

HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN?



About this activity

A question-themed song to introduce a grammar-themed quiz

- ▶ **Language level:** A2
- ▶ **Age of learner:** Teenagers and adults
- ▶ **Duration of activity:** 60 minutes
- ▶ **Activities:** Constructing questions; quiz
- ▶ **Topics:** Geography; science
- ▶ **Language aims:** Questions with the form "How + adjective"; numbers

For this activity, you will need the following:

- **A song** (see below)
- **A Canva slideshow**

IMPORTANT: For all materials and discussion, please go to the corresponding page in the Resources section – just scan or click on QR code.



The song

This activity uses a song to introduce a grammar point. *How Deep is the Ocean* was written by Irving Berlin in 1932 and consists of eight questions, each beginning with 'How + adjective' (or 'how much/many').

Part one – the song

1. Tell students:



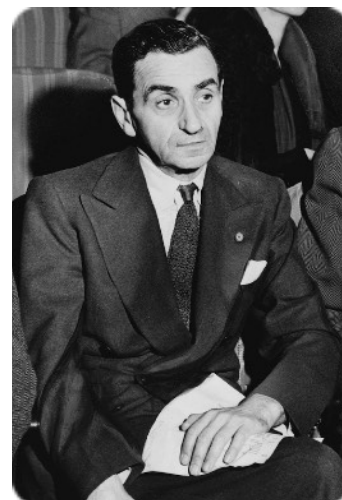
You are going to hear a song.
 There's something quite special about the lyrics (= the words).
 Most of them are questions.
 Listen carefully and pay attention to how many different questions you hear.
 Also, think about what these questions have in common.
 Are you ready?

2. Play a version of the song "How deep is the ocean" and let students count how many different questions they hear.

How Deep is the Ocean was written by Irving Berlin in 1932. The lyrics open with the question, "How much do I love you?" and are followed with a series of rhetorical questions, all of which imply that the answer is a lot.

The lyrics include exactly eight different questions including the following:

- How deep is the ocean?
- How high is the sky?
- How far is the journey from here to a star?
- How many roses are sprinkled with dew?
- And if I ever lost you, how much would I cry?



The song has been recorded by artists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Billy Holiday, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Etta James, Ray Charles, Diana Krall, Eric Clapton, and many others.



It is possible that Eric Clapton's version will resonate best with modern audiences. The accompanying Canva slideshow includes two videos of Clapton's rendition. While both videos feature the same recording, the second one includes onscreen subtitles for students to follow.

3. Listen to students' answers. As mentioned above, they should have heard exactly eight different questions, all of which include the structure 'How + adjective' (or 'how much/many').

4. Play the song a second time and ask students to write down as many of the questions as possible before asking them to share their answers.

5. Play a version of the song on YouTube which includes onscreen lyrics so that students can check their answers.



The Canva slideshow includes an AI-generated image that you can use to clarify the meaning of "How many roses are sprinkled with dew?"

Dew (uncountable noun) = morning drops of water condensation.

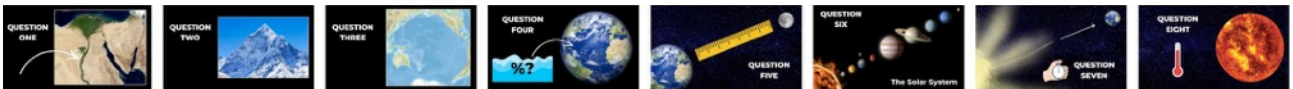
You can reinforce the verb "to sprinkle" using gesture.



Part two – the quiz questions

1. Tell students you have a quiz for them. It consists of eight questions, all starting with 'How'. Before they can take the quiz, students have to look at eight images and guess or work out what the questions are."

2. Put students into groups. Then, move through the eight images included in the Canva slideshow. For each image, ensure that students have enough time to think and write down their answers.



3. Go over the answers which are also provided in the Canva slideshow.

Answers:

- **Q1:** How long is the Nile?
- **Q2:** How high is Mount Everest?
- **Q3:** How deep is the Pacific Ocean?
- **Q4:** How much of Earth's surface is covered by water?
- **Q5:** How far is the Moon from Earth?
- **Q6:** How many planets are there in the Solar System?
- **Q7:** How long does it take sunlight to reach Earth?
- **Q8:** How hot is the surface of the Sun?

Please note that in some cases, there will be more than one way to write the questions.

4. Now that students have all the questions, they can do the quiz. For this, they should stay in the same groups as before and write down answers to all eight questions. Be strict about access to mobile phones – you can tell students that cheating will lead to instant disqualification!

5. Go over the answers and aware points to whichever group came closest to the actual answer.

Q1: How long is the Nile?

Approximately 6,650 kilometres (4,130 miles)

Q2: How high is Mount Everest?

8,848 meters (29,031 feet) above sea level

Q3: How deep is the Pacific Ocean?

At its deepest point, it is approximately 10,994 metres (36,070 feet)

Q4: How much of Earth's surface is covered by water?

Around 71%

Q5: How far is the Moon from Earth?

Approximately 384,400 kilometres (238,855 miles)

Q6: How many planets are there in the Solar System?

Eight: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune (In 2006, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) redefined the term planet to exclude dwarf planets such as Pluto.)

Q7: How long does it take sunlight to reach Earth?

Eight minutes and 20 seconds

Q8: How hot is the surface of the Sun?

Approximately 5,500 degrees Celsius (9,932 degrees Fahrenheit). However, the Sun's core, where nuclear fusion occurs, reaches around 15 million degrees Celsius (about 27 million degrees Fahrenheit).

Tip



Throughout this activity, there will be many opportunities to practise the pronunciation of big numbers in a meaningful way.

