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## Classroom Activities Using English Nasheed Songs

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### Abstract

Islamic scholars have stated that educators need to play the function of a teacher and achieve the dignity of being an educator, educate with love, possess fine morals and guide others towards benefit. In today's modern world, educators need to be knowledgeable and at the same time always diversify teaching techniques in order to be more effective and interesting to students. This paper aims to present and make recommendations for various classroom activities and ideas, especially Nasheed songs for use in language classes. Essentially, using Nasheed songs in classroom activities is one of the ways to diversify the use of music genres in the teaching and learning process. Using English Nasheed songs laden with positive moral values could reduce the anxiety of learning English, and provide an engaging, soothing and enjoyable experience for language learners. By using the proposed language games and activities, English teachers bring forward the use of Nasheed songs with its melodious music arts and good moral values and incorporate language skills games and critical thinking skills together in a meaningful teaching and learning process. It is hoped that this article would add to the knowledge on a diversified music genre which is English Nasheed songs and contribute towards assisting teachers in using Nasheed songs in the language classroom.

**Keywords:** Language Games, English Nasheed Songs, Moral Values, Music Genre, Popular Culture

### Introduction

There are many ways that teachers can bring music into the classrooms. Some teaching methods may require technology, and sometimes technology is not necessary at all when it comes to teaching music. Teachers and students can perform the songs live in the classroom if the songs are evergreen. Essentially, singing is a great way to practice listening and speaking skills. Other language skills include reading, writing and grammar which could be explored by using games together with the songs. Next, students can sing along with the songs, which would boost their oral skills. Moreover, students can focus on their pronunciation, tone, facial

expression and gestures as they sing along. Students can learn new words and practice using them in sentences and play spelling games too. In brief, many language activities could be done to accompany the songs.

Nasheed songs could be utilised by English teachers to provide students with meaningful activities to learn English. Teachers who love using songs in the classrooms, should explore and execute songs and language activities recommended in this paper. Essentially, Nasheed songs are soothing to the ear; and they contain a lot of moral values as these songs remind us of the purposes why we live in this world. Students can be encouraged to learn English, good moral values, and positive teachings through awesome Islamic Nasheed songs. Most importantly, Muslim students, could love and appreciate the noble moral values and Islamic teachings through the use of English Nasheed songs. Therefore, the main objectives of this paper are to suggest: 1) some ideas to incorporate Nasheed songs in the classroom and 2) lessons for teachers to properly integrate Nasheed songs in their classroom activities.

### **Music and Learning**

Our young students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, known as Millennials or Net generation students, love to listen to music as music is part of their lives. Kumar et al (2022) expressed that songs depict the current state of the world. Through the lyrics, people can express cultural trends, aspirations, motivations, worries, joys, and opinions which could aid students in understanding the language and culture too. Lems (2018) also agreed that the use of music and songs could help the development of language. For babies, music and language are blended together and it is essential that babies be aware of music as they develop their language and bonded with their mothers. That is the reason why we expose babies to songs, lullabies and nursery rhyme songs to accelerate their language growth. Music could also capture the interests of our learners, leading to higher curiosity and motivation which could improve the process of learning.

Furthermore, using music in the classroom helps students to pay more attention to the activities conducted and to create a more creative and conducive learning environment. When students listen to and sing to songs, learning becomes a natural and enjoyable process towards recognizing and understanding sounds, words and phrases. Learning through songs is one of the varieties of ways of language learning. The use of songs in the English classroom helps students in a variety of ways, including their linguistic growth, exposure to culture and diversity, and exposure to a variety of human expression and communication methods (Mobbs & Cuyul, 2018). This is in line with Tse (2015) who claimed that songs could enhance children's language skills, linguistic knowledge, pronunciation, and cultural consciousness. Teachers agreed that using songs to help students remember text could help these students to learn new languages and reinforce the grammatical rules they have already acquired in class (Salcedo, 2002; Tse, 2015). Furthermore, Tse (2015) reported that 90.2% of teachers thought that songs were crucial for fostering listening abilities.

