

Teacher’s Page - Scarborough Fair

The student handout pages include:

- 1 Pronunciation Practice pages.
- 2 Song lyrics.
- 3 Listening and Reading Pages with listening comprehension questions and an additional text on the meaning and symbolism of the song, with more questions.
- 4 A vocabulary exercise on the language of love.
- 5 An Activities Page. Ideas for learners who want to do more work with the song and connected themes.

The downloadable MP3 files include:

- 1 Scarborough Fair performed by New Druids’ Kerry Sansom and Colum Regan.
- 2 A pronunciation listening file which accompanies the tasks on the Pronunciation Practice pages.
Copy these to a CD or to your computer’s hard disk. You and your students may then copy the files in any way which is most convenient for listening on computers or MP3 players.

Working with the song.

Tick the activities you wish to use.

- Before learners listen to the song, ask them to think about what love is. Also, how does love show itself in how we behave towards each other? Are there different kinds of love and different ways of showing it? If learners find it difficult to express these ideas in English ask them to write down key words in their own language and then use a dictionary. Or you could write the following words and phrases on a board and discuss their meanings.



love	be affectionate (towards)
affection	be fond (of)
fondness	be jealous (of)
jealousy	be passionately in love with
passion	be infatuated (with)
infatuation	be devoted (to)
devotion	have a love-hate relationship (with)

Can learners think of more? Write these on the board.

- Listen to the song.* In the whole class discuss the story behind the song. What has happened to the two lovers? (Important: notice that although the New Druids’ version is sung by a woman the words are addressed to a woman from a man). What do they think the singer is asking of his love? Allow learners to listen again if necessary. Then copy and hand out the lyrics, together with copies of the Listening Pages, and let the learners answer the comprehension questions in A.



KEY: A 1 It's not clear. He is asking her to come back, so perhaps she left him. 2 No. He asks her to do a number of tasks first. 3 They are impossible tasks. (Examine each task and make sure the learners know why they are impossible). 4 He doesn't care/It doesn't matter. He would just like her to try. 5 Love sometimes demands/imposes/impossible tasks on people/Love is never easy. 6 He wants her to /propose to him/ask him to marry her. It was a very rare/unusual/unlikely thing to happen in those times. 7 Free answer. 8 Free answer. Learners might argue that the man is asking her to perform impossible tasks and then maybe he'll take her back. Perhaps he's just trying to 'put her in her place'. When sung by a woman, as in this case, the song could sound ironic.

B 1 Parsley – the removal of bitterness. Sage – strength. Rosemary – strong, enduring, feminine love; faithfulness; remembrance; prudence; sensibility. Thyme – courage. 2 He and the woman will need all the qualities they represent if their love is to survive. 3 Romantic songs of courtly love were about love at a distance. This is a folk song about two people sharing all the difficulties of being together. 4 Free answers. You could encourage a discussion based on some students reading their answers out loud.

Language exercises

Tick the tasks you want your learners to do.

The language of love (vocabulary work). Hand out the gap-fill task. Ask learners to work alone or in pairs. Then give them the answers.

KEY: 1 for 2 in, with 3 out, of 4 over 5 of, for 6 to 7 on 8 to 9 with 10 out, up, back 11 with 12 for/on 13 to 14 in

Work with the whole class or ask learners to work in pairs.

'Are you going to Scarborough Fair?' This could be a question in the present continuous tense about present actions. The person asked might be on his/her way to the Fair at the moment of asking. Or it could be a question about future plans. You could ask learners to practise by asking each other about their known plans for the weekend.

Example: What are you doing on Sunday? I'm visiting my aunt.



Work in the whole class to begin with. Write the sentences below on the board.

'If she tells me she can't, I'll reply...' (from the lyrics)

Ask learners to compare these sentences:

If she asks me, I'll marry her. If she asked me, I'd marry her.

What differences in meaning are suggested?

KEY: In the first, the person thinks it is possible that she will ask. In the second, the person thinks it is less likely, not likely or very unlikely that she will ask.

Ask learners to make up at least two pairs of similar sentences using the same constructions, so that one expresses future possibility while the other is less likely to happen.

Learners can then read their examples to the whole class or hand them to the teacher for checking.

❑ **Pronunciation practice** – see photocopiable handouts on following pages.

A raises awareness and practises pronunciation of homophones.

KEY: **b** time **c** won **d** their, they're **e** too, two **f** seems **g** wear
h rein, reign **i** see **j** so, sew **k** no **l** deer

B gives learners practice in recognising words which rhyme.

