

JAZZ CHANTS: A Rhythmic Expression of Standard American English

Carolyn Graham
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JAZZ CHANTS FOR CHILDREN

JAZZ CHANTS, a rhythmic expression of standard American English by Carolyn Graham, professor at the American Language Institute of New York University brings to the classroom the rhythmic expression that occurs in the language. These chants are designed as tools to develop the rhythm and intonation patterns of spoken American English.

Since jazz emphasizes a beat, and rhythm, stress and intonation patterns correspond to the varied emotions, this is a dynamic and an innovative way to approach learning. Specific structures are practiced in a pleasant way, making this indeed a valid tool. Yes/no questions, commands and responses, as well as contractions, consonant blending and lost final consonants in the often considered "substandard" language are among the items presented.

A clear steady beat and rhythm is essential for proper presentation. This should not distort the sentence but heighten the students' awareness of the natural rhythm patterns in spoken English. The chants are to be repeated following the model of the teacher and the tape, thereby giving the student practice in raising and lowering his voice for various emotions. This can be helpful to the shy student.

It is important that the student understand what he is saying and also the proper situation in which the chant phrases might occur. Many chants are adaptable to role playing, others to both friendly and argumentative dialogues.

JAZZ CHANTS, is a well-planned text with step by step procedures outlined to help the teacher. The tape which accompanies it is an important part since it is well recorded and lively, and can help the teacher who lacks rhythmic skill.

Another aid to the teacher is found in the content page where, along with the title and page number, the structure stressed in each chant is listed.

Using JAZZ CHANTS can be a refreshing break in the class routine that will brighten up interest. Students can have fun and produce natural sounding English at the same time.

The children's edition JAZZ CHANTS FOR CHILDREN follows the same principle with a more workbook type presentation to appeal to little children. Also accompanied by a tape, this book is a fine tool for the primary teacher. It also has detailed suggestions for classroom use. Children especially enjoy the playful songs, tasks and games that they are able to do with a minimum amount of help. This book for children can supply fine auxiliary material for a primary class.

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