Singing in class can enhance listening comprehension and give students the chance to practise pronunciation (Arleo, 2000; Mobbs & Cuyul, 2018). Additionally, students can revisit previously learned grammar rules and gain new vocabulary through music. Besides that, as suggested by the outcomes of the study by Schon et al (2008) as cited by Bokiev et al (2018), which evaluated the efficiency of learning words from an artificial language in spoken and sung sequences, music can also aid in learning a new language, particularly in the earliest phases of learning when segmenting words. This is also supported by Bokiev et al (2018) as he recommended that teachers incorporate music activities into the teaching of English,

especially in beginning classes, as music may stimulate many intelligences. Moreover, there are similarities between music and language, whereby music could stimulate people to learn languages.

Essentially, in Islam, music could be used as a vehicle for us to achieve harmony, peace and submission to God. Music could contain good values and negative aspects. It is important that in language learning classrooms, teachers create activities which are meaningful to students. One way could be using songs which have positive moral values in them. Nonetheless, songs that present negative aspects could also be used to get our students to identify and differentiate the clash between the negative aspects and the good values. They should avoid the negative ones and abstain from doing negative activities. In fact, Nasheed songs are known for presenting good values relevant for creating better persons, society, and environment in this world. In fact, Islamic teachings actually encourage Muslims to seek knowledge and creativity in science and technology to advance their daily lives, and the primary objectives of exercising good deeds should be targeted toward worshipping Allah (Juritah et al., 2019).

### **Music in Islam**

Nowadays, teenagers are very interested in music and other forms of entertainment. The 21st century calls for elements of creativity in education, and Nasheed is one of several instructional and facilitating strategies. Islam's views on music have changed over time depending on the context, religious activity, and time. A first step toward understanding the debate about music in relation to Islam is to look at how the word music can be understood (Berglund, 2008).

Islam, a religion of peace and human understanding, acknowledges that man's need for enjoyment is natural and that music is a form of that entertainment (Awang et al., 2008). Muslim scholars like Imam Syafiei, Malek, Abu Hanifa, Sufyan al-Thauri, and other learned men are said to have used similar terms in songs and music, which shows that it is unlawful, according to (Al-Ghazali, 2015). There are, however, a variety of musical genres that are accepted as acceptable; one requirement for music to be accepted as acceptable is that it should encourage the worship of God and provide intellectual fulfilment.

Contemporary Islamic scholars like Syeikh Mahmut Shaltut, Syeikh Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi, and Syeikh Dr. Ahmad Sharbasi share this viewpoint. A lovely song could fulfil a person's heart as long as it does not transcend the line of syaria, just as excellent food is required to satisfy the stomach. Simply defined, there are some musical subgenres that directly align with Islamic moral beliefs regarding what is forbidden, and others that are more subject to interpretation. Any music or musical activity that contains profanity, sexual content, or anything else that encourages sin is an evident illustration of what is forbidden (Harden, 2006).

Therefore, as long as the intent is positive and the lyrics do not contain any of the previously specified prohibited circumstances, music as a component of education is acceptable in Islam.

### **Nasheed Songs for Classroom Activities**

According to West et al (2017), in their study 'Simply Singing: The Use of Interdisciplinary Educational Design Research to Facilitate Music Making in Intercultural Islamic Settings', the idea of nashwad offers a technique to inspire musical activity in Islamic classrooms. A nasheed or nashwad (plural form for nasheed), is a simple song or chant with words and content that frequently refers to Islamic concepts, history, religion, and current events.

The Nasheed technique, according to Ajmain et al (2020), can improve memory, assist students to recall facts and other important information, generate tremendous interest and passion, improve motivation and focus, and promote students' self-confidence. Besides that, Nasheed is one method of instructing and facilitating the learning process. This technique enables teachers to conduct teaching and facilitation activities that increase student engagement and interest. One of the educational processes that are consistent with students' youth and way of life is entertainment. By singing or performing nasheed aloud or with the use of audio technology, the pupils may be exposed to terms used in the lyrics for Islamic education. With simple and easy going contexts and activities, teachers could make the lesson more captivating and meaningful for students.

