Controller said ... I **had** really **made** the grade



What the Major said to the Controller

"I'm stepping through the door"

The Major said ... he **was stepping** through the door

Vocabulary

(from *Fame...and all that goes with it* ELT materials based on *Just Jack - Starz in their Eyes*)

Running dictation match-up
(kinaesthetic activity)



You will see sentences on the walls around you, try to remember the phrase and dictate it to the rest of your team, who will then match them up with the meanings below. The winning group is the one which gets all the correct answers with accurate transcriptions first.

Word from song	Meaning
<i>VIP</i>	
<i>paranoia</i>	
<i>spotlight</i>	
<i>booze</i>	
<i>wanna</i>	
<i>shopping mall</i>	
<i>karaoke</i>	

These appear on the walls around the classroom.

a very important person - nowadays someone just a little bit famous
a feeling that everybody wants to harm you, a medical condition
a film term which literally means that the focus or attention is on you
a slang word for alcohol or for an alcoholic drink
an abbreviated form of <i>want to</i>
a US expression, in the UK this is known as a <i>shopping centre</i>
singing popular songs for fun to backing music, usually in a pub or club

Phonetics

(from *Fight for your Rights* ELT materials based on **Katy Perry – Roar**)

**Sounds within nouns**

Do you know how many phonetic sounds there are in the (UK) English sound system? How many of these are vowel sounds? How many of these are consonants?

Check the *Teaching Tracks* phonetic chart (left) to see if you are correct.

See if you can work out how the nouns in the first verse (below) are written phonetically by using the *Teaching Tracks* phonetic chart.

Word	Phonetic underline vowel sound / sounds
<i>tongue</i>	
<i>breath</i>	
<i>boat</i>	
<i>mess</i>	
<i>choice</i>	
<i>breaking point</i>	
<i>nothing</i>	
<i>everything</i>	



Teaching Tracks

Phonetic Chart © Carol Samlal & Chris Walklett



Vowels

Short	Long
ɪ d <u>i</u> sc	i: d <u>re</u> am
æ tr <u>a</u> ck	ɑ: b <u>a</u> r
ɒ r <u>o</u> ck	ɔ: o <u>rg</u> an
ʊ b <u>oo</u> k	u: g <u>roo</u> ve
ə s <u>a</u> mpl <u>e</u> r	ɜ: l <u>ea</u> rn
e e <u>ch</u> o	
ʌ dr <u>u</u> m	

Diphthongs

eɪ r <u>a</u> di <u>o</u>	əʊ pi <u>a</u> n <u>o</u>
aɪ vi <u>o</u> lin	aʊ s <u>ou</u> nd
ɔɪ j <u>oy</u>	ɪə h <u>ea</u> r
eə sh <u>a</u> re	ʊə t <u>ou</u> r

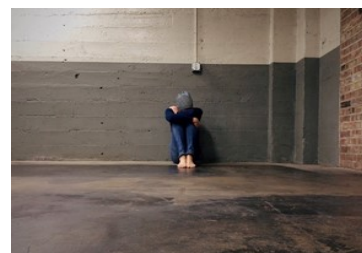
Consonants

Unvoiced	Voiced
p p <u>o</u> p	b b <u>a</u> nd
k k <u>ey</u> / <u>c</u> an	g g <u>ui</u> tar
t t <u>o</u> p t <u>e</u> n	d d <u>a</u> n <u>c</u> e
f f <u>u</u> n	v v <u>i</u> de <u>o</u>
s s <u>i</u> ng <u>l</u> e	z j <u>a</u> zz
ʃ sh <u>o</u> ut	ʒ ple <u>a</u> s <u>u</u> re
tʃ ch <u>a</u> rt	dʒ j <u>a</u> m
θ th <u>e</u> me	ð br <u>o</u> th <u>e</u> r
l l <u>y</u> rics	r r <u>o</u> ck
j y <u>o</u> del	w w <u>o</u> rd
m m <u>u</u> sic	n n <u>o</u> te
ŋ s <u>o</u> ng	h h <u>i</u> p h <u>o</u> p



Reading

(from *Down and Out* ELT materials based on Ed Sheeran – *The A Team*)

Homelessness in the UK

Walking around towns and cities in the UK, visitors especially foreign ones, are **struck** and often shocked by the level of homelessness. It is something they simply do not expect to see in what is claimed to be “the world’s oldest democracy”.

