

MEMBERSHIP

MY FAVOURITE THINGS



About this activity

A famous song from "The Sound of Music"

- ▶ **Language level:** A2/B1
- ▶ **Main task:** Students write phrases that fit a specific stress pattern
- ▶ **Topics:** Music & rhythm
- ▶ **Language focus:** Sentence stress; British vs. American spelling

For this activity, you will need the following:

- **A song** – 'My favourite things' (which you can access on YouTube)
- **Five images**

Note: For all materials and discussion, go to the corresponding page in the Resources section:

<https://membership.lessonstream.com/resources/my-favourite-things/>



The song

"My Favorite Things" is a classic song by Rodgers and Hammerstein which was written for the 1959 musical "The Sound of Music." It is sung by Maria, the nanny (played by Julie Andrews in the film,) as a way of comforting the children during a thunder storm. In the lyrics, she lists simple things that bring her joy: *raindrops on roses, whiskers on kittens, bright copper kettles*, warm wooden mittens. The song is a waltz which means that all of these items have a regular stress pattern (OooOo) and this activity exploits that fact.



Activity outline

1. On the board or screen, write the following:

O o o O o

2. Tell students that this represents a stress pattern. Offer a few example phrases that fit the pattern and then elicit some more from your students.

Some examples:

Quarter past seven
Out of the frying pan
What are you doing?

Monday and Tuesday
Where are you going?
Everyone thinks so

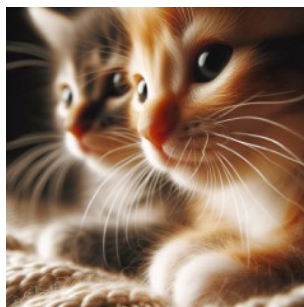
Solomon Islands
Isn't she lovely?
Paper and pencil

3. Tell students that you are going to show them four images. For each image, they should write down what they see. Importantly, the phrases that they write should consist of five syllables and fit the above stress pattern (OooOo). You can let students work in pairs or small groups for this.

Notes:

- Tell students that all answers are valid, as long as they fit the stress pattern. So for example, the first image could be 'flowers in Autumn', 'lovely pink roses' or 'rain in the garden'.
- Encourage students to make use of bilingual dictionaries when necessary. This will allow them to find unfamiliar words such as kettle, mittens, etc.

4. Show the images one by one. Give students enough time to think of a phrase. Once everyone has an answer, move on to the next image.



5. Tell students that there is one more image. It has a more complex stress pattern than the others. Write the following stress pattern on the board and show students the final image:

O o o O o o O o o O



6. Once everyone has a phrase for each image, let students share their answers, first with each other and then with the whole class. There will almost certainly be lots of opportunity for corrections at this stage.

7. If students haven't already worked it out, tell them that the five images relate to a well-known song. Find out if anyone knows it. Play the first verse of "My Favorite Things" and ask students to write down exactly what they hear. (This is, a sort of dictation).

8. Go over the answers and write the lyrics on the board or screen:



Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens
Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens
Brown paper packages tied up with strings
These are a few of my favorite things



9. Now challenge students to see who can write the longest sentence which fits the OooOooOooOoo stress pattern. While working with a group of French teachers at NILE, one of them wrote the following:

"Always from Paris come teachers of English to learn to teach patterns of stress to their students."

Follow-up

The song lyrics contain two words with American English spelling: *favorite* and *woolen*. British and American spelling are the two most notable variations of English orthography and you can ask students if they can think of any other examples of common pairs.

 US English	 British English
Favorite	Favourite
Woolen	Woollen
Color	Colour
Traveling	Travelling

 US English	 British English
Analyze	Analyse
Gray	Grey
Defense	Defence
Center	Centre