In addition, Ajmain et al (2020) further added that Nasheed is a technique used to teach students how to apply what they have learned through song. With more student interaction and less boredom among the pupils, the teacher will be better able to assess each student's strengths and talents. When students study subjects that are related to their interests, purposes, and benefits, they will learn more effectively.

Essentially, Nasheed songs are able to cultivate students' interest and participation. This enhances the chances that Nasheed can be recommended as popular culture in a classroom as the term "popular culture" refers to works of popular culture like books, movies, and music, and in an EFL context, popular culture serves as a motivational resource (Baoan, 2008; Lin, 2012; Luo, 2013), as there are Nasheed songs in the English language. Therefore, when it comes to English learning and teaching, English Nasheed songs are widely considered a component of popular culture that can be used in the classroom. Students will get the chance to develop their English abilities through popular culture. According to reports, children now have more faith in their vocabulary and reading, speaking, and writing skills in English (Luo, 2013). The participants said they had a better understanding of the chosen songs and felt more comfortable speaking in front of groups in English. They also reported having improved skills in collaboration, computer literacy, creativity, and self-expression—all of which will be important in college and in their future careers.

The aim of this paper is to share and suggest some classroom ideas and activities that incorporate songs, namely Nasheed songs for use in the language classroom. This paper would therefore present various lessons using English Nasheed songs and language activities and games.

### **Recommended Classroom Activities Using English Nasheed Songs**

This paper proposes 4 lesson ideas for teachers to use in their language lessons. Below are the lists of various activities and also four useful innovative lesson ideas which teachers could consider in their teaching and learning process

**Methodology of incorporating music in the classroom:** There are many ways to stir up the use of music and songs in our classroom.

1. Music can be accessible to the classroom through various digital gadgets.
2. Our classroom can utilize performances from YouTube.
3. The lyrics of the songs can be easily downloadable online and printed out or presented to the class using PowerPoint slides.
4. Teachers and students can share and post videos and audio through smartphones.
5. Teachers or students can perform live on Facebook and Instagram.

In fact, we can study and enjoy new artists and current or evergreen issues that occur in our societies around the world through Nasheed songs.

### **Innovative ideas for Using English Nasheed Songs**

What follows are innovative ideas that are useful for classroom activities

#### **A. Lesson Idea 1: Six Steps for Making a Song the Focus of Your Class**

Simpson (2015) suggested strategies for carrying out class activities using songs:

1. Listen to the songs (here the suggested song is English Nasheed) through Audio or Video Clip using MP3, radio, YouTube Videos, PowerPoint slides on LCD, WhatsApp/Telegram/Facebook groups through smartphones
2. Ask several questions about the title.
3. Listen to the song again this time with lyrics.
4. Focus on a particular aspect of grammar
5. Focus on vocabulary, idioms and expressions
6. Round things off with some creativity for example get students to write another verse of lyrics, respond to a paragraph or song verse, plan a music video and present to the class and also present personal thoughts that inspired the story presented in the lyrics. These ideas could help to generate creativity and critical thinking among students.

#### **B. Lesson Idea 2: Creating and Sharing Playlists**

1. Lems (2018) suggested an activity whereby students create and share playlists which were originally presented by Lapo in 2016.
2. In Lapo's lesson, students create a playlist of six songs representing different times of their lives. However, in this lesson, teachers can suggest a few English Nasheed songs to the students to get them started such as The Veil by Dawud Wharnsby Ali, Bismillah by Yussuf Islam, Hold My Hand by Maher Zain and others.
3. From this playlist, they choose one of the songs, transcribe the lyrics, annotate and analyse them, print a copy and share it with the class.
4. This activity can be done individually or in groups to promote collaborative learning.
5. During the presentation of the songs contained in the playlists, students can share reasons why they chose the songs in their playlists.
6. Making and sharing a playlist enable students to know and be known in a more in-depth manner by the others in the class, and this shared knowledge would then create a friendlier learning atmosphere whereby students know more about their friends' personal characters, and their music preferences.

