

Lesson Snapshot

- **Language level:** B1 and above
- **Learner type:** Teens and Adults
- **Skills:** Speaking (prediction, discussion, debate), Listening (for gist and comparison), Reading (lyrical analysis), Writing (creative writing, personal reflection), Grammar (modal verbs for determination/refusal)
- **Topic:** Narrative and Storytelling, Figurative Language (Metaphors), Power Dynamics, Determination and Refusal
- **Grammar Focus:** Using **will** / **I'll** for determination and **won't** for refusal.
- **Materials:** [Genially Presentation](#)
- **Duration:** Approximately 60 minutes

Objectives of this ESL Song Lesson Plan

- **Language Analysis and Proficiency:** Develop proficiency by analyzing figurative language (metaphors) and mastering the grammatical use of **will** and **won't** to express determination and refusal.
- **Integrated Communication Skills:** Enhance communicative skills by integrating listening (for comparison), speaking (in predictions and debates), reading (for lyrical analysis), and writing (for creative application).
- **Critical and Creative Engagement:** Foster higher-order thinking by critically analyzing the song's narrative to support an argument and creatively applying target language from a new perspective.

Step-by-Step ESL Lesson Plan for “The Dead Dance”

Follow these steps from my MUSIC+ Framework to guide your students through a memorable and effective lesson.

Step 1 (7 min)

Warm-up: Thematic Prediction

Divide students into pairs.

Show them three evocative images and a list of 10 keywords related to the song (slide 1 of the genially presentation).

Instruct pairs to discuss and make predictions based on the prompts:

What is the mood of this story?

Who is the main character?

What do you predict will happen?

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Bring the class together and have a few pairs share their predictions with the group.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS: This initial step sparks curiosity and activates students' prior knowledge. By investing in their own predictions, they become more engaged and motivated to discover the song's actual story.

Step 2 (8 min)

Narrative Scaffolding

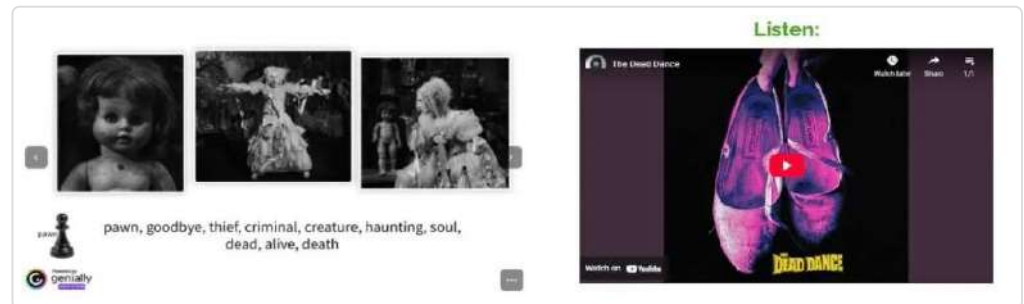
Place students in small groups. Instruct them to use the same images, keywords, and their predictions from Step 1 to create a short story with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

After they have formulated their story, ask each group to share a one-sentence summary with the class.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS: This activity provides students with a narrative framework, or schema, which primes them for better comprehension during the listening stage.

Step 3 (8 min)

Compare Stories Through Listening



Tell students they will now listen to the song "The Dead Dance."

Play the song once. Their task is to listen and compare their group's story to the narrative in the lyrics.

After listening, facilitate a brief whole-class discussion with the questions:

*What was similar between your story and the song?
What was different?*

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TIPS & SUGGESTIONS: This activity provides students with a narrative framework, or schema, which primes them for better comprehension during the listening stage.

Step 4 (10 min)

Figurative Language Analysis

Put students back into pairs. Provide them with a worksheet or display a slide with a multiple-choice activity focusing on key metaphors from the song:

1. **“You killed my queen with just one pawn.”**

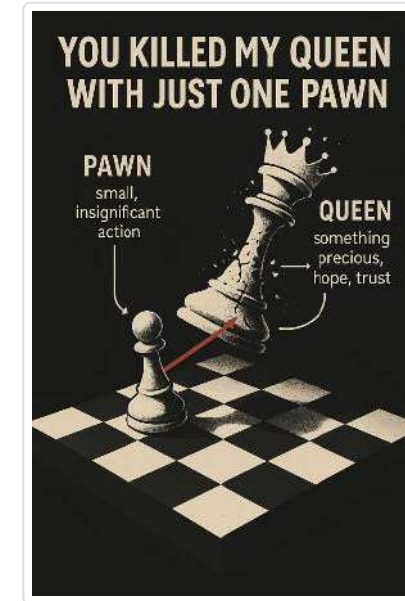
- a) You destroyed my most important hope with a small, insignificant action.
- b) You literally won a game of chess against me.
- c) You made my best friend angry with me.

