

Language: Chinese

Theme: Music

Important Question: What Makes my Number One Top Hit so Cool?

Level: 3rd year, 9th-12th grade

Author: Linda Chang Hmong Academy, St. Paul, MN



Summary: Chinese pop songs can meaningfully entertain those who enjoy Asian music. Listening to and understanding the content of Chinese pop songs helps people improve their knowledge and understanding of Chinese culture and customs on many different levels. Moreover, Chinese pop songs, like other music, generate different emotions and feelings that people can relate to while listening. People can connect these emotions to their own feelings and possibly improve their emotional or mental health. In addition to a variety of melodies and rhythms, Chinese pop songs integrate both Chinese and English. Many young people perceive this type of Chinese music as fashionable, and consequently the songs play an influential role in their lives.

Note: Many Chinese pop songs can be downloaded through these Internet web sites: www.chinese-tools.com, www.chinaportal.com/index.jsp and <http://tw.music.yahoo.com/>

In preparation for this unit, students will have had opportunities to listen to songs, and poems and to discuss the role of pop music in Chinese and American culture. They will have learned vocabulary and expressions for the various reactions people have to songs, words such as *happy*, *sad*, *bored*, etc., as well as *like*, *dislike*, *I think*, etc.

Goals/Objectives:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- 1) understand the main idea of three Chinese pop songs
- 2) make a connection between the main ideas of these three Chinese pop songs and Chinese culture
- 3) compare Chinese pop songs to American pop songs
- 4) sing a small portion of the “number one top hit”
- 5) use Chinese language to express their feelings about the number one top hit or the three Chinese pop songs
- 6) make a CD cover by writing a short description in Chinese, based on the main idea of the “number one top hit”

Standards: Standards for Foreign Language Learning
Cultures Standard 2.1

Communication: Standard 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
Connections Standard 3.1

Comparisons Standard 4.2

Integrated Performance Assessments:

Interpretive task: Time – approximately 40 minutes

Students listen to three Chinese pop songs to identify the main idea of the songs and think about how the songs make them feel. Students have a sheet with the names of the songs in Chinese characters and space to fill in the main idea for each song.

There are two parts to the interpretive task

- 1) Teachers ask students to write, in Chinese: 1) the main idea of the songs in a few short sentences next to each of the songs; 2) characters for words they recognize that support the main idea of the song.
- 2) Teachers ask students to: 1) identify the mood of each Chinese pop song by writing various emotional terms in Chinese characters, such as “快乐” (happy), “悲伤” (sad), and so on;
- 3) At a lower level, teachers can show students numbered pictures of main ideas or provide the pictures on a separate sheet. (Drawings of stick figures can be used). Students listen to the songs and select the picture that they think best describes the main idea and write the number of the picture in the space next to the name of the song.

Example sheet:

Name:			
	The main idea-this song is about...	Mood of the song	How I feel when I listen to the song
Song #1 (Name of song)			
Song #2 (Name of song)			
Song #3 (Name of song)			

After students have identified the main idea/ mood/ correct picture of the songs on their sheets, teachers ask students to exchange their sheets with a classmate. Teachers then write the main ideas of the songs on the white board while discussing them with the students.

In groups, students check their classmates' answers for the main idea/ mood/name of the songs. After students return their sheets to their classmates, they are encouraged to ask questions about the discussion, their answers, or the corrections made during the discussion.

Teachers collect the students' responses to evaluate the students' level of understanding. Unless most students' responses indicate misunderstanding for the interpretive task, the assignment to prepare for the interpersonal task can take place the next day.

Prior to the interpersonal task, students will work on the task below.

In class, students will choose a favorite song from among those heard in class. In preparation for the interpersonal task, students will use the Internet, either in the school library or at home, to research information about their favorite song and the artist/group who sings it. Students take notes on the information they find. Their notes and information will be the stimulus for the interpersonal task.

For an assignment students are asked to listen to two of their favorite songs at home and to ask their parents about their favorite songs and why they like them. Students also prepare to tell why they like their own favorites.

As a preparation for the interpersonal tasks, students sit in groups of three or four and ask and answer questions about their favorite songs and their parent's (or someone in their family) favorite song and the reasons why they like them.