Indeed the term ‘homelessness’ does not necessarily mean what it brings to many people’s minds. For a start, it does not only include those living rough on the streets. The 1996 Housing Act defines a variety of types of homelessness of which rough sleeping – the element visible to most visitors, is only **the tip of the iceberg**. The term ‘homeless’ is also applied to those of **no fixed abode**, who may for example be **sofa surfing** or living in a vehicle, and also to those who are still living in a property but who are threatened with **imminent eviction**.

Homelessness was first recognized in law in the UK in the **Vagrancy** Act of 1824 which made it an offence to sleep rough or **beg**. Homeless numbers vary throughout the ages but the late Victorian **eras** and the, so-called, **inter-war years** were particularly problematic periods for homelessness in Britain.

The numbers of homeless in the UK began to rise sharply again in the 1970s, **necessitating** the then Labour government to bring in a law – the 1977 Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. In addition to providing the first **statutory** definitions of homelessness, the Housing Act also made it a legal requirement for local councils to provide accommodation for those in need. However despite this being a legal requirement, in the 1980s when Margaret Thatcher and the Conservatives were in government, the homeless figure almost tripled from 55,000 to 123,000. Indeed, there has been another **spike** of late, a recent survey showing that there are in excess of 5,000 people sleeping rough in Britain’s streets on any given night.

There are a number of other words for homeless people: *vagrants*, *down and outs*, *beggars*, and *tramps* - the latter coming from an actual person, Alfred D Tramp who was convicted of vagrancy in Britain in the late Victorian age. Some words are adopted from American English such as *hobo*, and *bum*, which, in UK English, is a term for *backside*.



The reasons for modern homelessness are **multifarious** and complicated, and in the UK include: individual issues (financial, mental health etc.), familial issues (e.g. family breakdown or abuse), institutional issues (someone having previously been **in care** or prison for example) as well as wider, so-called structural (social and economic) causes.

The 'average' homeless person in the UK is not easy to describe. A recent report (2017) showed that of rough sleepers in London, the gender divide was 85% men to 15% women, which mirrors the widely viewed belief that this is an issue that tends to affect males far more than it does females. Age-wise there is a spread too depending on what types of homelessness is under investigation. Nowadays, the evidence shows a large number of young people (both men and women) are affected, as well as, **predominantly** middle aged men.

There does not seem to be a governmental strategy on how to deal with this issue and, some might **cynically** say, little desire to do so apart from when the problem that is clearly visible. When Prince Harry recently announced that he was to **wed** Meghan Markle in Windsor, the council leader there relayed to the Police that he wanted the area cleared of rough sleepers. This led to accusations of **social cleansing**, with comments that when the world's eyes are on Britain they will be presented with a fantasy image rather than the somewhat more **gritty** reality of modern life there.

Text questions

- 1) If you have been to the UK, did you notice any rough sleepers or homeless people?
- 2) Do you have any homelessness in your country?
- 3) What do you think can be done about the homeless situation in either your country or the UK?
- 4) What do you think about the policy in Windsor mentioned in the last paragraph? How else could this be addressed do you think?

There is a glossary on the next page.

Glossary

<i>struck</i> (adj)	from the verb <i>strike</i> - to be very surprised
<i>the tip of the iceberg</i> (n)	a small part of something – the rest is below the surface
<i>no fixed abode</i> (n)	having no home and thus no actual address
<i>sofa surfing</i> (v)	to move from sleeping on one friend's sofa to another's
<i>imminent</i> (adj)	happening almost immediately
<i>eviction</i> (n)	being forced to leave your home
<i>vagrancy</i> (n)	being homeless and poor
<i>beg</i> (v)	to ask people for money, usually on the streets
<i>eras</i> (n)	periods of time in history e.g. the Victorian era
<i>inter-war years</i> (n)	the years between the first and second world wars
<i>necessitating</i> (adj)	making something necessary or needed
<i>statutory</i> (adj)	relating to statute (law)
<i>spike</i> (n)	a sharp increase
<i>multifarious</i> (adj)	many and varied
<i>in care</i> (adj)	looked after by the state in social care
<i>predominantly</i> (adverb)	mostly
<i>cynically</i> (adverb)	distrustful of whether something is sincere or honest
<i>wed</i> (v)	to marry
<i>social cleansing</i> (n)	removal from an area of people deemed undesirable
<i>gritty</i> (adj)	showing something as it is, real and uncompromising



Listening & Vocabulary

(from *Fight for your Rights* ELT materials based on **Katy Perry – Roar**)



Listening and analysis.