✓ Correct: (a) — The queen = something precious; pawn = small action → big damage.

2. **“Like a thief in my head, you criminal.”**

- a) Someone physically stole from her.
- b) Someone took away her thoughts or peace of mind.
- c) Someone broke into her house.

✓ Correct: (b) — Suggests mental/emotional theft rather than literal crime.



3. **“You’ve created a creature of the night.”**

- a) She literally turned into a vampire.
- b) She feels transformed into a darker, stronger version of herself.
- c) She now enjoys going out at night.

✓ Correct: (b) — Emphasizes rebirth through pain, a powerful metaphor for resilience.

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Ask pairs to discuss and choose the best meaning for each phrase.

Review the answers as a whole class, discussing the imagery and intended meaning of each metaphor.

Step 5 (10 min)

Grammar Discovery: Will/Won't

Discover (Individual): Give students the full lyrics and ask them to individually read and highlight all instances of **I'll**, **will**, and **won't**.

Classify (Pairs): In pairs, students classify each highlighted example, labeling it as an expression of **determination** (a strong promise or intention) or **refusal** (a strong “no”).

Transform (Pairs → Whole Class): Instruct pairs to choose two sentences from the lyrics and “flip” them (e.g., change *I'll keep on dancing* to *I won't keep on dancing*). Discuss as a class how this transformation changes the singer's message and tone.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS: This guided discovery approach allows students to notice, analyze, and manipulate the target grammar in its authentic context, leading to a more profound understanding than a simple rule presentation.

Step 6 (10 min)

Textual Evidence Debate

Organize students into small groups for a debate.

Pose the debate question: *“Who has more power in this story—the singer or the criminal?”*

Instruct groups that they must support their arguments by citing at least one specific line or phrase from the lyrics as evidence.

Allow time for discussion, then have groups share and defend their conclusions with the class.

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Step 7 (7 min)

Creative Perspective Shift

Tell students they will now write from the perspective of the “criminal” in the song.

Task (Individual): Write four new lines of lyrics from the criminal’s point of view. The new lyrics must use **will** or **won’t** at least once to show their promises or refusals.

Have students share their creative lines with a partner.

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS: This task provides focused creative practice. It recycles the target grammar and encourages transformation by having students adopt a different narrative perspective

Step 8 (2 min)

Reflection & Wrap-Up

As an exit ticket, ask students to complete the following task individually on a small piece of paper or in a chat box.

Task: “Write one personal promise inspired by the song, starting with *I will...* or *I won’t...*”

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS: This final step personalizes the lesson, making the language and themes memorable and providing students with a resonant takeaway from the class.



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Teacher's Guide: Explaining the Metaphors

Here are simple explanations to help you guide students through the figurative language.

- **"You killed my queen with just one pawn."**

Explanation: This uses chess imagery. The "queen" is something precious (love, trust), and the "pawn" is a seemingly small act of betrayal. The adversary destroyed something valuable with a surprisingly minor or treacherous move.

- **"Like a thief in my head, you criminal."**

Explanation: This simile compares the person to a thief inside the singer's mind. Their memory is intrusive and unwanted, stealing her peace.

- **"You've created a creature of the night."**

Explanation: This metaphor suggests the adversary's actions have transformed the singer into someone dark, vengeful, or changed, who has lost her former self.

Love this lesson? Create your own in 5 minutes!

Download my [FREE AI Cheatsheet](#) to get the "Master Prompt" that can generate a complete lesson journey like this for ANY song you choose.

Author Bio:

About the Author: [Márcia Bonfim](#) is an ESL/EFL teacher and creator of the **Song Activity Factory**. She helps educators create engaging lessons using her signature BEAT+ Method, which features the MUSIC+ Framework. You can [discover her complete methodology summary here](#).