After the student discussion, the teacher records on a board which songs were favorites and why. This provides an opportunity for students to review and/or ask about vocabulary words or expressions they need help with.

The next day, students are asked to discuss information about their number one top hit with their groups.

Interpersonal task: Time – approximately 45-50 minutes

1. Students will spend approximately 10 minutes listening to the three Chinese pop songs again. They take notes and write the Chinese words “喜欢” (like) or “不喜欢” (dislike) on a piece of paper. They can also note how the songs made them feel.
2. After listening, students sit in groups of 3 or 4 (6-8 minutes). They get and give each other information about:
 - the kind of feelings the songs portray to them (happy, sad, angry, bored, worried, lonely, etc.)
 - what they have learned online about their favorite song
 - which song they like most and which (if any) they like least
 - their favorite American hit
3. Students move to a new group and repeat the conversation about each other’s favorite Chinese and American song. (6-8 minutes)
4. Students sit in two different groups

Student Directions for the interpersonal task:

You will hear the three Chinese pop songs again. Listen to the songs and fill in the chart below while you listen.

Task:

- 1) Listen and write next to the song you like most and the song you like least. You can use the sheet to help tell the members in your group which song you like best and which you dislike and how they made you feel.
- 2) Ask students in your group about the music they like and dislike and how it makes them feel.
- 3) Ask students about their favorite American songs.
- 4) Tell your group your favorite American songs.
- 5) Talk about the differences in the Chinese and American songs.
- 6) Take notes about what they say. Use a new sheet for each group you are in and don’t forget to write your and your group member names.

Student sheet for listening to the three songs:

My name: _____		
Song	喜欢	不喜欢

Interpersonal Sheet for Students in Groups

Group 1 2 3 Circle the group number	Rating	Feelings while listening to this song
My name:	Favorite Songs 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	
1st group name:	Favorite Songs 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	
2 nd group's name:	Favorite Songs 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	

Interpersonal Task Rubric

* Teachers observe students' group discussion based on the rubric below.

	Giving Information	Getting Information	Communication Strategies
Exceeds Expectations	Response is easily understood by group members.	Student asks comprehensible questions about the songs.	Student gets clarification by using other words or phrases.
Meets Expectations	Response is generally understood, may require some repetition.	Student's questions are generally comprehensible.	Student gets clarification with questions.
Approaching Expectations	Response is generally difficult to understand.	Student's questions are overall not comprehensible or student does not ask questions.	Student gets clarification through frequent repetition of the word not understood.

N.B. The responses to the interpersonal task provide an opportunity for a discussion of culture e.g., the relationship of the pop songs to Chinese culture and the traditional role of songs in furthering health. Or a comparison to American pop songs can be made. The discussion can be in Chinese, or if students are at a lower level, during a "targeted" time in English.

Presentational task

Overview

This is a group project. The group will be singing like the group that sings on the CD. Students are asked to assume the role of the group/singer who made the song and perform it the same way the group might have performed it. (Also, depending on school schedules, students could be asked to sing their Chinese number one top hit in the school's talent show).

Teachers post or display the CD covers of the three Chinese pop songs in the classroom.

To prepare for the oral presentational task, teachers divide students into small groups of three who have not worked together before.

Each group picks a Chinese song from the three Chinese pop songs heard earlier. Students listen to the song for the first five sentences. They write what they hear and work together to get the first five sentences correct. The teacher observes the groups as they listen for the texts and provides help in making sure the words are correct.

Students then practice the songs for part of the next class. During the following class, the groups perform their songs.

Directions to Students

In your group, pick the song that your group likes best. You can refer to the sheets you made during the group discussion. Listen to the first five sentences and work together to get the correct words. You will be reciting them as a group.

Task: Practice singing the first five sentences of your agreed-upon song, after you have included any corrections provided by your teacher. Be sure to pay attention to pronunciation,

Teacher-developed IPA from the Virtual Assessment Center (VAC) at CARLA
Oral Presentational Task Rubric

Names:	
	Comprehensibility
Exceeds Expectations	Singing is fluent and pronunciation is comprehensible; there are no inappropriate pauses.
Meets Expectations	Singing is generally fluent and mostly comprehensible with occasional inappropriate pauses.
Approaching Expectations	Singing requires much effort to be understood and the frequent pauses interfere with comprehensibility.

