SONG ACTIVITY – Somewhere Only We Know  
by Lily Allen

Name:  
Group:  
Date: / /

1. Work in small groups. Discuss the questions with your classmates.

Think of a special place you like to go to:

a. Why do you go to this place?
b. Do you go there alone? If not, who do you go with?
c. How do you feel when you are at this place?
d. Do many people know about this place?

2. You are going to listen to the song Somewhere Only We Know, by Lily Allen. But, first, let’s work with some words that will help you understand the lyrics. Match the underlined words to their meanings.

a. The pathway to the farm house was muddy and difficult to walk on.
b. I’ve seen Harry Potter’s movies so many times that I know them like the back of my hand.
c. Emily is the only friend I can rely on at all times.
d. Have you ever come across one of your parents’ diaries?
e. The storm broke several branches of the old oak in the square.

[ ] very well   
[ ] found unexpectedly, by chance   
[ ] the parts of a tree   
[ ] track made for people to walk over   
[ ] depend on, trust

3. Now listen to the song and complete some of its lines.

a. “I walked across an empty land
   I knew the pathway like the back of my _________.

b. “Oh, simple thing, where have you ________?
   I’m getting tired and I need someone to rely on.”

c. “I came across a fallen ________
   I felt the branches of it looking at me”

d. “Is this the place we used to ________?
   Is this the place that I’ve been dreaming of?”

e. “And if you have a minute, why don’t we ________
   Talk about it somewhere only we know?”
4. Listen to the song again. What do you think it is about? Check (✓) all the items that apply.

[ ] a. loneliness
[ ] b. family life
[ ] c. a relationship
[ ] d. a special place
[ ] e. how friends help us
[ ] f. trust

5. Read this explanation about the meaning of the song. What do you think about it?

The real meaning of the song’s video and lyrics remain unknown; however, several have accepted that the meaning refers to "Manser's Shaw", a place in Battle where Keane members used to visit in their childhood days and the site of the Battle of Hastings, fought on 14 October 1066.

Richard Hughes, Keane’s drummer, offered the following explanation of the song on Chris Flynn’s fansite:

“We’ve been asked whether "Somewhere Only We Know" is about a specific place, and Tim has been saying that, for him, or us as individuals, it might be about a geographical space, or a feeling; it can mean something individual to each person, and they can interpret it to a memory of theirs... It’s perhaps more of a theme rather than a specific message... Feelings that may be universal, without necessarily being totally specific to us, or a place, or a time...


Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somewhere_Only_We_Know#cite_ref-3

6. Work in pairs. Discuss these questions with your partner.

a. Do you like to be alone? Why (not)?
b. What do you usually do when you are all by yourself?
c. Why is it so difficult for some people to trust others?
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TEACHER’S NOTES

Target audience (age): Ensino Fundamental and Ensino Médio.

Aims: Discuss special places students enjoy going to. Expand vocabulary. Use rhymes to understand lines from a song. Discuss the meanings of a song.

Duration: 50 min.

Organization: individual / group work / pair work.

Material: worksheet.

Preparation: Make copies of the worksheet (1 per student). Check the website with the song. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mer6X7nOY_o).

Procedure:

Pre-listening (Activities 1 and 2)

- Warm up students by asking What kind of music do you like? Who’s your favorite singer/band? Where do you listen to music? Listen to students’ ideas.
- Hand out the worksheets.
- Organize students into small groups (3-4 students) for Activity 1. Go through the questions with the whole class first, then allow groups some time to discuss them. Walk around the classroom, helping with vocabulary, if necessary.
- When they are finished, have some students share their ideas with the whole class. Answer(s): personal answers.
- In Activity 2, ask students if they are familiar with the song. Have them work individually with the task. Check answers with the whole class. Answer(s): b.; d.; e.; a.; c.

Listening (Activities 3 and 4)

- Allow students some time to go through items a. – e. in Activity 3. Draw their attention to the fact that the word they will use to complete each line rhymes with the last word in the previous or following line.
- Note: you can ask students to try to complete the lines before listening to the song.
- Play the song for students to do the task. Check answers with the whole class. Answer(s): a. hand; b. gone; c. tree; d. love; e. go.
- Play the song again for Activity 4. Encourage students to pay attention to the lyrics and the melody as they listen. Check answers. Answer(s): a.; c.; d.; f.
- Note: you might ask students to mention lines of the song that justify their answers.

After listening (Activities 5 and 6)

- Read the information in Activity 5 with the whole class.
- Hold a discussion with the students. Encourage them to share their ideas about the meaning of the song.
- For Activity 6, organize students into pairs.
- While they discuss their ideas, play the song in the background. Walk around the classroom, helping with vocabulary, if necessary.
- When they are finished, encourage some students to share their ideas with the class. Answer(s): personal answers.

Wrap up activity

- Play the original version of Somewhere Only We Know, by the British alternative rock band Keane, which was recorded in 2004. Encourage students to say which version they like best: the original one or Lily Allen’s, released in 2013. Explain that the British singer recorded the song for a department store TV commercial at Christmas time and that her version was actually more successful than Keane’s.
- Students can sing along with the song.
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Extra

• Carry out a quick comparative analysis of the song and the poem *The Road Not Taken*, by Robert Frost (available at https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/road-not-taken). You can ask students to find similarities and differences between the works (see some suggestions in the chart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Differences</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The setting is the same in the song and the poem: a place in the countryside, in the woods.</td>
<td>• The time is different: the poem is set in the past, while the song starts in the past, but has passages set in the present.</td>
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<td>• The interaction with nature is important in the song and the poem – it allows the poetic personae in both works to learn about him/herself.</td>
<td>• In the song, the persona refers to another person as someone who he/she misses. The persona in the poem talks about him/herself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Both personae are alone in the woods.</td>
<td>• The poem is about choice – about how decisions we make can change our entire lives. The song, on the other hand, is about a place that reminds the persona of someone he/she loves.</td>
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<td>• The poem and the song are nostalgic – the personae in both works reminisce about events in the past.</td>
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• Ask students to find other famous songs and their cover versions.

• Play the Christmas TV commercial in which Lily Allen’s version of *Somewhere Only We Know* was used. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NW2EmATcb6o

• Ask students to mention other songs used in TV commercials.