KEY: **B1a** rhymes with 1, 6, 9 **b** 2, 7, 10, 12 **c** 13, 14 **d** 4, 15 **e** 3, 5, 8, 16, 18. Which words do not rhyme with, or sound the same as, any on the left? Answers: 11 'cough' which rhymes with 'off' 17 'weak' which sounds the same as 'week'

C raises awareness and offers practice of weak forms. (Your learners will need to be familiar with, or at least be aware of, the International Phonetic Alphabet).

Learners often give full value to unstressed words and syllables, whereas native speakers produce these as weak forms involving the



[ə] or [n] sounds. **Use the free downloadable MP3 pronunciation file** so that learners can listen to native speakers producing these forms. Monitor learners and challenge them if they produce full values such as [v], [ænd], or [tu:]. Ask them to try to reproduce these using the [ə] or [n] sounds used by native speakers.

Note: Your learners do not have to imitate native British speakers in their own production of English. However, this type of exercise can raise awareness of the sounds produced by native speakers in everyday conversation. Exercises like this can also improve learners' listening skills.

KEY: **C2 a** She's from Sweden. **b** Blue and yellow. **c** Is this the train for London? **d** Do you take milk and sugar? **e** Here's my phone number.

C3 The sounds are represented by the [n] and the [ə] symbol, also known as the 'schwa' symbol. Emphasise that these are very common sounds when English is spoken at normal conversational speed.

Pronunciation Practice



A *Work in pairs if you like.* Find words that sound the same as the words below (which come from the lyrics of *Scarborough Fair*). Write them down. Make sure you know what the words mean. Take turns to use the words in sentences of your own. The first has been done as an example.

- | | | |
|----------------|----------|---------|
| a) fair - fare | e) to | i) sea |
| b) thyme | f) seams | j) sow |
| c) one | g) where | k) know |
| d) there | h) rain | l) dear |

The groups of words you have created are known as homophones. These are words which sound the same but are spelt differently.

B1 *Work in pairs if you wish.* The words on the left are from the lyrics of Scarborough Fair. Which words on the right rhyme with them or sound the same? Be careful. There are two words on the right which do not rhyme with any on the left. What are they?

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| | 1 wear |
| | 2 who |
| | 3 Oh! |
| | 4 now |
| | 5 dough |
| | 6 hair |
| | 7 through |
| a) fair | 8 sew |
| b) true | 9 care |
| c) make | 10 new |
| d) plough | 11 cough |
| e) sow | 12 you |
| | 13 break |
| | 14 ache |
| | 15 how |
| | 16 pro |
| | 17 weak |
| | 18 toe |

B2 *Continue to work in pairs if you like.* Make an exercise just like the one above – use the same format and instructions – but use these words on the left: **lamb, dear, come, try, for.**

Don't forget to put at least one word in the list on the right that does **not** rhyme with any on the left.

Hand your exercise to a partner or another pair, then check their answers.

C1 When you listen to New Druids' version of Scarborough Fair you will notice that Kerry sings each word separately and clearly. Of course, this is not usually the case in natural speech.

Work in pairs. Look at these typical English phrases and sentences.

Begin with a-e below. On the left you have the sentence written normally. On the right it is written in phonetic script in the way that many British speakers would say it when speaking at normal speed.



Listen to the speakers on the MP3 pronunciation file. Then take turns to say each sentence aloud in the same way.

a A cup of tea. əkʌpətɪː

b A table for two. əteɪblfətuː

c It's twenty to one. ɪtztwentɪtəwʌn

d Two cans of Coke and a bottle of water. tuːkænzəkəʊknbʊtləwɔːtə

e A cheese and tomato sandwich. ətʃiːzntəməːtəsænwɪdʒ

C2 *Continue working in pairs.* Take turns to say these sentences and phrases using the phonetic script. When you have both said each one aloud, write out the sentence or phrase. If you need help, listen to the MP3 pronunciation file.



a ʃɪzfrəmswɪːdn

b bluːnʒeləʊ

c ɪzðɪsðətreɪnfələndn

d dʒətəɪkmlkɪŋʃʊgə

e hɪəzməfəʊnɪlmbə

C3 *Look at C2 again.* Which sounds are commonly heard when words like *a*, *of*, *and*, *for*, *to*, and *from* are spoken in normal speech. Which two phonetic symbols represent these sounds?