Written Presentational Task

Each group will make a CD different cover by writing a short description (in Chinese) based on the main idea of the top hit they have sung and provide information about how the song makes them feel and why someone should buy the CD.

After completing their draft, students hand in their CD covers to teacher. Teachers provide feedback on the CD covers and return to students in class the next day.

(As time allows, teachers can also provide feedback class and respond to students' questions in class.) Students work in groups to complete the CD cover. Teachers can post all of the completed CD covers around the classroom or in the school library.

Provide students with a checklist for the draft the group will be handing in.

Checklist for CD cover Draft
1. I / we checked the characters for accuracy.
2. I/we have a graphic.
3. I/we describe the main idea of the song.
4. I/we list the name of the artist.
5. I/we have 4 (or some number of) sentences in my/our description.
6. The writing is legible.
7. Group member names are included.
8. Task each group member did is included.
9. The text is in Chinese.
10. I have reviewed my writing.

Rubric for the CD Cover

Exceeds Expectations	Sentences contain no errors. Information is interesting. Chinese writing is clear and neat.
Meets Expectations	Chinese writing is generally comprehensible. Information is overall clear.
Approaching Expectations	Limited information is provided; information is very minimal. Chinese writing is not always legible.

Functions:

Express likes and dislikes

1. Students need to be able to recognize and understand the meaning of these two Chinese terms “like” and “dislike” and to express their preferences about these Chinese pop songs by using pens to write either of these two Chinese terms on given papers.
2. Students need to listen to their group members and need to be able to understand their members’ ideas, opinions, and feelings that are shared in the Chinese language while participating in small group activities.

Ask questions and provide answers

3. Students need to ask questions (in Chinese) when they experience difficulty in understanding their group members’ ideas, opinions, or feelings during group activity. Moreover, students need to ask questions (in Chinese) if they need clarification for other students’ opinions or presentations in class.
4. Students need to be able to say “I like/dislike the Chinese pop song, because I feel ...” (in Chinese) in sharing their feelings about the number one top hit (or the three Chinese pop songs). By the same token, students need to be able to say “I like/dislike the Chinese pop song, because ...” (in Chinese) in expressing their reasons for liking/disliking the number one top hit (or these three Asian pop songs).

Vocabulary:

Students need to recognize Chinese characters and to know the meanings of the following eight Chinese vocabulary words/terms:

“我的” (my)	“喜爱” (favorite)	“中文” (Chinese)	“普遍” (popular)
“歌曲” (song)	“喜欢” (like)	“不喜欢” (dislike)	“音乐” (music)

Instructional strategies:

Teaching Chinese vocabulary and characters, pinyin, and their English meanings

Beginning:

Teachers play a variety of Chinese music on low volume as background music in the classroom.

Step 1: Before the beginning of class, teachers copy the Chinese characters of the Chinese terms “my, favorite, Chinese, popular, song, music, like, dislike” in a large font on the whiteboard. The pinyin for each Chinese character is showed under its character on the whiteboard as well. Moreover, teachers write down the English meaning for every Chinese term under its pinyin. Teachers can also post pictures related to each Chinese term, such as music beside that Chinese word to help students learn these Chinese terms. (Teachers can present the Chinese vocabulary words and pictures through a PowerPoint as well.)

In the beginning of class, teachers can give students a handout with all of the Chinese characters, pinyin, English meanings, and pictures after introducing the class activity and objectives.

Teachers ask students to write the Chinese characters “喜欢” (like) and “不喜欢” (dislike) on a piece of paper one on each side. Or, teachers can ask students to practice writing these Chinese characters on a small white board. (Students are asked to write the Chinese characters “喜欢” (like) and “不喜欢” (dislike) on a colored piece of paper and attach it to a paint stirrer. (The sticks and the signs can be used for other subjects - such as sports, cars, food, and so on.)

