

**ONLY IF** by Enya

Focus on: Adverb Clauses using If, Only If, When—UUEG 3e Ch. 17

Notes for the Teacher**1. Preparing the Song**

Find the music and lyrics to “Only If” by Enya. Prepare a lyrics handout for students to predict some basic rhyme words. Here’s an example from the first stanza:

When there's a shadow,
you follow the (a) _____.
When there is love,
then you look for the (b) one.
And for the promises, there is the (a) sky.
And for the heavens are those who can (b) _____.

In each rhyme scheme, replace the word the student knows and has a fair chance of predicting from the content with a blank line. It doesn't have to be the second word in the pattern. Hide the remainder of the lyrics on the back or ask the students to cover other stanzas that have repeating lyrics so they don't see the full answers. The first two stanzas plus one round of chorus work well for this part.

Next, remove all commas from adverb clauses throughout the song or whatever non-repeating part you want to use.

2. Song background

Enya is an Irish composer, musician and singer who has had worldwide popularity from the 1980s to the present. She has written songs for film soundtracks, has had several #1 albums, and is credited with being Ireland's second greatest arts export after the band U2. Enya often uses traditional Irish musical instruments in her compositions, as well as the Gaelic language, the ancient traditional language of Ireland which is in danger of dying out. Enya's unique sound comes from layering her voice as much as 100 times in a song. That means she sings and records the vocals 100 times and then plays them together, sounding like a choir of voices.

3. Grammar background

The grammar focus of this lesson is **Adverb Clauses**. The song uses three different **subordinating conjunctions** as excerpted here:

- **When** there's a shadow, you follow the sun.
- **If** you really want to, you can seize the day.
- **Only if** you want to, will you fly away.

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In each instance in this song, the clauses follow the DC, IC pattern (dependent clause followed by a comma, followed by the independent clause). An additional clause characteristic to note is the inversion of subject and verb when using **only if**.

4. Vocabulary

This is a list of words students at this level may need help with. The definition given deals only with the word as it is used in the song.

- **to seize** (verb): to take and hold on to tightly
- **afar** (adverb): poetic word meaning *from far away*.

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Student Worksheet**Before you listen**

1. Read the excerpt of lyrics your teacher has given you and try to predict the missing rhyming words. Each set of **a** and **b** is a rhyme. Then check your answers with a classmate.

While you listen

2. As you listen to the song, put a check mark next to adverb clauses on your lyrics sheet.
3. Listen to the song again to get a feeling for the meaning.

After you listen

4. When the song is over, underline each adverb clause and the independent clause it is connected to. Compare your answers with a classmate.
5. Complex sentences with two clauses can have either of these two patterns:

- Independent Clause + Dependent Clause
- Dependent Clause + Independent Clause

Compare the complex sentences in the song with the patterns above. Which pattern do they match?

6. What are the subordinating conjunctions that introduce the adverb clauses? Write them here:
7. Which one of the subordinating conjunctions requires a different kind of grammar structure in the independent clause? What is that difference?
8. Do any of the complex sentences need commas between their clauses? If so, add commas where needed.



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9. As a class or with a partner, discuss what you think the song might mean. What could Enya have meant in these lines?

*If you really want to, you can seize the day.
Only if you want to, will you fly away.*

Writing:

10. Imagine you are writing a letter to a child in your life—your own child or someone close to you. In this letter, give the child some advice for his or her future. What advice would you like to give about life, love, happiness, accomplishing goals, finding success, etc.? Use the words *when*, *if*, and *only if* as subordinating conjunctions at least once each if possible.