

Song Worksheet

Rich Folks Hoax by Rodriguez



"Rodriguez Live in Zurich" by B0rder licensed under [CC Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

About the Artist

Sugarman known professionally as Rodriguez, is a Mexican-American singer and songwriter from Detroit. His music career was initially disappointing in the United States, but unknown to Rodriguez his albums became a huge hit in South Africa, where he sold more records than Elvis Presley.



Instructions

How to Use This Worksheet

Follow the steps below to get the most benefit from this worksheet.

We recommend writing your answers and examples in a journal or a notebook, and reviewing the words you're learning regularly.

STEP 1

Complete the 'Vocabulary' section before listening to the song.

You will understand more of the video if you familiarize yourself with the vocabulary first. This will also help you retain what you're learning. We've provided the answers for the exercises on page 11.

STEP 2

Listen to the song the first time without subtitles or the lyrics.

If you always listen to English songs with the subtitles or lyrics, you'll never give your listening skills a chance to improve. It's okay if you don't understand everything at first. **You'll notice a big improvement in a few weeks if you practice regularly.**

STEP 3

Listen to it a second time with the lyrics if needed.

We have provided the lyrics for the song on page 9.

If you're a teacher, feel free to use this worksheet in your classes. You'll find other [free worksheets](#) on our website. If you're a learner, you could work on the worksheet with your English teacher or language partner. You could also use it as a resource for self-study. If you're looking for a teacher, [book a free trial with one of our teachers here](#).

If you have any feedback or suggestions, [we'd love to hear from you!](#)



Vocabulary

1. WORDS IN CONTEXT

Match the words or phrases in bold to their synonyms or meanings.

destiny burial place not deep people not real

1. Some **folks** think that the law should be changed.
2. Be careful. The water is **shallow** here.
3. Everything you believe about your girlfriend is **an illusion**.
4. She was buried in a **grave** next to her older sister.
5. They want to decide their own **fate**.

2. FILL IN THE BLANKS

Complete the sentences with the correct words.

You might have to change verb forms (talk - talking or talked).

fate folks shallow illusion grave

1. The mirrors give the _____ of more space.
2. Coffin dust is the _____ of everyone.
3. The _____ end of the pool is only three feet deep.
4. Some _____ say that the house is haunted.
5. Many of the soldiers were buried in unmarked _____.



Vocabulary

3. DEFINITIONS

Match the words or phrases to their definitions.

claim a hoax preach digest

1. _____: a lie to trick or deceive people
2. _____: assert that something is a fact although you can't prove it
3. _____: understand and process new information
4. _____: give a religious speech; to give advice in an annoying way

4. WHAT'S ANOTHER WAY TO SAY...?

Rewrite the sentences with one of the words above.

You might have to make some changes to the sentences, or add/change a preposition.

1. She was trying to **process** all the new information she learned on her first day.

2. He **gave a speech** about the importance of tolerance and acceptance.

3. Some people **assert** that they've seen aliens.

4. The bomb threat turned out to be **a lie**.



Listen to the Song

► [Click here to listen to the song](#) (or search for 'Rich Folks Hoax by Rodriguez' on YouTube).

Watch it at least once without subtitles or the transcript. Watch it a second time with the transcript if needed.

Speaking Practice

DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions.

Try to give as much detail as you can. Elaborate with examples or stories whenever possible.

1. What did you think of the song? Have you heard it before?
2. Has music ever been used as a tool to promote social change in your country? If so, was it used this way only in the past or also nowadays?
3. What's your attitude towards money? Do you hate it or love it? Are you a spender or a saver? What do you think is a healthy attitude towards money? Has your behavior with money changed over time?
4. Society largely defines success as having wealth. How do you define success?
5. How does having more money change someone's personality? If you suddenly become extremely wealthy, what is something about your personality that would change?
6. To a certain extent, money fixes problems and can provide a better quality of life. But do you think money can actually buy happiness? Why/why not?
7. What's your recipe for happiness? What are four things that are guaranteed to make you happy?



Reading Practice

Do you know the story behind *Sixto Rodriguez*?

Sixto Rodriguez is a Mexican-American folk musician born in 1942 in Detroit, Michigan. In the early-1970s, he recorded two albums but both of them sold few copies in the States, so he ended up quitting his music career and worked as a labourer. In most of his songs, Rodriguez speaks out about the difficulties that face the poor.

