



OCTOPUS'S GARDEN by The Beatles

A lesson about conditionals that are untrue in the present or future (Chapter 20)

Notes for the Teacher

1. The Song

Do a search on the Internet to find the song "Octopus's Garden" by The Beatles. When you search, be sure to include the title and the name of the artist.

2. Song background

You are going to hear a song by The Beatles, a very successful musical group from Liverpool, England that played music throughout the 1960s.

This song is very imaginative! The singer imagines a beautiful life underneath the water with a friendly octopus. He thinks that everyone would be very happy there.

3. Grammar background

This song uses the conditional -- **would + the simple form** of the verb. Write this sentence on the board:

*If I **had** the time, I **would take** an exercise class. (But I don't have the time right now)*

Explain that the conditional is used to talk about something that is not true at the present time.

Change **I would** to **I'd** to show the contracted form:

*If I **had** the time, I'd **take** an exercise class.*

Ask volunteers to write other sentences, using this structure, "If I ..., I'd ..."

Point out that in this song, the singer uses the **would + simple form** of the verb construction, but not the *if*-clause. That's because the *if*-clause is assumed to be there, even though it is not spoken. For instance, in the example below, the speaker lists many things she would like to do if she had the time, but she doesn't use a new *if*-clause every time.

*If I **had** the time, I **would take** an exercise class.
I **would also ride** my bike.
I'd probably **go** on long walks too.*

The *if*-clause "If I had the time," is assumed to be present even when it's not in every sentence.

Explain that in this song, the singer describes how he would live if he could live in the ocean. He uses many **would + simple form** of the verb constructions. The assumed *if*-clause is "If I lived in the ocean..."



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You can find more information on these conditionals in Chapter 20 of *Understanding and Using English Grammar*.

4. Vocabulary

These are just some of the words you may want to discuss during your lesson.

- **octopus:** a sea animal with eight arms
- **shade:** an area that is cooler and darker because the sunlight cannot reach it.
- **hideaway:** a safe, secret place to hide
- **coral:** colorful rock in the ocean, made by tiny sea animals



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Student Worksheet

While you listen

1. Listen to the song once for meaning. Try to imagine the octopus's garden. What does it look like?
2. Now listen one more time. List the conditional phrases with *would* or its contracted form 'd in the box below.

WOULD	'D

3. Listen a third time and check your answers. How did you do?

After you listen

1. Things to think about and discuss

In pairs, small groups, or as a whole class, share your answers to these questions:

- The singer describes life underneath the ocean. Would you like to live there? Why or why not?
- The singer wants to live in a hideaway, and he doesn't want to be found. What do you think he wants to get away from?

2. Speaking & Writing

In pairs or small groups, share your answers to the following questions:

Do you ever feel like getting away from the world?
Where would you go?
What would you do there?
Who would you take with you?

Now, write a paragraph about a hideaway that you could escape to. Be creative!