

You probably already know that music is a great way to learn and practice English. Choosing who to listen to can be difficult, though, as there are so many great artists and music genres available. Choosing who to listen to can be almost as difficult as learning English.

In these handouts, we're going to look at some of the more popular western artists. We'll talk a little bit about their personal lives and also learn the lyrics (words) from one or two of their more popular songs. Questions about the artists and their music can be sent to me at teacher@englishforlife.ca.

Neil Young is a iconic Canadian-American artist whose music has **inspired** both fans and other musicians. Born in Toronto, Canada, in 1945, he was the youngest of two sons; his father was journalist Scott Alexander Young, who wrote sports articles and fiction. His mother, Edna Blow Ragland Young (known to friends as "Rassy"), was of French and American **ancestry**; she was also a member of Daughters of the American Revolution, a non-profit group that promotes education and (American) patriotism. Members of the group must be direct descendants of people who fought in the American Revolution.

Most of Young's early life was spent in Toronto, Ontario or Winnipeg, Manitoba, except for a year in Florida, in 1951. Young had contracted polio and was partially **paralyzed**; his parents believed the warmer weather would speed his recovery. This would be one of several influences on his later work and his activist sympathies. Young would record a cover of the Ian Tyson song "[Four Strong Winds](#)" in 1978, saying that the song reminded him of his childhood in Winnipeg. As an artist, Young has donated his time and energy to other **philanthropic** concerns, such as racism, environmentalism and political activism. One of his most famous songs, "[Ohio](#)", reflects on the shooting of four students by members of the Ohio National Guard in 1970, during a protest against the war in Vietnam.

Young was the co-founder of Farm Aid, along with musician [Willie Nelson](#), which raised money for farmers in desperate financial need and encouraged the growth and consumption of food grown locally. Young's work also represented the human touch, **showcasing** personal issues and the experience of being human and vulnerable. "[Old Man](#)" was written by Young in remembrance of Louis Avila, the caretaker of his northern California ranch. His work, while often **wistful** and somber, also celebrated life, such as in the hit song "[Harvest Moon](#)".

Young's creative influences are varied and come from a variety of musical genres, such as rock 'n roll ([Elvis Presley](#) and [Chuck Berry](#)), country ([Johnny Cash](#)), R&B ([Fats Domino](#) and Little Richard) and much more. Young **blended** and worked with these influences to create a style of guitar playing that was distinctive; one of his earliest bands, Buffalo Springfield, lasted only two years but created the musical **genres** folk rock and country rock. The band is today considered the father of grunge music (the band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1997). Young was previously inducted in 1995 as an independent musician.

His work wasn't always **appreciated**, though, and fame has come and gone over his long career. At times a best selling artist and at other times struggling to sell records, Young was nevertheless influential on a number of up and coming young artists. His collaborations have included [Linda Ronstadt](#), James Taylor and [Joni Mitchell](#), a long time friend from his early days. Young himself never wanted fame, admitting his fear of becoming **mainstream** sometimes affected his choices and jeopardized his career. His passion for his beliefs, though, make it likely that he will still be voicing his opinion and creating music for a long, long time to come.

Lyrics

Four Strong Winds

Think I'll go out to Alberta,
Weather's good there in the Fall.
I got some friends that I can go working for.
Still I wish you'd change your mind
If I asked you one more time,
But we've been through this a hundred times or more.

Four strong winds that blow lonely,
Seven seas that run high,
All those things that don't change, Come what may
If the good times are all gone,
Then I'm bound for moving on.
I'll look for you if I'm ever back this way

If I get there before the snow flies,
And if things are looking good,
You could meet me if I send you down the fare.
But by then it would be Winter,
Not to much for you to do.
And those winds sure can blow cold way out there.

Four strong winds that blow lonely.
Seven seas that run high.
All those things that don't change , Come what may
The good times are all gone,
So I'm bound for moving on.
I'll look for you if I'm ever back this way.

Still I wish you'd change your mind
If I ask you one more time,
But we've been through that a hundred times or more.

Four strong winds that blow lonely.
Seven seas that run high.
All those things that don't change , Come what may
If the good times are all gone,
Then I'm bound for moving on.
I'll look for you if I'm ever back this way.
I'll look for you if I'm ever back this way.

Ohio

Tin soldiers and Nixon coming
We're finally on our own
This summer, I hear the drumming
Four dead in Ohio

Gotta get down to it
Soldiers are cutting us down
Should have been done long ago
What if you knew her
And found her dead on the ground
How can you run when you know?

Na na na na
Na na na na
Na na na na
Na na na
Na na na na
Na na na na
Na na na na
Na na na na
Na na na

Gotta get down to it
Soldiers are cutting us down
Should have been done long ago
What if you knew her
And found her dead on the ground
How can you run when you know?

