

MEMBERSHIP

HOMESICK & OUT OF LOVE



About this activity

A storyline from a famous song about a character who wants to go home

- ▶ **Language level:** A1 upwards
- ▶ **Main task:** Drawing; story building
- ▶ **Topics:** Love & relationships; homesickness
- ▶ **Language focus:** Singular *they/their*; present perfect; *wish*; second conditional

For this activity you will need the following:

- A blank piece of A4 paper for each student
- The lyrics to *California Dreamin'* by the Mamas and the Papas

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

<https://membership.lessonstream.com/resources/homesick-out-of-love/>



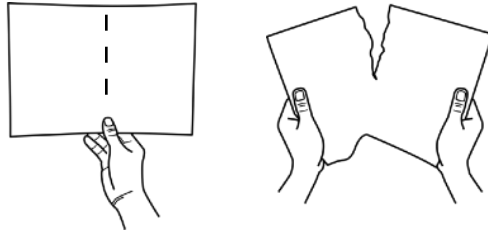
About the story

This activity makes use of a simple storyline that is taken from the lyrics of *California Dreamin'* by the Mamas and the Papas. The song was written in 1963 by John Phillips and Michelle Phillips during their first year of marriage.

Activity outline

1. Give each student a blank piece of A4 paper. Then give the instructions below. Speak slowly and clearly as you do.

I want you to fold your piece of paper like this [demonstrate]
 Now I want you to tear your piece of paper like this [demonstrate]
 Now you have two pieces of paper like this [show everyone what they should have]



Now I want you to draw two simple pictures – one on each piece of paper
 Don't worry – they don't have to be masterpieces!
 You can draw matchstick figures if you like
 [Show students an example of a matchstick figure]



Show me your pencils
 Now put down your pencils and just listen

In the first picture, I want you to draw a man or a woman – you can decide
 They're going for a walk
 It's a cold winter's day and the sky is grey
 The trees are bare – in other words, they have no what?
 No leaves!
 The leaves are on the ground
 The man or woman in your picture looks sad

I'll say that again:
 In the first picture, I want you to draw a man or a woman – you can decide, etc.

Any questions?
 OK, pick up your pencils and draw your pictures
 [Students draw their pictures]

Now, the second picture might be a little bit more difficult but please don't worry
 In the second picture, the same man or woman is in a church
 They are on their knees and they are praying [gesture this phrase]
 [Repeat if necessary]

Any questions?
 OK, draw your pictures
 [Students draw their pictures]

Notes:

- If you have a group of particularly reluctant artists, you could ask for a single volunteer to come to the front of the class and draw the pictures on the board according to your instructions. Alternatively, draw the pictures yourself and give a running commentary as you do so.
- You can use the instructions on the previous page to introduce singular *they/their*. We use these pronouns to refer to a person of unknown or unspecified gender.
- As an alternative to paper and pens, students can use a drawing app on their mobile device.
- You can give students a time limit for the drawing – 2 or 3 minutes per picture, for example.



Drawing by Jack Keddie.
Your students' sketches do not
have to be as good as this!

2. While students are drawing the pictures, write the words and phrases below on the board or screen. When a student finishes drawing before the others, ask them to label their picture(s) with the words and phrases.

- A sad man / woman
- A cold winter's day
- The bare trees
- The ground
- Going for a walk
- The grey sky
- The leaves
- Praying
- Down on his/her knees
- A church

3. Students might want to see each other's drawings at this stage and that is fine. But point out that they will get an opportunity to do so later. Before that, set the following task:

I want you to decide the following:

- Who is the character in your pictures and what is their name?
- Where are they and how did they get there?
- What is happening in their life and why are they sad?
- Is there anyone else involved in the story?
- In the second picture, why are they praying?
- How does the story end?

Write these questions on the board or screen

Write down your stories on a separate piece of paper or in your notebooks.

Notes:

- Give students enough time to build their stories – don't rush them.
- Circulate and offer language support and corrections when necessary.
- Here is some possible language that can emerge:
 - **Present perfect** (picture one): *She has lost his dog; He has been dumped; Her grandmother has died*
 - **Wish** (picture two): *I wish I wasn't poor; I wish I was somewhere warmer; I wish I had a dog to keep me company*
 - **To pray that ... / to pray for something (to happen)** (picture two)

4. It's time for a mill drill. Demonstrate the task by asking two students to stand up with their pictures. Then do the following.

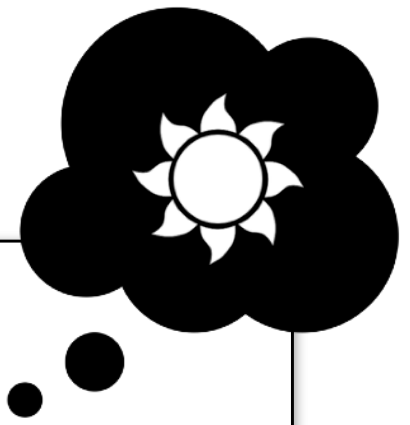
- Ask student A to show student B their pictures and introduce their character
- Ask student A to tell student B what is happening in the two pictures – what is the story?
- Ask student B to ask student A a question about the character, their situation or the story
- Ask students to swap roles and then repeat the process

5. Ask everyone in the room to stand up, find a partner and share their stories. Once they have done that, they should form new pairs and repeat the process.

Notes:

- You can set a time limit for the mill drill according to the number of students in the group.
- For Zoom teaching, you can put students into breakaway rooms to share their stories.
- If you created drawings of your own, you can also get involved and tell your own story – see next page

6. Tell students your own story which could go something like this:



So I have a story which comes from a very famous song
I'll tell you my story and let's see if you know the song
It's about a man from Los Angeles
We don't actually know his name
But he has moved to New York to be with his girlfriend

It's a very cold winter and the man is not happy
He misses Los Angeles
In other words, he is homesick

He goes out for a walk
The sky is grey
The trees are bare
The leaves on the ground are brown
And the man can't stop thinking that he would be happy again if he was back home
He would certainly be warmer!

The other problem is that the man has fallen out of love
In other words, he doesn't love his girlfriend any more
And he's confused

While he's walking, he passes a church
He stops and goes inside
And inside, he gets down on his knees and he starts to pray
And while he's praying, he has a thought
If he didn't tell his girlfriend, he could leave that day

And that's the story
We don't know what happens in the end
We don't know if he stays or if goes
We don't know how the story ends

Does anyone know the song?

7. Find out if anyone knows *California Dreamin'* by the Mamas and the Papas. Let students listen to the song and follow the lyrics. The song has a call and response format so if you are feeling musical, you can try to encourage (at least some of) your students to get involved in a performance.

• **Teacher:** 🎵 All the leaves are brown • **Students:** 🎵 All the leaves are brown Etc.

8. Ask students to investigate the song and find similarities and differences between the story that it tells and the lives of John Phillips and Michelle Phillips who wrote it.