

# Using Songs for Teaching EFL or ESL to Young Learners



“The Garden Song”  
By Dave Mallett

# Experience and Rationale

Listening to songs in the target language is a great way to get children familiar with the sounds of the language, with words and phrases, and with grammar structures.

This slideshow gives some ideas for using English songs with children for listening but also for singing.

# Experience and Rationale

Songs add variety to lessons and can be used as warm-up or closing activities.

Songs provide situated practice for vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.



# Experience and Rationale

Songs provide opportunities for learning “chunks” and formulaic expressions, which may be available for analysis later.

Songs may appeal to varied learning styles and multiple intelligences.

Songs involve “tonal memory” for learning.

Children can sing while doing other things (like drawing or cleaning the room).

# The Garden Song

“The Garden Song” was written by David Mallett. It tells about planting a garden.

The vocabulary and length of this song probably make it better for older learners (I’d estimate 10 and older), though its jaunty tune and clever rhyme scheme make it fun for anyone.

# The Garden Song

To see a video of the song being sung by David Mallett – the man who wrote it – you can go to

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m0LewjkO4s&list=RD2m0LewjkO4s&start\\_radio=1&t=47](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m0LewjkO4s&list=RD2m0LewjkO4s&start_radio=1&t=47)

# The Garden Song

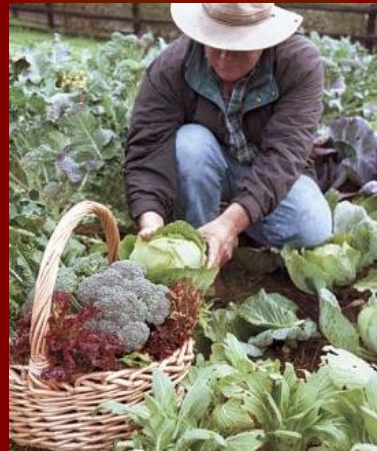
You can use this song with children as a listening exercise. It can build vocabulary.

You can talk about how seeds grow.  
Children can sing this song too.

The lyrics will be given below, but first, here are some pictures to share with your learners before they listen to the song.

# Garden Song Pictures

What do you think the words of this song will say?





# Garden Song Pictures



# The Garden Song

**Chorus:** Inch by inch, row by row,  
Gonna make this garden grow.  
All it takes is a rake and hoe  
And piece of fertile ground.  
Inch by inch, row by row,  
Someone bless these seeds I sow.  
Someone warm them from below,  
'Til the rain comes tumblin' down.



# First Verse

Pulling weeds and picking stones,  
Man is made of dreams and bones.  
Feel the need to grow my own  
'Cause the time is close at hand.  
Grain for grain, sun and rain,  
Find my way in nature's chain.  
Tune my body and my brain  
To the music of the land.



## Second Verse

Plant your rows straight and long.  
Temper them with prayer and song.  
Mother Earth will make you strong  
If you give her love and care.  
Old crow watching hungrily  
From his perch in yonder tree.  
In my garden I'm as free  
As that feathered thief up there.



# The Garden Song

**Language note:** “Inch by inch, row by row” = gradually, one at a time

## **Parallel expressions:**

Little by little

Step by step

Minute by minute

Drop by drop

Bit by bit



# The Garden Song

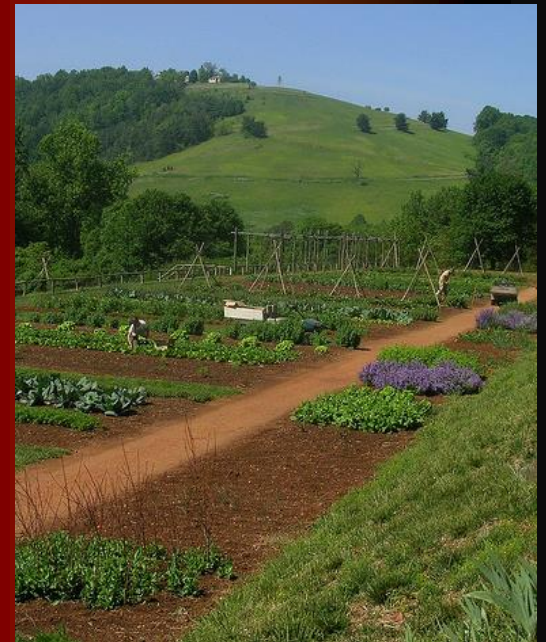
**Language note:** There are many examples of casual speech in this song:

Gonna = going to  
(also wanna, gotta, dunno)

'Til = until

'Cause = because

Tumblin' = tumbling



# The Garden Song

**Chorus:** Inch by inch, row by row,



Gonna make this  
garden grow.

All it takes is a rake and hoe



And piece of fertile ground.





# The Garden Song

Inch by inch, row by row,  
Someone bless these seeds I sow.



Someone warm them from below,  
'Til the rain comes tumblin' down.

# The Garden Song

**Chorus:** Inch by inch, row by row,  
Gonna make this garden grow.  
All it takes is a rake and hoe  
And piece of fertile ground.  
Inch by inch, row by row,  
Someone bless these seeds I sow.  
Someone warm them from below,  
'Til the rain comes tumblin' down.

# The Garden Song

**First Verse:** Pulling weeds and picking stones,  
Man is made of dreams and bones.  
Feel the need to grow my own  
'Cause the time is close at hand.  
Grain for grain, sun and rain,  
Find my way in nature's chain.  
Tune my body and my brain  
To the music of the land.



**First Verse:** Pulling weeds and picking stones,  
Man is made of dreams and bones  
Feel the need to grow my own  
'Cause the time is close at hand.



Grain for grain,  
Sun and rain,



Find my way in nature's chain.  
Tune my body and my brain  
To the music of the land.



## Second Verse:

Plant your rows straight and long.  
Temper them with prayer and song.  
Mother Earth will make you strong  
If you give her love and care.  
Old crow watching hungrily  
From his perch in yonder tree.  
In my garden I'm as free  
As that feathered thief up there.



## Second Verse:

Plant your rows straight and long.  
Temper them with prayer and song.



Mother Earth will make you strong  
If you give her love and care.



Old crow watching hungrily  
From his perch in yonder tree.



In my garden I'm as free  
As that feathered thief up there.





# Final Chorus

Inch by inch, row by row,  
Gonna make this garden grow.  
All it takes is a rake and hoe  
And piece of fertile ground.  
Inch by inch, row by row,  
Someone bless these seeds I sow.  
Someone warm them from below,  
'Til the rain comes tumblin' down.



# The Garden Song

**Language note:** This song has many “consonant clusters” (two or more consonant sounds together without a vowel separating them). Here are some:

Inch, bless, seeds, from, weeds, stones,  
grow, dreams, brain, hand, straight,  
prayer, hungrily, perch, tree, free

# Activities with the Garden Song

This song can be used with a unit about food, gardening, agriculture, or the environment.

It can be used separately as a listening exercise

(e.g., have the students hold up pictures of particular vocabulary items).



# The Garden Song

For a video of John Denver singing "The Garden Song" with the Muppets please visit

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3FkaN0HQgs&feature=related>

The plants in the garden  
sing along!



# The Garden Song

I hope you and your students enjoy this song and can use this slideshow. Please feel free to change it to suit your needs.

