

The Roots of Reggae

Level: Advanced

Topic: Lifestyles

Key vocabulary: bilingual lists in PDF and boxes (Teachers can download this material from the online version of the magazine)

Preparation: A copy of the article for each student. Access to Internet. Youtube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YK-4SgpAJRs&feature=related>

Objective: Students read and discuss Bob Marley's life. They exchange opinions and participate in formal debating.

Warm Up:

Ask your students if they've ever seen the movie 'I am legend'

Allow some time for students to exchange their opinions.

Watch this Bob Marley scene from the movie 'I am legend' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YK-4SgpAJRs&feature=related>

Ask students how much they understood from the scene they have just watched.

Hand out a copy of the script for the scene and watch the video again.

Script: [Bob Marley] had this idea. Kind of a virologist idea. He believed that you can cure racism and hate; literally cure it, by injecting music and love into people's lives. When he was scheduled to perform at a peace rally, a gun man came to his house and shot him down. Two days later he walked on stage and sang. Somebody asked him, "Why?" He said, "The people who are trying to make the world worse are not taking a day off. How can I? Light up the darkness."

Allow time to talk about Bob Marley's idea and discuss what they think about it. It is important to set a time limit.

Main Activity

Tell your students they are going to read an interesting article about reggae and learn about how Bob Marley became a legend.

1. Give each student a copy of the article.
2. Allow some time for silent reading and ask them to underline or highlight words that are unknown. You can give them the meaning of words or make them work cooperatively with a dictionary. Just make sure you don't spend too much time in this activity.
3. Ask comprehension questions. You can always prepare a worksheet with reading comprehension activities in advance. Or you can also use the multiple choice comprehension questions in the 'Language' section of the article.
4. Have a class discussion about the themes that were present in Bob Marley's songs: poverty, corrupt politics, gang violence, misery, war and the redemptive power of love.
5. Tell your students they are going to have a formal debate the following class and they have to form groups of 6 people.



Follow up

Make students choose from one of the following statements. Three people from the group are for the statement and three students are against the statement.

'Because Bob Marley wrote and sang about misery, war, and the redemptive power of love, reggae became more than entertainment for its listeners. It became a coping mechanism for life'.

"I think Bob Marley had the gift to be able to express himself as an artist using a very simple musical language. [He went] straight to the heart not only with his words but with the chords and the sound of his wonderful voice."

"A lot of people are experiencing now what Bob would call 'an exodus, the movement of Jah People'. This is basically why Bob Marley's words and legacy are still so strong and probably will keep growing."

Monitor their conversations and ask the best students to perform a formal debate in front of the class.

