

**BLOWIN' IN THE WIND** by Bob Dylan  
Performed by Peter, Paul, and Mary**A lesson about questions with *how many* + count noun (Chapters 11) and time clauses (Chapter 2)****Notes to the Teacher****1. The Song**

Do a search on the Internet to find the song “Blowin’ in the Wind” by Bob Dylan. When you search, be sure to include the title and the name of the artist.

**2. Song background**

Bob Dylan is a very famous American songwriter who has won many awards for his music. He is most famous for music that he wrote in the 1960s, but he still writes songs now.

Bob Dylan is famous for writing songs of social commentary. In other words, his songs talk about things that are good and bad in the United States. This song, “Blowin’ in the Wind,” talks about the Vietnam War, a war that the United States was fighting at the time. Many people, like Bob Dylan, thought that the war was unnecessary and wrong.

**3. Grammar background**

This song asks a lot of questions with *how many*. Show students how questions with *how many* are formed:

**How many** + plural noun + helping verb + subject + verb?  
*How many words do you see?*

This song also uses a lot of modal verbs. The form for these questions is the same:

**How many** + plural noun + modal verb + subject + verb?  
*How many classes must a student take?*

Point out that only plural count nouns are used with *how many* (How many words? How many classes?) You can find more information on *how many* questions with count nouns on page 322 in Chapter 11 of *Fundamentals of English Grammar*.

This song also uses time clauses. A time clause begins with *before*, *after*, *until*, *while*, *when*, or *as soon as*. Here is an example:

I brushed my teeth *before I went to bed*.

Ask volunteers to give a few more examples.



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You can find more information on time clauses on page 48 in Chapter 2 of *Fundamentals of English Grammar*.

**4. Vocabulary**

This is a list of some of the words you may want to discuss during your lesson.

- **dove:** a kind of bird
- **sail:** travel over water in a boat or ship
- **cannonball:** a heavy ball that is used in war
- **ban:** make something illegal
- **how many times:** how often
- **pretend:** to act like something is true when you know it is not true



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**Student Worksheet**

**While you listen**

1. Listen to the song once. While you listen, try to hear phrases with *how many*. When you hear *how many*, write it down, and include the noun that follows it. Your list will look like this:

*how many cats*  
*how many dogs*

2. Listen one more time. Listen for time clauses. In this song, *before* and *till* (short for *until*) are used. When you hear a clauses using *before* or *till*, write it down as best you can.

BEFORE	TILL

3. Now listen one more time and follow along with the text. Find all of the questions with *how many* and underline them. There are a lot! Circle all the time clauses.

**After you listen**

**1. Things to think about**

- Is there an answer to the questions in this song?
- What do you think the title "Blowin' in the Wind" means?
- What do you think the meaning of this song is? What does the writer want to say? Remember that the song was written during a war, but it may have other meanings, too.



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**Student Worksheet page 2**

**2. Grammar**

*Death* is usually used as a noncount noun like *love* or *peace*. What does it mean here, when it is used as a count noun?

**3. Writing**

Think of some problems in your life or in the world. Write three questions about the problems. Use the same style as the song. You can be serious or funny. For example, you could write:

*How many times will my cat scratch my sofa  
before she uses her scratching post?*

(A scratching post is a small carpet for cats to scratch.)