



I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR by U2

Focus on: The Present Perfect—FEG 3e Ch. 4

Notes to the Teacher

1. Preparing the Song

Find the lyrics to the song, “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For” by U2 and print copies for students. Then prepare a cloze exercise based on the lyrics. Locate the uses of the Present Perfect in the song lyrics. In some, but not all uses of the Present Perfect, replace the past participle verb with a blank line. For example:

I have _____ highest mountain, I have _____ through the fields.
Only to be with you. Only to be with you.

Use an audio-only recording of the song to do the cloze exercise. The music video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czFTV-1ZQk>) can be used for discussion. The music video takes place on the streets of Las Vegas, which will generate good discussion as it relates to the theme of the song.

2. Song Background

U2 is one of the most famous and prolific bands of the late 20th century and is still going strong. The Irish band has received 22 Grammy Awards. Its front man, Bono, is also internationally well-known as a humanitarian and activist for social justice, especially regarding poverty in Africa. This song is from 1987 and was a number one hit for U2.

3. Grammar Background

The grammar focus of this song is the **Present Perfect**, specifically as it refers to life experience.

To form the **Present Perfect**:

have or *has* + *the past participle*

Present Perfect verbs used in the song:

have climbed *have run* *have crawled* *haven't found*

3rd person:

has climbed *has run* *has crawled* *hasn't found*



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The Present Perfect as used in this song implies a lifetime of doing things to find what the singer is looking for. It's almost like he's sharing a list of the things he has tried so far. There is a sense that he will not give up—the use of the Present Perfect indicates that he hasn't put the search behind him yet.

4. Vocabulary

Some vocabulary used in the song that students may need help with:

- **scale** (verb): to climb to the highest point of something
- **bond** (noun): something, like ropes or chains, that tie things together tightly
- **bleed** (verb): to spread into or to gradually run into something

(Definitions are for the use of the word in the song.)

Depending on the location and make-up of the class, there are 2 religious references that you may want to ask the students to find, or they can be left out of the lesson:

- **kingdom come**
- **carried the cross**

5. Other Notes

As in most creative pieces, there are some grammar irregularities in this song--most notably in the line, "I have spoke with the tongue of angel." See if the class knows what the correct form is and discuss why an artist might take liberties with grammar. (One possible reason, in this case, is the parallelism between *spoke* and *broke*.)



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Student Worksheet

While you listen

1. Listen to the song. How does it make you feel? Would you say it is generally a happy, upbeat song, or something else? Why?
2. Now listen to the song again and complete the cloze exercise.

After you listen

3. Underline all uses of the Present Perfect in the song. (Hint: there are more than you wrote in on the cloze exercise!) Which participles are regular and which are irregular?

Regular:

Irregular:

4. Find a line of the song where two participles share the same auxiliary verb.
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5. Think of something that you really want to do in your life, but you haven't been able to do yet. Now, copy the style of the song by writing two or three things you have done, followed by what you still want to do.

Example: I have painted a picture. I have written a poem. But I still haven't written a story.

Share this with another student.

6. Discuss: What do you think this person is looking for? What kind of effort has he made in his search? How do you know that? Do you think this person is optimistic about finding what he wants in the future?

Watch the music video of the song. Where is it filmed? Describe what you know about this location. How does the location influence your understanding of the song? Or does it confuse the meaning?