Some years later, his albums became extremely successful in Apartheid-era South Africa and also in Australia. Rodriguez had no idea he was a legend there. Everyone loved his music, and his songs not only served as anti-Apartheid anthems but also were used in protests.

Other than his music, his fans knew nothing about Rodriguez, and there were false rumours that he had committed suicide after releasing his second album.

In 1998, a group of dedicated fans managed to find Rodriguez in a modest house in Detroit and flew him to South Africa for a series of concerts. That meant an unexpected revival of his music career that allowed him to retire from his job and begin to live his dream.

In 2012, a Swedish filmmaker named Malik Bendjelloul turned Rodriguez's life into the documentary "Searching for Sugar Man". This helped introduce Rodriguez to a whole new audience and it was nominated for Best Documentary Feature at the 85th Academy Awards.



What is Folk Music?

Folk music can refer to two types of music: traditional and contemporary folk music.

The first one can be found all over the world; it is often old music by unknown songwriters that has been passed down through generations. Some describe it as the music of the common people.

The second is a modern notion of folk music that arose during the 1960s in the United States and it is made by acoustic instruments and meaningful lyrics.

Protest songs speak up against injustice; they are part of a movement for cultural or political change and inspire people to reflect and take action.

AFTER READING

Answer the following questions.

1. Have you heard of Rodriguez before? Have you seen the documentary? What do you think about his story?
2. This song was released in the US in March 1970. How is music different now from that in the 1970s? In your opinion, what decade has produced the best music?
3. What do you know about folk music? What other folk artists can you name? What do you think of protest songs? Do you like them? Why/Why not?



Writing Practice

PRODUCTION

Choose 3 - 5 words you learned today, and use them to create one of the following:

1. 6 - 10 separate sentences
2. A paragraph
3. A short story
4. A poem or a song

USE A VARIETY OF SENTENCE STYLES

Avoid using simple sentences. Instead, try to use a variety of sentence styles and lengths:

Type	Definition	Example
Simple	Consists of only one clause.	" <i>She likes traveling.</i> "
Compound	Combines two independent clauses with: <i>and, but, yet, so, etc.</i>	" <i>She likes traveling, and she loves exploring new places.</i> "
Complex	Combines one main clause and one dependent clause with: <i>if, even though, because, unless etc.</i>	" Even though <i>she likes traveling, she doesn't travel often.</i> "

USE TRANSITION WORDS AND CONJUNCTIONS

Elaborate with examples or stories whenever possible. You can use the following transition words, phrases and conjunctions to connect your ideas:

For example,

For instance,

Let me explain.

Even though/if

I remember when ...

This reminds me of ...

Since ...

Unless ...

Until ...

If ..., then ...

Not only ..., but also ...

Besides ...



Lyrics

The moon is hanging in the purple sky
The baby's sleeping while its mother sighs
Talking about the rich folks
Rich folks have the same jokes
And they park in basic places.

The priest is preaching from a shallow grave
He counts his money, then he paints you saved
Talking to the young folks
Young folks share the same jokes
But they meet in older places.

So don't tell me about your success
Nor your recipes for my happiness
Smoke in bed
I never could digest
Those illusions you claim to have going.

The sun is shining, as it's always done
Coffin dust is the fate of everyone
Talking about the rich folks
The poor create the rich hoax
And only late breast-fed fools believe it.

So don't tell me about your success
Nor your recipes for my happiness



Smoke in bed

I never could digest

Those illusions you claim to have going.



Answer Key

1. WORDS IN CONTEXT

1. people
2. not deep
3. not real
4. burial place
5. destiny

2. FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. The mirrors give the illusion of more space.
2. Coffin dust is the fate of everyone.
3. The shallow end of the pool is only three feet deep.
4. Some folks say that the house is haunted.
5. Many of the soldiers were buried in unmarked graves.

3. DEFINITIONS

1. a hoax: a lie to trick or deceive people
2. claim: assert that something is a fact although you can't prove it
3. digest: understand and process new information
4. preach: give a religious speech; to give advice in an annoying way

4. WHAT'S ANOTHER WAY TO SAY...?

1. She was trying to digest all the new information she learned on her first day.
2. He preached about the importance of tolerance and acceptance.
3. Some people claim that they've seen aliens.
4. The bomb threat turned out to be a hoax.