Tin soldiers and Nixon coming
We're finally on our own
This summer, I hear the drumming
Four dead in Ohio
Four dead in Ohio (four)
Four dead in Ohio (four)
Four dead in Ohio
Four dead in Ohio (how many more?)
Four dead in Ohio (why?)
Four dead in Ohio
Four dead in Ohio
Four dead in Ohio
Four dead in Ohio
Four dead in Ohio

Old Man

Old man, look at my life
I'm a lot like you were
Old man, look at my life
I'm a lot like you were

Old man, look at my life
Twenty four and there's so much more
Live alone in a paradise
That makes me think of two

Love lost, such a cost
Give me things that don't get lost
Like a coin that won't get tossed
Rolling home to you

Old man, take a look at my life, I'm a lot like you
I need someone to love me the whole day through
Ah, one look in my eyes and you can tell that's true

Lullabies, look in your eyes
Run around the same old town
Doesn't mean that much to me
To mean that much to you

I've been first and last
Look at how the time goes past
But I'm all alone at last
Rolling home to you

Old man, take a look at my life, I'm a lot like you
I need someone to love me the whole day through
Ah, one look in my eyes and you can tell that's true

Old man, look at my life
I'm a lot like you were
Old man, look at my life
I'm a lot like you were

Harvest Moon

Come a little bit closer
Hear what I have to say
Just like children sleepin'
We could dream this night away

But there's a full moon risin'
Let's go dancin' in the light
We know where the music's playin'
Let's go out and feel the night

Because I'm still in love with you
I want to see you dance again
Because I'm still in love with you
On this harvest moon

When we were strangers
I watched you from afar
When we were lovers
I loved you with all my heart

But now it's gettin' late
And the moon is climbin' high
I want to celebrate
See it shinin' in your eye

Because I'm still in love with you
I want to see you dance again
Because I'm still in love with you
On this harvest moon

Because I'm still in love with you
I want to see you dance again
Because I'm still in love with you
On this harvest moon

vocabulary

inspired	Made to feel confident by or about something
ancestry	The history of a person's family
paralyzed	Unable to move
philanthropic	Described as giving to others or doing something to help others
showcasing	Making something visible or noticeable
wistful	Sad, impossible or in the past
blended	To combine several different things together
genres	A style of something, such as music, novels or movies
appreciated	Well liked or thought of in a good way
mainstream	Common, average; similar to most other things in a group

YouTube videos

Neil Young with Willie Nelson - Four Strong Winds (Live at Farm Aid 1995)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIQu_MVZcas

Neil Young - Ohio (Official Live Video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxI9R_2ax-8

Willie Nelson - Always On My Mind (Official Video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7f189Z0v0Y>

Neil Young - Old Man (Live at Farm Aid 1998)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qkf1doko6ts>

Neil Young - Harvest Moon [Official Music Video]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2MtEsrcTTs>

Elvis Presley - Jailhouse Rock (Music Video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gj0Rz-uP4Mk>

Chuck Berry - Johnny B. Goode (Live 1958)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ROwVrF0Ceg>

Johnny Cash, June Carter Cash - Jackson
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m67eqm0mNCQ>

Fats Domino - Ain't That A Shame (1956)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FDYyf8Kqrs>

Linda Ronstadt - Blue Bayou (Official Music Video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp9G0zkorio>

Joni Mitchell - Big Yellow Taxi (Official Lyric Video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2595abcvh2M>

Article Research Sources

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: Neil Young

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Young

Biography: Neil Young

<https://www.biography.com/musicians/neil-young>

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: Daughters of the American Revolution

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daughters_of_the_American_Revolution

Neil Young Archives

<https://neilyoungarchives.com/>

Far Out – Music: ‘Woodstock’: the only song Neil Young has ever regretted

<https://faroutmagazine.co.uk/only-song-neil-young-regretted/>

Shared: The Heartbreaking Story Of Neil Young's Disabled Son

<https://www.shared.com/neil-youngs-disabled-son/>

The Conversation: Neil Young's ultimatum to Spotify...

<https://theconversation.com/neil-youngs-ultimatum-to-spotify-shows-streaming-platforms-are-now-a-battleground-where-artists-can-leverage-power-175732#:~:text=We%20believe%20in%20the%20free%20flow%20of%20information&text=Neil%20Young%20has%20given%20Spotify,Rogan's%20misinformation%20about%20COVID%20vaccinations.>

Los Angeles Times – Entertainment & Arts: Ava DuVernay is the latest artist to follow Neil Young's exit from Spotify because of Joe Rogan

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/music/story/2022-01-30/spotify-joe-rogan-covid-neil-young-list-of-artists#:~:text=Entertainment%20figures%20Neil%20Young%2C%20left,have%20cut%20ties%20with%20Spotify.&text=Veteran%20singer%20songwriter%20Neil%20Young,SPOTIFY's%20deadly%20misinformation%20about%20COVID.%E2%80%9D>

The Greedy Hand (Neil Young's music website, for purchases)

<https://neilyoung.warnerrecords.com/>