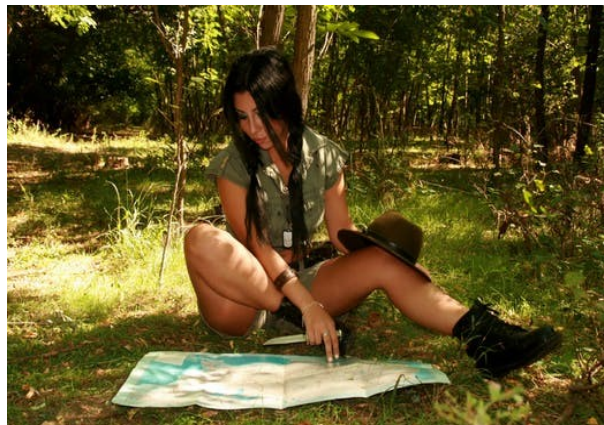
Imagery in Roar

Listen to the song in full.

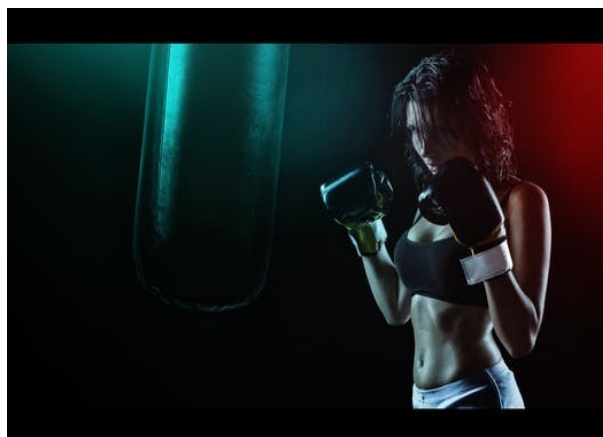
While you are listening, look out for and write down in the boxes below words/phrases that have either:

- a) jungle imagery,
- or
- a) boxing imagery

a) jungle imagery



b) boxing imagery



Writing

(from *Appearance & Reality*
ELT materials based on *Lily*
Allen - LDN)



