

Song 5: A Lot of Days Are Gone



ACTIVITY MENU

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A Lot of Days Are Gone: Lyrics

by *The Hacienda Brothers* (written by *Dave Gonzalez & Jeb Schoonover*)
(3:08)

1 A lot of days are gone,
But I'm still holding onto what they used to be
Back when it was yesterday
The future seemed so far away
And there was always time, but now it's slipped away.

6 A lot of things went wrong,
And all I'm holding onto now are memories.
Things I knew I shouldn't do, things I wish I did
Back in time, when I was just a kid.

Chorus (2x):

10 Time is just a way of counting yesterdays
But good times never hang around
Long enough to stay.
Yesterdays are memories, and some might fade away.
Others last forever with a price I'll have to pay.

15 A lot of things are gone,
And nothing comes along that means that much to me.
'Cause nothing ever could compare
To what we had when you were here
Back when you were holding onto me.

20 No, nothing ever could compare
To what we had when you were here
Back when you were holding onto me.



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

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 picture of the sad cowboy and guitar ([page 619](#)) on the board. Write the title of the song on the board underneath the picture.

Instructions: See [page 326](#). Optional: you may wish to share the 'Information for Teachers' on [page 619](#) with the students after hearing their predictions.

Brainstorming and Mind-Mapping Vocabulary

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: Write this word on the board as the starting point for brainstorming:

regrets

Instructions: See [page 324](#).

What Do You Know About...?

Purpose: To generate interest in the song, and activate background knowledge about country music and cowboys

Level: All

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Make a copy of the quiz ([pages 620-621](#)) for each group of students. (Answer key: [page 628](#).)

Instructions: See [page 324](#). Tell students that the quiz is about a style of music called country music and the American cowboy. Note: *fiddle* is another term for *violin*, and is commonly used to refer to this instrument when it is used in country and western music. Also see the reading text on [page 627](#) for more information.



A Lot of Days Are Gone: Picture Predictions



Information for Teachers:

Country and western music is often associated with the American cowboy, and usually tells sad stories about loss and regret. In fact, many country-western singers dress like American cowboys even though they do not work on ranches. The guitar is a common instrument in this type of music.



A Lot of Days Are Gone: What Do You Know About...?

Country music is a popular type of music in the United States, especially in the open prairies of the western United States. What do you know about this type of music and where it comes from?

Matching: Instruments

Each of the following instruments is used in many country music songs. Can you match the instrument with its name?

harmonica

drums

guitar

fiddle

banjo



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____

Multiple Choice: All About Cowboys

Many country musicians perform in “western wear,” or the clothes of traditional American cowboys. But who is the American cowboy? Look at the following picture of a cowboy at work. Then choose the best answer for each question below.



6. Who is a cowboy?
- a person who rides cows
 - a person who works on a ranch, often taking care of cows
 - a young boy who likes cows
 - a young, male cow
7. Ranches are usually big, open properties where large animals that live in herds are often raised. Which of the following animals might live on a ranch?
- horses
 - cows and sheep
 - buffalo
 - all of the above

8. What does a cowboy ride while doing his work?
- a horse
 - a train
 - a camel
 - a donkey

9. Look at the pictures below. Which articles of clothing do cowboys wear? Circle all that apply.



a. cowboy hat



b. sneakers



c. boots



d. leather gloves



e. baseball cap



f. denim shirt



g. sweater



h. jeans



i. bandana

10. Why do cowboys wear long pants and shirts made out of heavy materials, sturdy boots, hats, and bandanas?
- to stay cool in the hot weather
 - to be noticeable in the dark
 - to stay clean
 - to protect themselves from the sun, dust storms, cold weather, and plants



Listening Activities: Choose one of the listening activities below.

Mixed-Up Lyrics

Purpose: To listen for specific words or phrases, and make print and sound connections

Level: 2 and above

Time: 15 – 25 minutes (to play the song two or three times)

Preparation and Materials: Make a copy of the handout ([page 623](#)) for each group of students. Cut apart the lines and mix them up. (Answer key: see the lyrics on [page 628](#).)

