GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Learn more about intonation and stress. Practice intonation. Learn some new idioms. Learn about 'should' in the past and practice using it.

Activity One - Discuss with your partner.

1. Do you prefer the simple things in life or the finer things in life?
2. Do you sometimes wish for a simpler life?
3. Would you prefer a high flying top level job with responsibility and fame, or a really enjoyable job with less stress?

Activity Two - I **should have done** things differently.
Should *combines with the perfect infinitive to form* ***should have*** *+* ***past participle*** *when we want to talk about past events that did not happen, but should have happened. We are talking about an expectation and referring back to past time. Ask and answer the questions with a new partner:*

1. What should you have done differently today to make your day simpler?
2. What should you have done differently in general in the last few years to make your life simpler?
3. Who should you have asked for help if you wanted to make things easier for yourself at work/school last week?
4. Where should you have done your shopping in order to spend less on food this week?
5. Where, in the world should you have gone on holiday to have a simple relaxing time last summer?

Now make up three questions using should have and prepare answers to present in front of the rest of the class. You ask and your partner answers.

Activity Three - ***'GONNA WANNA WHATCHA'*** *Read the information about intonation and about 'contractions' in English.*

Have you ever wondered where the words 'gonna' or 'wanna' come from? You may realise that they are the contractions of going + to, and want + to but do you know why there we use such contractions in spoken English? Let's find out more.

We use contractions very frequently when we speak (not so much when we write). Sometimes they have more than one meaning, for example 'I'd' can mean 'I had', or, 'I would'.

Some can be difficult for French people to pronounce, like ‘It’ll’, (it will), or aren’t, (are not), ‘oughtn’t’, (ought not) or mightn’t, (might not).

Other contractions, such as ‘gonna’ and ‘wanna’ are in fact informal words which represent the spoken language but which we never, ever use in writing and are ‘officially’ incorrect English. It’s important to recognise and understand these shortened words because this is actually the way we speak English. When someone says ‘What are you going to do?’ it sounds like ‘Whatcha gonna do?’. When we say ‘Do you want a cup of tea’ it sounds like ‘D'you wanna cup of tea?’.

So why do we use all of these contractions? Well, it’s because English is a stress based language and we stress the important words in each sentence and ‘swallow’ or say quickly the less important. There is a certain regular rhythm when we speak caused by the stress pattern, so we have to say some words more quickly than others. This is why we ‘swallow’ some words. This could also be why you feel you don’t understand ‘everything’. In fact you don’t have to understand ‘everything’, just the key words. Auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, pronouns and propositions are all spoken quickly and sometimes are shortened so that you hardly hear them at all. They are non-stressed words (function words). The **content words** of the sentence, the important words which are the key to understanding meaning,

Activity Four - Take turns reading from the lyrics below. Try to say the CONTENT words slowly and slightly louder than the other words. Say the function words more quickly.

When are you gonna to come down
When are you going to land
I should have stayed on the farm
I should have listened to my old man

You know you can't hold me forever
I didn't sign up with you
I'm not a present for your friends to open
This boy's too young to be singing the blues

So goodbye yellow brick road
Where the dogs of society howl
You can't plant me in your penthouse
I'm going back to my plough

Back to the howling old owl in the woods
Hunting the horny back toad
Oh I've finally decided my future lies
Beyond the yellow brick road

What do you think you'll do then
I bet that'll shoot down your plane
It'll take you a couple of vodka and tonics
To set you on your feet again

Maybe you'll get a replacement
There's plenty like me to be found
Mongrels who ain't got a penny
Sniffing for tidbits like you on the ground

Now let’s listen to the song - feel free to sing along!



Activity Five - Read the paragraph below and try to identify all of the idioms in it. How many can you find?

This song 'yellow brick road' is about someone who wants to go back to a simple life and get away from fame and fortune to return to his family home, and farm. The song writer has regrets and looks back on his past life thinking that he should have done things differently. In today's society it's common for people to feel a lot of pressure to succeed, to have to work long hours and often in stressful circumstances. Some people decide to give up on their careers and go back to a more simple life. They say that less is more and try to make ends meet with the bare minimum by scaling down their spending and making do with less. By keeping things simple people are able to enjoy simple pleasures such as family meals, walks in the park, watching the sun rise and eating home-made food. Life can be simplicity itself if you want it to be!

Activity Six - What should they have done differently to avoid their lives getting very complicated?



Activity Seven - Rôle Plays.

A. You are George Clooney with his new wife. You explain to her that you have decided to give all of your money away to charity and to live a more simple life.

B. You are the Dali Lama and you explain to a journalist in an interview, what the key to simple happiness is.

C. You are Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz. You explain to the Tin man why you want to go home on the yellow brick road, without meeting the Wizard.

D. You are François Hollande explaining to his girlfriend that he can't see her for a while because he needs a more simple life.

