

Song 8: El Paso



ACTIVITY MENU

PRE-LISTENING

What Do You Know About...?
Picture Predictions
Unscramble the Sentences

LISTENING

Relax and Enjoy!
Listening Gap-Fill
Did You Hear What I Heard?

SINGING

Sing Along With Me
Drum and Instrument Circles
One Theme – Many Songs

POST-LISTENING

Speaking: I'd Like to Ask You About...
Reading: A Range of Questions
Writing: Songwriter Histories



El Paso: Lyrics

by Danielle Ate the Sandwich

(1:31)

- 1 Oh El Paso, I have ridden on your highway curves,
And I have spoken to the governor
About the use of your U-turns.
- 4 Oh El Paso, I ate two corndogs at a Wienerschnitzel,
And I have watched your infomercials
That threaten bigger muscles
To those who stay up late enough to order.
- 8 Oh El Paso, I left better than I was before,
And I have sung my golden melodies
With the best man that I know.
- 11 Oh El Paso, won't you save a place for a girl like me?
I am awful sad to leave you,
Glad to have known you,
And happy to have had your company.



Pre-listening Activities: Choose one or two of the activities below.

What Do You Know About...?

Purpose: To generate interest and introduce vocabulary for the song, and activate background knowledge about the topic

Level: All

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: None

Instructions: See [page 324](#). Read the following True/False statements out loud to students:
El Paso is a city in Mexico.
Wienerschnitzel is a fast-food chain that specializes in hot dogs.
An infomercial is a blend of two words, “information” and “commercial,” into one new word.
To make a U-turn means to drive in a circle.

(Answer key: [page 677](#).)

Picture Predictions

Purpose: To generate interest and introduce vocabulary for the song, and activate background knowledge about the topic

Level: All

Time: 15 – 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Hang the pictures representing El Paso ([page 667](#)) on the board.

Instructions: See [page 326](#), Modification E.

Unscramble the Sentences

Purpose: To generate interest and introduce vocabulary and grammar for the song, and activate background knowledge about the topic

Level: 2 and above

Time: 20 – 30 minutes, plus the length of the song (4:31 minutes)

Preparation and Materials: Make enough copies of the scrambled sentences ([page 668](#)) so that each group has one sentence to unscramble. Optional: give each group a copy of the two challenge sentences that contain relative clauses. (Answer key: see the lyrics on [page 665](#).)

Instructions: See [page 321](#). Do not have students re-order the sentences into a stanza after they have unscrambled the sentences.



El Paso: Picture Predictions



El Paso: Unscramble the Sentences

----- ✂ -----
have I on ridden curves your highway

----- ✂ -----
spoken I about use have governor the of U-turns your to the

----- ✂ -----
corndogs ate at Wienerschnitzel I two a

----- ✂ -----
better I than was left I before

----- ✂ -----
you for won't a save me place like girl a

----- ✂ -----
awful I to you sad leave am

----- ✂ -----

Challenge Sentences

Hint: both of these sentences contain a relative clause after the bolded noun.

----- ✂ -----
infomercials that watched have I bigger your threaten muscles

----- ✂ -----
the my sung I melodies have golden **man** I best that know with

----- ✂ -----



Listening Activities: Choose one of the listening activities below.

Relax and Enjoy!

Purpose: To enjoy listening to the song

Level: All

Time: 5 – 10 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Write the following three discussion questions on the board, or create your own:

Does it seem like a serious or a humorous song?

What is the instrument that you hear? What does it remind you of?

Do you like the song? Why or why not?

Instructions: See [page 334](#).

Listening Gap-Fill

Purpose: To listen for details, and practice present perfect aspect and past tense verbs

Level: 2 and above

Time: 15 minutes (to play the song two or three times)

Preparation and Materials: Make a copy of the gap-fill handout ([page 670](#)) for each student. (Answer key: [page 677](#).)

Instructions: See [page 337](#).

Did You Hear What I Heard?

Purpose: To listen for main ideas and specific details

Level: 2 and above

Time: 15 – 20 minutes (to play the song one or two times)

Preparation and Materials: Write the following questions on the board: (Answer key: [page 677](#))

1. How does the singer feel about leaving the city of El Paso?

2. What are two things that the singer did in El Paso?

3. What was the infomercial about?

Instructions: See [page 341](#).



El Paso: Listening Gap-Fill

Directions: First, read through these song lyrics and guess what the missing words might be. Write your guesses on the blanks. Second, as you listen to the song, correct what you have written or fill in any missing words.

Oh El Paso I (1) _____ on your highway curves, and

I (2) _____ to the governor about the use of your U-turns.

Oh El Paso, I (3) _____ two corndogs at a Wienerschnitzel,

and I (4) _____ your infomercials

that threaten bigger muscles

to those who stay up late enough to order.

Oh El Paso, I (5) _____ better than I (6) _____ before,

and I (7) _____ my golden melodies with the best man that I know.

Oh El Paso, won't you (8) _____ a place for a girl like me?

I am awful sad to leave you,

glad to (9) _____ you,

and happy to (10) _____ your company.



El Paso: One Theme – Many Songs

Directions: Write lyrics for a two-stanza song related to the theme of the song you have just learned. Choose a topic that is related to the theme of the song. Use the same melody as the first two stanzas of the song (lines 1 – 7). However, you should avoid using the same words that were in the original stanza. Create seven lines using the number of syllables indicated below (to mimic the melody of the original song).