#### **C. Lesson Idea 3: Sample Language Games for the Song "Hold My Hands" by Maher Zain**

Given below is the song lyrics from verse 1 to verse 8. Here are 5 suggested language games (Game 1 to Game 5)

#### **Song Lyrics of "Hold My Hands" by Maher Zain**

##### **Verse 1**

I hear the flower's kinda crying loud  
The breeze's sound in sad  
Oh no  
Tell me when did we become

##### **Verse 5**

Now we share the same bright sun  
The same round moon  
Why don't we share the same love  
Tell me why not

So cold and empty inside  
Lost a way long time ago  
Did we really turn out blind  
We don't see that we keep hurting each other no  
All we do is just fight

**Verse 2**

Now we share the same bright sun  
The same round moon  
Why don't we share the same love  
Tell me why not  
Life is shorter than most have thought

**Verse 3**

Hold my hand  
There are many ways to do it right  
Hold my hand Turn around and see what we  
have left behind  
Hold my hand my friend  
We can save the good spirit of me and you  
For another chance  
And let's pray for a beautiful world  
A beautiful world I share with you

**Verse 4**

Children seem like they've lost their smile  
On the new blooded playgrounds  
Oh no  
How could we ignore, heartbreaking crying  
sounds  
And we're still going on  
Like nobody really cares  
And we just stopped feeling all the pain because  
Like it's a daily basic affair

Life is shorter than most have thought

**Verse 6**

Hold my hand  
There are many ways to do it right  
Hold my hand Turn around and see  
what we have left behind  
Hold my hand my friend  
We can save the good spirit of me and  
you  
For another chance  
And let's pray for a beautiful world  
A beautiful world I share with you

**Verse 7**

No matter how far I might be  
I'm always gonna be your neighbour  
There's only one small planet to be  
So I'm always gonna be your neighbour  
We cannot hide, we can't deny  
That we're always gonna be  
neighbours  
You're neighbour, my neighbour  
We're neighbours

**Verse 8**

So hold my hand  
There are many ways to do it right  
Hold my hand  
Turn around and see what we have left  
behind  
So hold my hand my friend  
We can save the good spirit of me and  
you  
For another chance  
And let's pray for a beautiful world  
A beautiful world I share with you

**Game 1: Check Your Understanding**

**Circle the correct answer (s).**

1. The song is about\_\_\_\_\_.
  - fights

- peace
  - unity
  - responsibility
  - crime
  - hope
2. Who should we love?
- yourself
  - friend
  - children
  - neighbour
3. What is the main theme of the song “Hold My Hands”?
- Fighting poses no goodness to human kinds.
  - Humans share the same world and should live harmoniously.
  - We must be united and lead peaceful lives.
  - Neighbours must do the right things and help each other.
4. In verse 1, how do we hurt each other?

---

*(Answer : By fighting)*

5. In verse 2, what similar things do we share and what should we share?

---

*(Answer: The same sun and moon and we should share the same love)*

6. In verse 3, why do we have to turn around?

---

*(Answer: to see the pain and chaos we left behind)*

7. In verse 4, why is it that nobody really cares?

---

*(Answer: We feel that it is just a thing that happens daily and it is a basic affair in our current society)*

8. In verse 5, how should a neighbour act towards his or her neighbour?

---

*(Answer: Neighbours must be responsible to care for each other and help those in trouble)*

### **Game 2: Get A Straight Line and Give A Synonym**

Place Card 1 on the blackboard or whiteboard. Team members then choose a word on the card and send a team representative (either Team A or Team B) to write the correct synonym of the given word. Team representatives must come out alternately to take turns to write their answers on the board. The team that manages to get a straight line across horizontally, vertically, or symbol like an X will be declared the winner (Proposed answers are provided in italics)