Next, teachers ask students to think of the music their parents listen to, the music in clothing stores, and elevator music. Then, teachers ask students to talk about the kind of music they listen to, the kind of school band that they play in, the kind of music that their parents listen to, the kind of music that they dislike, different music in the grocery store, etc. Then, students hold up the side of the paper that shows Chinese characters “喜欢” (like) and “不喜欢” (dislike) to express their opinions while engaging in this task. (During this activity, teachers can play different kinds of Chinese music, such as opera, classic music, and other pop songs.)

Teachers ask students to list the titles of the Chinese songs (in Chinese) that they discuss and share on the whiteboard in the classroom. Then, teachers play three Chinese songs whose titles are provided by students from a list in the classroom. Next, teachers randomly ask students to say the titles of the songs in Chinese. In engaging in this activity, teachers can ask the other students to hold up the “喜欢” (like) side for songs they like and to hold up the “不喜欢” (dislike) for music they don’t like as teachers say the name of the Chinese songs. This activity can effectively help students remember the Chinese characters/terms of “like” and “dislike.”

Teaching Speaking of the eight Chinese vocabulary words

Step 2: Teachers teach students to pronounce the pinyin for each Chinese vocabulary/term and introduce the English meaning for every Chinese vocabulary/term with a picture.

Teachers say the pinyin one at a time and ask students to repeat after him or her. Teachers repeat this activity two or three times to help students practice pinyin. Then, teachers introduce the English meaning of the Chinese vocabulary/terms to students. After making sure that most students be able to say the pinyin of the first Chinese vocabulary/term, teachers ask students to say the pinyin and introduce the English meaning of the next Chinese vocabulary words. Teachers teach the pinyin of all relevant Chinese vocabulary words and their English meanings through this activity. Teachers can make mp3 files for students to listen to and students can record mp3 files with the words for teachers to check. (Textbooks may have CDs and online activities for learning vocabulary and for pronunciation).

Step 3: Teachers divide students in pairs and ask them to practice saying all of the Chinese vocabulary words with each other for approximately five to ten minutes. During this time, teachers walk around the classroom, and carefully watch and listen to students' practice while checking students' speaking exercises. If students forgot how to say or have difficulty saying the pinyin of any of these Chinese vocabulary words, teachers verbally demonstrate the pinyin to these students in front of them two or three times. Then, teachers ask these students to continue orally practice the pinyin until they become familiar with the pinyin.

Step 4: Teachers randomly select a student to verbally practice the pinyin of the first Chinese vocabulary word. Then, teachers randomly choose another student to say the pinyin of the second Chinese word. Teachers continually engage in this activity until a student practices the last Chinese word. During this activity, teachers assess how well students verbally say each pinyin by listening to the tone and sound that students produce.

- For a small sized class, teachers can ask every student to practice saying the pinyin for all the Chinese words in order to help all students practice speaking pinyin.

Teaching Listening to the eight Chinese vocabulary words

Step 1: Teachers say each of the eight Chinese vocabulary words one at a time for students using gestures and showing a picture or a flash card.

After three words have been introduced, the teacher can show the gesture or action or the picture and say a word. Students say yes or no, depending on whether the word matches the action or the picture.

During this activity, students are asked to pay attention to teachers and to listen to teachers as they say the words and sounds for the pinyin.

Step 2: Teachers repeat the process described above. Additionally, teachers ask students to listen and to learn the pinyin and English meanings as much as they can.

Step 3: Teachers assess students' listening comprehension. Teachers the eight Chinese vocabulary words (in pinyin) one at a time and ask all students to write down its English meaning on a paper or on small white boards which they hold up as soon as they finish writing.

Step 4: After completing the check described in Step 3, teachers ask students to exchange their answer sheets with their classmates. Teachers write the English meaning for each Chinese vocabulary word on the whiteboard.

Teachers ask students to use red pens to check their classmates' answers based on the answers provided on the classroom whiteboard.

Another strategy that teachers can apply to assess students' listening competence is to play an audio CD that is made by teachers or by students with the vocabulary words. Students write down the eight Chinese vocabulary words while listening to this recording.