Stanza 1

(13 syllables)

(10 syllables)

(8 syllables)

Stanza 2

(15 syllables)

(9 syllables)

(7 syllables)

(11 syllables)



Post-listening Activities: Choose one or two of the activities below.

Speaking: I'd Like to Ask You About...

Purpose: To ask and answer questions

Level: All **Time:** 40 – 50 minutes (may be split up into several class sessions)

Preparation and Materials: None.

Instructions: See [page 362](#).

Reading: A Range of Questions

Purpose: To read for factual details; combine, infer, evaluate, and reflect on information in a reading text

Level: 2 and above **Time:** 25 – 30 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Make a copy of the reading text and questions ([pages 674-675](#)) for each student.

Instructions: See [page 366](#), Modification D.

Writing: Songwriter Histories

Purpose: To write short narratives in the past tense

Level: 2 and above **Time:** 40 – 50 minutes (may be extended over several class sessions)

Preparation and Materials: Make a copy of the handout ([page 676](#)) for each group of students.

Instructions: See [page 376](#), Modification C.



El Paso, Texas: Between Two Lands

Geography and Weather



El Paso is a city in the western corner of Texas, which lies on the border between the United States and Mexico. It is the sixth largest city in Texas with a **metropolitan**³⁶ area that has been growing **dramatically**.³⁷ Due to its geographical characteristics, El Paso is a place where American and Mexican cultures mix.

El Paso has a harsh desert climate. Summers are hot and dry, while winter weather is mild with low **humidity**.³⁸ Despite the dry atmosphere, it rains about nine inches per year on average. The city sometimes floods from late July to August, influenced by intense summer thunderstorms.

History

Before Spanish **conquistadors**³⁹ discovered this area in the Chihuahuan desert, Native Americans inhabited the El Paso region for centuries. Although El Paso became part of the United States when Texas joined the Union in 1845, before that there were disagreements about how to draw the border between Mexico and the United States. The Rio Grande River eventually became the boundary between the two countries.

These days, El Paso has developed into a modern city, which is a center of significant industry, **commerce**,⁴⁰ and transportation in the Southwest. Major industries include tourism, textiles, manufacturing of cement and building materials, and food processing.



Entertainment



As a border town, El Paso has flourished with numerous entertaining and interesting places to enjoy. Franklin Mountains State Park, which opened to the public in 1987, is the largest urban park in the United States. The park offers visitors various outdoor activities, such as hiking, biking, camping, and exploring caves.

The Chamizal National Memorial, a well-known National Park, commemorates the Chamizal Treaty of 1963. These park grounds stand for the peaceful settlement of a 100-year border **dispute**⁴¹ between the United States and Mexico. The memorial displays murals, historical documents and pictures that present the values of **diplomacy**,⁴² different cultures, and cooperation.

³⁶ **metropolitan** a large city plus the cities and towns surrounding it

³⁷ **dramatically** suddenly and to a great extent

³⁸ **humidity** the level of moisture in the air

³⁹ **conquistador** a leader in the Spanish conquests of America in the 1500s

⁴⁰ **commerce** activities that relate to buying and selling goods and services

⁴¹ **dispute** a disagreement

⁴² **diplomacy** the work of maintaining good relations between the governments of different countries



El Paso: A Range of Questions

Question 1: What is the weather like in El Paso? *(focusing)*

Question 2: What historical event makes the Chamizal National Memorial famous? Why? *(combining)*

Question 3: Why do you think there were disagreements about drawing the border between Mexico and the United States? *(inferring)*

Question 4: What do you think might be good about living in a big city? What would be bad about it? Why? *(evaluating)*

Question 5: Please share your own travel experiences with others. How would you describe location, weather, and history of the places you have visited? *(relating)*



El Paso: Songwriter Histories

In your group, create a sequence of pictures about the events that led up to the writing of the song *El Paso*. Fill in the blank boxes below with your drawings in the order that these events happened. Write a brief dialogue to accompany each of the drawings.

1)
“
”

2)
“
”

3)
“
”

4)
“
”



El Paso: Answer Keys

What Do You Know About...?: Answer Key

1. False – it is in the state of Texas in the United States
2. True
3. True – infomercials are a type of advertisement that provides factual information about a product.
4. False – to make a U-turn means to turn a car completely around, so that you can travel in the opposite direction. The turn makes a U shape.

Listening Gap-Fill: Answer Key

Oh El Paso, I (1) have ridden on your highway curves,

I (2) have spoken to the governor about the use of your U-turns.

Oh El Paso, I (3) ate two corndogs at a Wienerschnitzel,

and I (4) have watched your infomercials

that threaten bigger muscles to those who stay up late enough to order.

Oh El Paso, I (5) left better than I (6) was before,

and I (7) have sung my golden melodies with the best man that I know.

Oh El Paso, won't you (8) save a place for a girl like me?

I am awful sad to leave you,

glad to (9) have known you,

and happy to (10) have had your company.

Did You Hear What I Heard? Answer Key

1. The singer is sad and expresses sorrow about the things she will miss about the city of El Paso. She also expresses gratefulness for having spent time there.
2. The singer has (1) ridden on the curving highways, (2) spoken to the state's governor, (3) eaten corndogs, (4) watched infomercials, (5) sung songs, and met the best man she's ever known.
3. The infomercial claims that ordering corndogs late enough at night gives a person larger muscles.

