

A simple procedure for teaching Jazz Chants

I suggest using the excellent materials produced by Carolyn Graham and published by Oxford University Press. I especially recommend using her audio CDs. Her recordings will make each chant a fun and memorable activity.

1. **Play** the Audio CD.
2. **Show the written version** and **clarify** any linguistic or cultural items.
3. The class **repeats** along **with the audio** CD.
4. The class **performs** the chant **with the CD**. First the class takes the response part, giving the response jointly with the voice (or voices) on the CD. Then the class takes the first part, again repeating along with the voice on the CD.
5. **T/C performance**. You take the first part and the class responds. Then, the roles are reversed: the class takes the first part and you respond.
6. **Half class/Half class performance**. Half of the class takes the first part and the other half responds. Then they switch.
7. The **students practice** the chant **in pairs**.

I have spoken of an audio CD, but you can also use a YouTube video.

You don't necessarily have to do all of these steps. You might decide to only do the first four.

In steps (3) and (4) the students are repeating along with an audio CD. It will be helpful for the students to see the written text during their first attempts at repetition and then have them repeat only listening to the audio.

For steps (5), (6) and (7) the students will need to see the written version of the chant. These steps are done without the CD.

After step (3) you might want to have a T/C repetition of each line. This can be done with the class viewing the written text and repeating along with you. You and the class can also clap once on each stressed syllable.

Constantly returning to past chants will lead the students towards a more natural pronunciation, along with an increase in their fluency.

Here is one of my favorite chants. You will note that it consists of six dialogue-type exchanges. The exchanges are not usually numbered, but I did so for extra clarity in this example.

BANKER'S WIFE'S BLUES

1. Where does John Live?
He lives near the bank.
2. Where does he work?
He works at the bank.
3. When does he work?
He works all day
And he works all night,
At the bank, at the bank,
At the great big bank
4. Where does he study?
He studies at the bank.
5. Where does he sleep?
He sleeps at the bank.
6. Why does he spend all day, all night, all day, all night
At the bank, at the bank?
Because he loves his bank,
More than his wife.
And he loves his money,
More than his life.