Instructions: See [page 334](#).

Listening for Rhyming Words

Purpose: To listen for details, and recognize and discriminate between similar sounds

Level: 2 and above

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

Preparation and Materials: Make a copy of the lyrics ([page 617](#)) for each student or pair of students. (Answer key: [page 628](#).)

Instructions: See [page 336](#), Modification C. Tell students to find all the rhyming words at the ends of lines.

Musical Words

Purpose: To listen for and write specific words or phrases

Level: 2 and above

Time: 10 – 15 minutes (to play the song two times)

Preparation and Materials: Stop the song at the places on the CD suggested below, or choose your own. Optional: make a copy of the lyrics ([page 617](#)) for each student or group of students.

Instructions: See [page 338](#). Stop the song after each stanza (see the lyrics on [page 617](#)):

Section 1: lines 1 – 5 (0:00 – 0:29)

Section 2: lines 6 – 9 (0:30 – 0:47)

Section 3: lines 10 – 14 (0:48 – 1:15)

Section 4: lines 10 – 14, repeated (1:16 – 2:20)

Section 5: lines 15 – 19 (2:21 – 2:48)

Section 6: lines 20 – 22 (2:49 – end)



A Lot of Days Are Gone: Mixed-Up Lyrics

----- ✂ -----
A lot of days are gone,
But I'm still holding onto what they used to be
Back when it was yesterday
The future seemed so far away
And there was always time, but now it's slipped away.

----- ✂ -----
A lot of things went wrong,
And all I'm holding onto now are memories.
Things I knew I shouldn't do, things I wish I did
Back in time, when I was just a kid.

----- ✂ -----
Time is just a way of counting yesterdays
But good times never hang around
Long enough to stay.
Yesterdays are memories, and some might fade away.
Others last forever with a price I'll have to pay.

----- ✂ -----
Time is just a way of counting yesterdays
But good times never hang around
Long enough to stay.
Yesterdays are memories, and some might fade away.
Others last forever with a price I'll have to pay.

----- ✂ -----
A lot of things are gone,
And nothing comes along that means that much to me
'Cause nothing ever could compare
To what we had when you were here
Back when you were holding onto me.

----- ✂ -----
No, nothing ever could compare
To what we had when you were here
Back when you were holding onto me.

----- ✂ -----



Singing Activities: Choose one of the singing activities below.

Sing Along With Me

Purpose: To practice pronunciation and intonation

Level: All

Time: 10 – 15 minutes (to sing the song two times)

Preparation and Materials: Write the chorus ([page 617](#), lines 10 – 14) on the board or on a large poster.

Instructions: See [page 345](#), Modification C. Have students sing along with the chorus each time it occurs in the song (two times).

Disappearing Song

Purpose: To practice pronunciation and intonation, and recall words and phrases

Level: 2 and above

Time: 20 – 25 minutes (to sing the song four times)

Preparation and Materials: Write the lyrics ([page 617](#)) on the board.

Instructions: See [page 345](#). Stop after Step 4 (when 50% of the words remain).

Drum and Instrument Circles

Purpose: To explore the rhythm of words

Level: All

Time: 20 – 30 minutes (to sing the song two or three times)

Preparation and Materials: Collect and bring in different types of drums or instruments. If you cannot do this, then students can clap their hands or tap on the desks.

Instructions: See [page 349](#).



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

Speaking: Silly Story

Purpose: To tell stories, and practice using new vocabulary in sentences

Level: 2 and above

Time: 15 – 20 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Make a copy of the Silly Story word cards ([page 626](#)) for each group of students.

Instructions: See [page 361](#).

Reading: Our Land, Your Land

Purpose: To think critically, make connections between the reading and the world, practice comparative adjectives, and develop an understanding of geography

Level: 3 and above

Time: 40 minutes

Preparation and Materials: Make a copy of the reading text ([page 627](#)) and the U.S. map ([page 371](#)) for each student. Prepare a map of your own country, and gather information about the geographical features of both countries.