## Example 1

<b>COLD</b> <i>(motionless/unkind)</i>	<b>EMPTY</b> <i>(vacant)</i>	<b>BLIND</b> <i>(sightless)</i>
<b>BRIGHT</b> <i>(sunny)</i>	<b>FIGHT</b> <i>(battle)</i>	<b>SMILE</b> <i>(beam/grin)</i>
<b>FAR</b> <i>(distant/remote)</i>	<b>FRIEND</b> <i>(pal/companion)</i>	<b>GOOD</b> <i>(noble)</i>

## Example 2

<b>HURTING</b> <i>(sad)</i>	<b>SAME</b> <i>(alike)</i>	<b>BEAUTIFUL</b> <i>(lovely)</i>
<b>NEIGHBOUR</b> <i>(fellow citizen)</i>	<b>AFFAIR</b> <i>(situation)</i>	<b>PLANET</b> <i>(Earth)</i>
<b>MISERABLE</b> <i>(sad)</i>	<b>PRAY</b> <i>(plead/beg)</i>	<b>HOLD</b> <i>(grip)</i>

**Game 3: Get A Straight Line And Give An Antonym**

Place Card 1 on the blackboard or whiteboard. Team members then choose a word on the card and send a team representative (either Team A or Team B) to write the correct Antonym of the given word. Team representatives must come out alternately to take turns to write their answers on the board. The team that manages to get a straight line across horizontally, vertically, or symbol like an X will be declared the winner. (Proposed answers are provided in italics)

## Example 1

<b>SMILE</b> <i>(frown)</i>	<b>STOPPED</b> <i>(started)</i>	<b>CRYING</b> <i>(laughing)</i>
<b>SUN</b> <i>(moon)</i>	<b>SHORTER</b> <i>(longer)</i>	<b>GOOD</b> <i>(bad/evil)</i>
<b>IGNORE</b>	<b>PAIN</b>	<b>MANY</b>

<i>(notice)</i>	<i>(pleasure)</i>	<i>(few)</i>
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## Example 2

<b>CARE</b> <i>(neglect)</i>	<b>LOVE</b> <i>(hate)</i>	<b>BEAUTIFUL</b> <i>(ugly)</i>
<b>DENY</b> <i>(agree/admit)</i>	<b>BASIC</b> <i>(complex)</i>	<b>LIKE</b> <i>(dislike)</i>
<b>CHILDREN</b> <i>(adult)</i>	<b>RIGHT</b> <i>(wrong)</i>	<b>BEHIND</b> <i>(in front)</i>

**Game 4: Spell Out Game**

Get the students to give the synonyms of the following words found in the song. Rearrange the spelling of the synonym. (Proposed answers are provided in italics)

<b>WORD</b>	<b>SYNONYM</b>
• breeze	tusg , eelgnt wdin <i>(gust, gentle wind)</i>
• spirit	losu, ich <i>(soul, chi)</i>
• thought	assumed <i>(assumed)</i>
• heartbreaking	ads, ssngidpere <i>(sad, depressing)</i>
• turn out	kema, dropuec <i>(make, produce)</i>
• daily	dyeervyda <i>(every day)</i>
• blood	sampla <i>(plasma)</i>

**Game 5: Word Formation: Prefix and Suffix and Parts of Speech**

Paste words consisting of Root words and Prefix / Suffix on students' chests. Those with root words have to stand up. Music will be played for 30 seconds for the Prefix and Suffix to attach themselves to their root words based on the words shown on the PowerPoint slide. Finally, students have to identify and tell the class the parts of speech of their new words. (Proposed answers are provided in italics)

Root Word	Prefix / Suffix	New Word	Parts of Speech
1.planet	~ary	planetary	<i>Adjective</i>
2.child	~like	childlike	<i>Adjective</i>
3.life	~less	lifeless	<i>Adjective</i>
4.hurt	~ful	hurtful	<i>Adjective</i>
5.like	dis~	dislike	<i>Verb</i>
6.tell	re~	retell	<i>Verb</i>
7. do	re~	redo	<i>Verb</i>
8.ignore	~ant	ignorant	<i>Adjective</i>
9.blind	~ness	blindness	<i>Noun</i>
10. new	~ly	newly	<i>Adverb</i>
11. friend	un~, ~ly	unfriendly	<i>Adjective</i>
12. flower	~y	flowery	<i>Adjective</i>
13.fight	~er	fighter	<i>Noun</i>
14. deny	un~, ~able	undeniable	<i>Adjective</i>
15. loud	~ness	loudness	<i>Noun</i>

#### D. Lesson Idea 4: Sample Lesson Plan

A sample lesson plan is attached for teachers.