Scarborough Fair – lyrics

Are you going to Scarborough Fair?
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Remember me to the one who lives there
She once was a true love of mine

Tell her to make me a cambric shirt
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme
Without any seams or needle work
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Tell her to wash it in yonder dry well
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Where water ne'er sprung nor drop of rain fell
Then she'll be a true love of mine

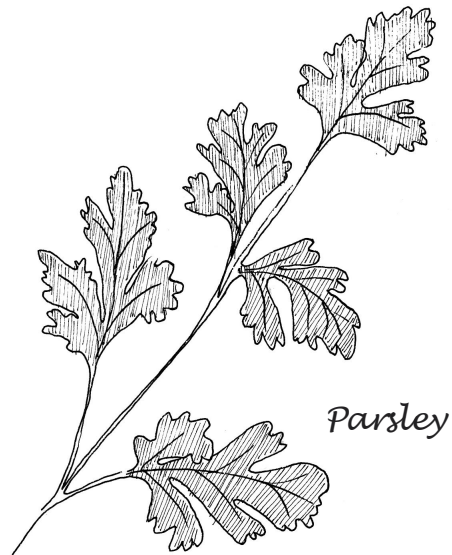
Have her to find me an acre of land
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Between salt water and the sea strand
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Plough the land with a horn of a lamb
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Then sow some seeds from the north of the dam
Then she'll be a true love of mine

If she tells me she can't I'll reply
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Let me know that at least she will try
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Love imposes impossible tasks
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Though not more than any heart asks
I must know she's a true love of mine

Dear when thou hast finished thy task
Parsley sage rosemary and thyme
Come to me my hand for to ask
Then thou art a true love of mine



(Repeat twice)

Listening and Reading Pages

A *Read the lyrics and answer the questions.*

- 1 Two lovers have parted. Did the man leave the woman, or the other way round?
- 2 Does the man want her to come back to him immediately?
- 3 What sort of tasks does the man want the woman to do?
- 4 Does he care if she can't do the tasks?
- 5 What is the message of the song?
- 6 What is the last impossible or very difficult task he asks of her?
- 7 If you were the woman, how would you reply?
- 8 Do you think the man really wants the woman to return?

B *Read the text and answer the questions.*

Scarborough Fair is a very old song dating back to the Middle Ages. The story is simple. Two lovers have parted, but the man still loves her and wants her back. He meets someone who is travelling to Scarborough Fair and asks the person to pass on a message to the lady.

If she tries to perform a number of impossible tasks she will prove her love for him. The final task is for her to ask him to marry her. This would have been almost unthinkable in those days.

The herbs that are named in the second line of each verse are important symbols. They were as powerfully symbolic in the Middle Ages as roses and other flowers are today.

Parsley was supposed to improve the digestion of heavy food. It was also thought to remove bitterness both physically and spiritually. So parsley reminds the lovers that they should put bitter memories behind them.

Sage represented strength, and the woman will certainly need that to attempt her impossible tasks.



Sage



Thyme

Rosemary symbolised love, faithfulness and remembrance. In ancient Greece and Rome lovers gave rosemary to their ladies. In a number of European countries, including Britain, it is still quite common for brides to wear rosemary in their hair on their wedding day.

It also represented prudence and sensibility. In ancient Rome a person who had to perform a difficult mental task would often put a small bag of rosemary under their pillow the night before.

In addition, rosemary symbolises feminine love which grows slowly into something enduring and strong. It is clear that the lover hopes his lady will show all the qualities of rosemary as she puts their old difficulties behind them and looks to the future.

Thyme was associated with courage. In the Middle Ages ladies embroidered images of thyme into their lovers' or husbands' shields, which were then carried into battle.

Thus the singer of the song wishes his true love to forget the bitterness of the past and to demonstrate the strength, courage and fortitude to return to him. Love, the song tells us, is never easy and has to be prepared for great difficulties if it is to survive.

This shows that *Scarborough Fair* is a folk song and not a song sung by the nobility. The courtly ideal of romantic love meant a man adoring a lady from a distance with no hope of winning her. *Scarborough Fair* is very different. It is 'up close and personal', a folk song about all the problems and difficulties of sharing one's life with another person.

- 1 What does each herb mentioned in the song represent?
- 2 Why does the singer include the names of the herbs?
- 3 How can you tell that the song is not part of the courtly love tradition of the nobility?
- 4 Judging from this text and the song, do modern love relationships differ from those of the Middle Ages? Express your ideas on this question in a few written sentences.