Research

The Glastonbury Festival or Views on London

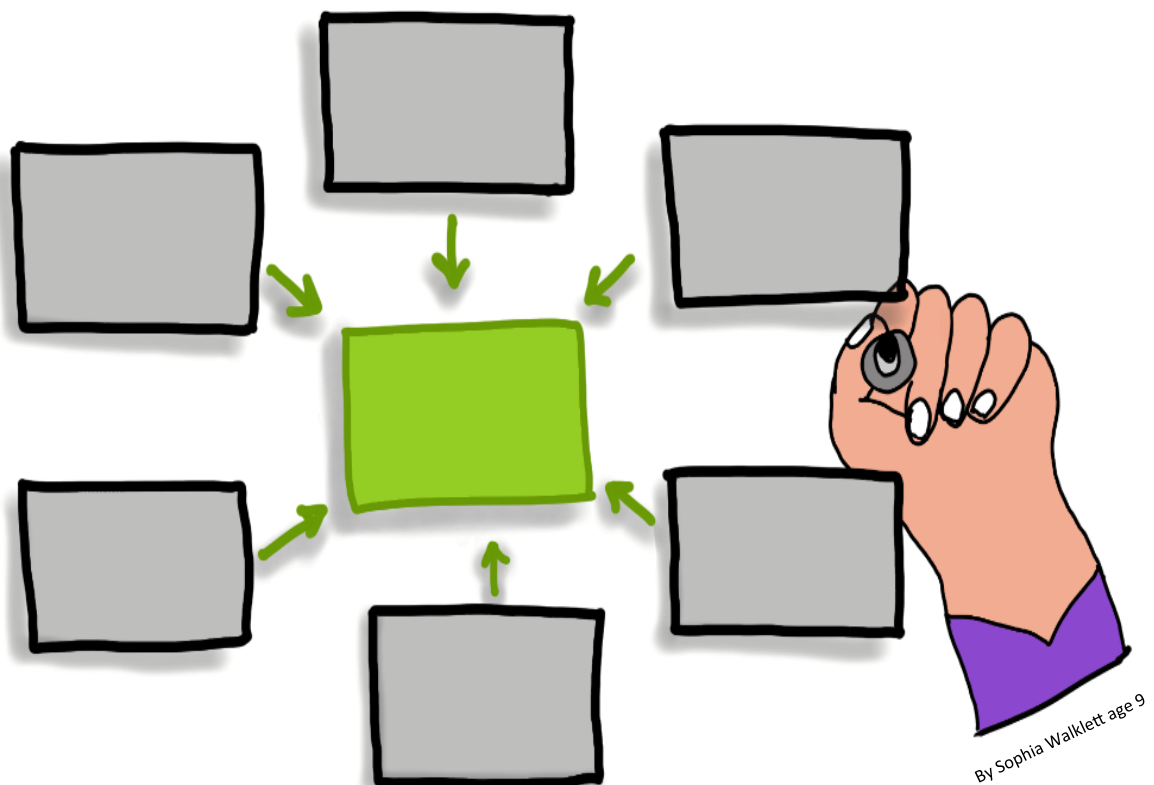
Either

- i) Find out about the Glastonbury Festival and its importance to recent British musical culture. Write a paragraph summarising what you found out about it.

Or

- ii) Find out what other artists have had to say about London. Write a paragraph summarising what you found out about what these artists have had to say about the capital.

Brainstorm ideas using the mind map below then using these ideas write a paragraph.



Multi Skill

(from *Filthy Lucre?* ELT materials based on *Pink Floyd – Money*)



Moral Dilemmas...what would you do?

Do you know what a moral dilemma is?

What would you do in the following situations? Use the second conditional if applicable.

Explain your answers. Be honest!

What would you do if...?

You found a bag of money on the street...

E.g. *If I found a bag of money on the street I would...*

You saw your best friend using someone else's credit card...

You saw a bag of expensive items outside a charity shop which is closed...

A good friend wanted you to lend them £1000....

You saw an item in a shop which was wrongly priced at £9.99 not £99.99...

What students have had to say about *Teaching Tracks* materials:

“Learning English via music was a very interesting experience for me”

“I loved this way of learning”

“I don’t normally listen to foreign music but this was inspiring”

“I like English songs, so I enjoyed this very much”

“This was a unique type of English lesson – I enjoyed it very much”

“It was the first time I had learnt this way, it was great”

“It was an easy and enjoyable way to learn”

“Studying with songs is very nice”



What teachers have had to say about *Teaching Tracks* materials:

“materials were clear and straightforward”

“perfect for an integrated skills lesson”

“lots of discussion was generated”

“very good materials...well planned”

“the students enjoyed and felt motivated by it”

“the material was well staged”

“the target language is well scaffolded”

“they learnt a lot of new vocabulary”

“a good build up to listening to the song”

“the material can be easily exploited”

“teaching instructions were very clear and easy to use”



About the author;

Chris Walklett has been using music, songs and song lyrics in the classroom for many years dating back to his very first lesson in the mid-1990s. Music and its educational use is a subject that is dear to his heart, so much so that that his MA Linguistics dissertation focused on '*Use of, and attitudes to, songs and song lyrics in coursebooks*'.

In 2015 he presented a TEDx Talk on a related topic on and has facilitated numerous workshops and talks at IATEFL and other conferences in the UK and Europe, encouraging other ELT professionals to get creative with songs and song lyrics in their classrooms.

Chris hosts an engaging Facebook group *Creating Uses for Songs and Song Lyrics* for like-minded teachers. As well as teaching ELT & EAP, Chris also lectures History at a UK university.

To find out more please visit: www.teachingtracks.co.uk or contact chris@teachingtracks.co.uk.
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Many thanks to the teachers and colleagues who trialled these materials and for their invaluable feedback; to the students who enjoyed the lessons and took the time to share their thoughts. A special thanks to friend and colleague Carol Samlal for her support and her copyediting and illustrating skills and my daughter Sophia for her drawings .



sample

Are you passionate about music, songs and song lyrics?

Are you tired of using music, songs and their lyrics in the
same old, same old fashion?

**Would you like to use them in your classroom
more often & more effectively?**

If you want to go 'beyond the gap fill', using songs for
more meaningful activity *Teaching Tracks* is the answer.

**Within these pages is a cross-section sample of the
lesson materials found in the *Teaching Tracks*
coursebook *Top Ten*, and it is packed with an array
of activities covering all the key language skills as
well as mixed 'multi-skill' activities.**

This sampler shows the philosophy behind the method
and the potential of this resource in the ELT classroom.

**You're on the right track with *Teaching Tracks*: a fresh
and innovative approach to using songs & song lyrics
in the English language teaching classroom.**