Instructions: See [page 370](#). Have students read the text for comprehension. In addition to the geographical features mentioned in the text (mountains, farmland, plains, prairies, rivers), have students identify cities like Nashville, where the music industry is centered.

Writing: I Think This Song Rocks!

Purpose: To critically evaluate a piece of music, and write a short persuasive song reviews

Level: 3 and above **Time:** 40 – 50 minutes (may be extended over several class sessions)

Preparation and Materials: Gather information about song reviews.

Instructions: See [page 376](#). Use the following topics to help students brainstorm words to use in their reviews:

Instruments heard in “A Lot of Days Are Gone”
Nouns and adjectives to describe the singer’s emotions
Adjectives to describe the beat or rhythm of the song



A Lot of Days Are Gone: Silly Stories

count	yesterday	time
stay	far away	slip away
hold on	future	compare
pay	fade away	memories
forever	price	wish



The Melodies of Cowboys: Country Western Music

A lot of things went wrong, and all I'm holding onto now are memories
- Hacienda Brothers, *A Lot of Days Are Gone*

Do you ever look back at something that happened in your life and wish that it had **turned out**²³ differently? Do you ever feel sad when thinking about memories of the past? In the song *A Lot of Days Are Gone*, the Hacienda Brothers (a country western music band) sing a story of a lost love and of regrets for life events that didn't turn out right. Stories of regret and lost love are common in today's country western music. Where do you think country western music came from? Can you use the two words *country* and *western* to guess where this music developed?

The name *country western music* reflects the origins of the music. In the early 1900s, two similar musical styles developed in different areas of the United States: (1) the southern parts of the Appalachian Mountains in the East, and (2) the plains and prairies of the western states. Because of the hilly land in the Appalachian Mountains, small farms that grew crops like tobacco, sweet potatoes, and corn were common. Most people lived on these small farms or in small rural communities, rather than large cities. That is, they lived *in the country*! Their music, which focused on telling stories and often used a banjo, is one of the origins of today's country western music.



Landscape in Appalachia

On the other side of the country, the landscape of the western states is much different than in the Appalachian Mountains. The West has many large prairies and plains. These **expansive**,²⁴ flat lands are filled with grasses and shrubs, and are home to many ranches. Ranches are usually large properties where **herds**²⁵ of cattle, sheep, and horses are raised. Cowboys on



Cowboys on a Western plain

horseback who tended to these herds often played instruments like the guitar and the banjo, and sang when out on the range tending the animals. That brought *western* into country western music. Today, many country western musicians dress like cowboys. They wear jeans, large belt buckles, western-style shirts, and even cowboy hats. It's no surprise that country western music is sometimes called "cowboy" music!

Over time people began to use the term *country western music* to refer to the music from these two areas. Today this genre is one of the most popular types of music in the United States. Nashville, Tennessee has become a center for the country western music industry. In fact, many of the most famous country western music stars live in or near Nashville.

²³ **turn out** to end or resolve in a certain way

²⁴ **expansive** very large, covering a large area

²⁵ **herd** a group of animals that live or are kept together



A Lot of Days Are Gone: Answer Keys

Listening for Rhyming Words: Answer Key

<i>line</i>	<i>*starred words are near rhymes</i>
1, 6, 15	*gone, *wrong
2, 16, 19, 22	be, me, me, me
3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14	yesterday, away, away, stay, away, pay
7, 8	did, kid

What Do You Know About...? Answer Key

1. drums
2. banjo
3. guitar
4. fiddle
5. harmonica
6. b. a person who works on a ranch, often taking care of cows or cattle
7. d. all of the above (all of these animals are large and are usually raised in herds that roam and graze on large ranches)
8. a. a horse
9. a. cowboy hat; c. boots; d. leather gloves, f. denim shirt; h. jeans, i. bandana
10. d. to protect themselves from the sun, dust storms, cold weather, hard work, and plants (shrubs, cactus, or bushes)