##### Lesson Plan

1. **Topic: “Hold My Hands” by Maher Zain**
2. **Lesson Outcome**

By the end of the lesson, students should be able to

- i. Categorize the lyrics into 3 parts of speech such as noun, verb, adjective
  - ii. Identify synonyms and antonyms to a list of words based on the song lyrics
  - iii. Construct sentences.
3. **Materials:** Audio Tools such as Radio/MP4 & softcopy of the song or laptop/speaker & soft copy of the song, song lyrics, handout of lyrics and activities, LCD, Powerpoint slides, Mahjong Papers, Marker Pen, Blue Tac/ Masking Tape, class WhatsApp group for the English subject

#### 4. Activities targeted for students: Low- Intermediate learners

<b>Set Induction:</b>	<p>-Teacher presents the title of the song “Hold My Hands” by Maher Zain to the students.</p> <p>- Teacher asks students questions about the song.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you recognize the singer, Maher Zain? Tell us briefly what you know about the singer.</li> <li>2. Have you ever listened to the song by Maher Zain entitled “Hold My Hands”? What is the song about?</li> <li>3. Can anybody sing the song aloud? Just some of the parts of the song, if you are familiar with it?</li> <li>4. Teacher asks about the theme of the song.</li> </ol> <p>-Teacher discusses students’ reflections and answers to the questions.</p>
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<b>While- Teaching</b>	<p><b>Activity 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students refer to the handouts of song lyrics while listening to the song played.</li> <li>- Students can sing along as they listened to the song.</li> <li>- Teacher and students briefly discuss the theme of the song which is love, peace, loneliness, relationship and destruction.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher reviews previous lessons on nouns, Verbs and Adjectives from previous lessons. The teacher asks students to refer to the song lyrics and identify which words are nouns, verbs and adjectives.</li> <li>- In groups of 3 to 4, students fill in the blanks according to a table which is categorized into Noun, Verbs and Adjective based on the song lyrics</li> <li>- Students then write their answers on mahjong papers and paste their answers on the class walls.</li> <li>- After 15 minutes, the teacher and students discuss the answers together.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher reviews previous lessons on synonyms and antonyms from previous lessons.</li> <li>-In groups, students choose 5 verbs from the verbs discussed in Activity 2 and list out the synonyms and antonyms for each verb. Students are allowed to Google to find their answers.</li> <li>-Students then have to construct one sentence for each of the 5 verbs. The sentences must be relevant to the song theme - love, peace, war and destruction.</li> <li>- After 30 minutes, students can post their answers in the class WhatsApp group for the English subject.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion:</b>	The teacher summarizes all relevant words based on the theme of relationship, peace, love, loneliness and destruction.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers need to create innovative language activities and vary their strategies to integrate popular culture, such as Nasheed songs into the classroom. In addition, teachers could uphold positive music genres and explore learning activities which carry positive values to the human race in their lessons. Essentially, using Nasheed songs and innovative language activities would assist students to memorize facts, strengthening memory, creating high interest, building excitement, and improving motivation and confidence. This would bring about a holistic student (Ajmain et. al., 2020).

As a suggestion, teachers can publish these games on their blogs or YouTube videos or create online games with activities to share the ideas with a range of wider and worldwide audiences. It is hoped that this paper would increase knowledge of the diverse music genre known as Nasheed songs and help teachers include Nasheed music in their language learning lessons. Thus, with the recommended language games, teachers can provide new alternatives by integrating learning processes that generate positive values and positive thoughts in classroom learning experiences. Teachers should try out these ideas. It is hoped that both teachers and students would have fun with the activities as many educators are music lovers.

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