

# Content-Based Chants / Cantos y canciones del contenido

- *RL/I #10: Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding*
- *RF #1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of text*
- *RF #2: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words both in isolation and in text*
- *RF#3: Know and apply grade level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words*
- *RF #4: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables and sounds (phonemes)*
- *SL #4: Memorize and recite poems, rhymes and songs with expression*
- *L #1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage*
- *L #4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words and phrases based on grade-level content and reading*
- *L #5: Explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings*
- *#6: Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to and responding to texts*

## Summary

Children need opportunities to practice utilizing new high-level academic vocabulary in a safe environment. One way to achieve this is through the use of chants that are laden with the content and the vocabulary we want them to use in their speaking and writing. Children who may be unlikely to utilize these academic words in their regular discourse feel safe to experiment with the vocabulary while chanting along with their peers.

Chanting also develops young children's phonemic awareness as they become familiar with the rhythm and tone of the language (Hali Yopp, Robert Marzano). Additionally, singing and chanting taps into many intelligences including musical, auditory, linguistic, intrapersonal, and bodily-kinesthetic, which aids in the retention of information (Howard Gardner, Susan Kovalik).

## Implementation

Drawing upon the list of high-level vocabulary and concepts of a unit, teachers select familiar chants, songs, and rhymes and rewrite the lyrics. The frames should be age-appropriate and also lend themselves to the rhythm of the language. For example, young children will enjoy tunes such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain."

If the language of instruction is Spanish, consider tunes that may suit the language better and be culturally familiar such as "La Cucaracha" or "Arroz con leche." Each thematic unit should have 4-7 chants, each of which address a different aspect of the content and vocabulary of the theme.

Once chants are selected, teachers write them on chart paper to be hung on the wall, thus adding an element to the print-rich environment. In the preschool classroom, these are meant to be used as a reference for the teacher; not for the children themselves to read. But, beginning in Kinder, the chants are posted for the teacher AND the children follow along as they class sings. Because of this, chants should be color-coded, either stanza by stanza to visually chunk like information or line by line to aid in tracking.

Because chants provide a risk-free manner in which to learn new language and content, all chants should be posted and sung often at the very beginning of a thematic unit. This

repeated exposure to the language prepares young minds for hearing the vocabulary as it comes up throughout the lessons of the unit. Teachers and students should have fun with the chants, developing moves that correspond to the vocabulary to help children begin to internalize meaning through this kinesthetic learning opportunity.

After about the first week of a thematic unit, once children have begun to internalize the chants, teachers can begin to use the chants as a way to reinforce concepts, vocabulary, and also to teach language arts skills such as Concepts About Print, phonics, grammar, and word study skills. The specific language arts work should be guided by the standards selected for that unit, or by specific linguistic elements that the teacher has noticed students struggling with. Teachers are encouraged to highlight, sketch, and add pictures to the chants on the walls as a teaching opportunity.

Chants should also be typed up in a packet. In Preschool, these packets can be sent home at the beginning of the unit as one resource for parents to use with their kids to promote parent engagement and literacy activities at home. Families enjoy having access to the vocabulary and content in such an engaging way. Beginning in Kinder, students should also have their own packet of chants at school. At school, children are provided opportunities to use their packets to practice reading, illustrating, or to reinforce the language arts concepts taught whole class. Second and Third graders can be encouraged to write chants and songs using academic language and concepts from the thematic unit.

**Notes on Content-Based Chants**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


## Photos of Content-Based Chants

Geology Cadence  
By S. Wren  
Adapted by Jennifer Analla

We just know what we've been told,  
Geology is as good as gold!  
Rocks and soil and minerals too,  
Classified for me and you!


Sound off - Sedimentary!  
Sound off - Metamorphic!  
Sound off, 1, 2, 3, 4 - Igneous!

Weathering breaks rocks down,  
Erosion carries them around.  
Soil comes from this process,  
To grow our food and plants, oh yes!



Sound off - Weathering!  
Sound off - Erosion!  
Sound off, 1, 2, 3, 4 - Make soil!

We use rocks for many things,  
Buildings, roads, and diamond rings!  
Medicine and gemstones too,  
Collecting rocks is fun, it's true!



Sound off - Useful!  
Sound off - Helpful!  
Sound off, 1, 2, 3, 4 - Conserve!

## Photos of Content-Based Chants continued...

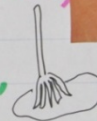
### School Workers By Jennifer Analla & Kristy Herrera

At our school, we have workers,  
And they help us every day,  
They keep us safe so we can learn,  
In our classrooms and at play.

In our library, there are books,  
The librarian cares for them,  
She checks them out with her computer,  
If they're damaged, she'll repair.



The custodian keeps our school clean,  
Collects trash and mops up spills,  
Fixes things that may be broken,  
Even cleans the windowsills.



The school nurse cares for us,  
If we get hurt or we are ill,  
She checks our vision and our hearing,  
Checks for fever if we have a chill.





## Photos of Content-Based Chants continued...

Insects All Around (tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)


Lady bugs and butterflies,  
Buzzing bees up in the sky.  
Teeny, tiny little ants,  
Crawling up and down the plants.  
Many insects can be found,  
In the sky and on the ground.

### Ohlone Here, There

Ohlone here, Ohlone there.  
Ohlone, Ohlone everywhere.

*hard-works* **brave** Courageous Ohlone hunting *expert* **skillfully**.  
*USE materials* **industrious** Ohlone gathering *base or root* **diligently**.  
*hard-working* **resourceful** Ohlone fishing *words* **patiently**.  
*quiet + calm* **And peaceful** Ohlone sharing *waiting calmly* **harmoniously**.  
*together*

Ohlone amidst the mountains,  
Ohlone along the coastline,  
Ohlone among the woodlands,  
And Ohlone throughout the regions.



Ohlone here, Ohlone there,  
Ohlone, Ohlone everywhere.  
Ohlone! Ohlone! Ohlone!

Steps in a Process Diagram

- Step 1: Brothers Whack the fish to make escorns fall.
- Step 2: Sisters and children get them all.
- Step 3: Remove the shells and throw out to dry.
- Step 4: Now stick a skewer in the store house way up high.
- Step 5: Wash with boiling water to eat.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC