



YELLOW SUBMARINE by The Beatles

A lesson on the **simple present tense (Chapter 3)** and **simple past tense (Chapter 10)**

Notes for the Teacher

1. The Song

Do a search on the Internet to find the song “Yellow Submarine” 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 England. The Beatles played music in the 1960s, but their music is still very popular today. This song is from their 1968 movie *Yellow Submarine*. In the movie, the four members of The Beatles ride in a yellow submarine (a kind of boat) to interesting places, and they have many adventures. In this song, The Beatles sing about their happy lives in the submarine.

3. Grammar background

This song uses a lot of simple present tense and simple past tense.

First, review the form and meaning of simple present tense with your students. Explain that the simple present is the simple form of the verb. We add an -s to the verb if the subject is 3rd person singular. Use the chart below.

Simple present

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 ST PERSON	I <i>talk</i>	we <i>talk</i>
2 ND PERSON	you <i>talk</i>	you <i>talk</i>
3 RD PERSON	she <i>talks</i> he <i>talks</i> it <i>rains</i>	they <i>talk</i>

We usually use the simple present tense to talk about habits. Habits are something that we do always, usually, or often. Another way to talk about this is to say that the situation is generally true.

Look in Chapter 3 (pages 53-91) of *Basic English Grammar* for more information about the simple present tense.

Now review the simple past. Explain that the simple past tense is used for an action that was completed in the past.



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First, review regular verbs. Remind the students that regular verbs are formed by adding *-ed* to the simple form of the verb. Point out that the simple past form is the same for all subjects. Use the chart below.

Simple past (regular verbs)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 ST PERSON	<i>I talked</i>	<i>we talked</i>
2 ND PERSON	<i>you talked</i>	<i>you talked</i>
3 RD PERSON	<i>she talked</i> <i>he talked</i> <i>it talked</i>	<i>they talked</i>

Remind students that irregular verbs change their forms in the past tense. Put this chart on the board.

Simple past (irregular verbs)

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1 ST PERSON	<i>I went</i>	<i>we went</i>
2 ND PERSON	<i>you went</i>	<i>you went</i>
3 RD PERSON	<i>she went</i> <i>he went</i> <i>it went</i>	<i>they went</i>

Tell students that they will have to learn the past tense for each irregular verb, so they need to study these verb forms. Here are some examples of past tense forms for irregular verbs.

SIMPLE PRESENT	SIMPLE PAST
come	came
fly	flew
sing	sang
run	ran

Say the present form and ask volunteers to give the past form of a few verbs.

Look in Chapter 8 (pages 213-251) of *Basic English Grammar* for more practice with the simple past tense.

4. Vocabulary

These are just a few of the vocabulary words you might want to discuss during your lesson.

submarine: a boat that can stay under the water for a long time

aboard: on a ship

ease: comfort

till: until



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Student Worksheet

While you listen

1. Listen to the song one time. Don't look at the words! It is better to practice listening. Write down the simple present tense verbs that you hear.
2. Now listen to the song again. Write down the simple past tense verbs in the song.
3. Share your answers with another student. Did you find the same words? Did you find different words?

Now listen again. Try to hear the words on your partner's list.

4. Now look at the words to the song.
Circle all the present tense verbs you wrote down.
Underline all the simple past tense verbs you wrote down.
Listen to the song again. Try to hear all the verbs.

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:

- Do you like this song or not?
How do you feel when you hear this song?
- Now think about life on the yellow submarine.
How many people are on the boat?
What do they do all day?
What does the "land of submarines" look like?
Would you like to live on a submarine? Why or why not?



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2. Practice the Grammar

Simple present tense

Find four lines that have simple present tense verbs. How are these four lines the same?
Why do you think the singer used the simple present?

Simple past tense

Find three lines that have simple past verbs. How are these three lines the same?
Why do you think the singer used the simple past?

Then find two past verbs that are irregular. What are the present tense forms of these two verbs?

3. Speaking & Writing

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

Is there a place where you often get together with friends and family?
Who is usually there?
What do you usually do?
How do you usually feel?

Now write a short paragraph describing your special place. Use this title:

My Special Place