The language of love

Fill in the missing words – in, out, of, for, with, over, to, up, on, with, back.

- 1 Mark fell _____ Shelley at High School.
- 2 But she was _____ love _____ his best friend, Brad.
- 3 Sadly, Brad fell _____ _____ love with her in their final year.
- 4 It was hard for her to get _____ being dumped like that.
- 5 Shelley was always fond _____ Mark but she had never had strong feelings _____ him.
- 6 She could tell that he was attracted _____ her.
- 7 She recalled that he'd had a crush _____ her when he was nine or ten.
- 8 He seemed very nice, very attached _____ his family and therefore a little boring.
- 9 Then she got involved _____ a guy called Pete who was six years older.
- 10 They went _____ for several months, but they kept breaking _____ and getting _____ together again.
- 11 It wasn't love. Pete was obsessed _____ her and was often jealous.
- 12 Then, one day, Mark plucked up the courage to ask her _____ a date.
- 13 She met his parents and saw that they were a loving family and meant a lot _____ each other.
- 14 She also realised that Mark was genuinely interested _____ her. Maybe he wasn't so dull after all.

Activities Page

Choose one or more of these activities.

Tick the ones you want to do. If you want, you can treat them as short activities, mini-projects or even major projects. You can choose to work alone, in pairs or small groups.

Ask your teacher for a Song Review Sheet from the Ready to Fly Teacher's Materials. **Fill it in.** Then swap reviews with a partner. Do you agree about the song? Say why/why not.

Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme symbolised certain virtues in the Middle Ages. What are important symbols today in your culture or country? **Write a short list**, then compare these with a partner's list. How powerful or meaningful are these symbols?



Scarborough Fair is a song which has lasted for hundreds of years. Simon and Garfunkel made it well-known to millions around the world in the 1960s. **Can you think of a love song in your own language** which has lasted for many years and is still sung today? If you like, sing all or a little of it to the class and explain what the song is about.

What is your favourite love song? Write down the lyrics, translating them into English if necessary. Then explain why you like it so much.



Surf the WWW and find other folk songs in English. You could carry out a general search by typing the words 'famous English folk songs' or 'famous English folk song lyrics' into a search engine. Choose a song or two, read the lyrics and listen to a sound file if there is one. Decide which song you like most and print out the lyrics. Show your song to classmates and, if you want, you could start a collection of folk songs.



If you need help getting started you could enter these titles into a search engine followed by the word 'lyrics'...

A Sprig of Thyme (19th century, northern England)

Barbara Allen (17th century, Scotland)

The Butcher Boy (circa 1860, England)

Botany Bay (19th century, Australia)

Lorena (early 1800s, USA)

The Lark in the Clear Air (19th century, England)

Down by the Sally Gardens (19th century, Ireland)

Greensleeves (1580, England)

Idle Days of Summer (18th century, Wales)

Golden Slumbers (16th century lullaby, England)

Many traditional folk songs have been revived in modern times by pop or rock groups. For instance, the Beatles produced a version of the traditional lullaby *Golden Slumbers*. The Animals' version of *The House of the Rising Son* is another example. **Surf the WWW** and try to find more examples.



If you need help you could try entering these titles into a search engine...

The Beatles – *Golden Slumbers*

Simon and Garfunkel – *Scarborough Fair*




The Animals – *The House of the Rising Sun*

Cat Stevens – *Morning Has Broken*


Bob Dylan – *Little Sadie*

Elvis Presley – *Amazing Grace*

The Everly Brothers – *Barbara Allen*

-  Can you think of a traditional song in your own language which has been given a modern treatment? **Try to find recordings** of traditional and modern versions. Play or sing them to the class and explain what the lyrics mean. If you like, translate the lyrics into English.
-  **Work alone**, with a partner or in a small group. Create your own rap version of *Scarborough Fair*. Perform it to the whole class if you wish.
-  In 2005, *Unchained Melody*, as performed by the Righteous Brothers, came top in a poll to discover Britons' favourite love song. **Find or download a recording** of *Unchained Melody*, listen to it, then fill in a Song Review Sheet (your teacher can give you copies). Do you agree that this is a great love song? Say why or why not.

Are there other candidates for best love song in English? Which ones do you know?

-  **What is your favourite love song in your own language?** Tell your classmates. If you like, you can find the lyrics and translate all or some of them into English. If you love singing you could even sing the song to your classmates – in your language, of course!