



The Great Song Of Indifference – Bob Geldof - Notes



- **Activity type:** Matching positives and negatives, practising structures with 'or', discussing things we should care about, identifying references to these issues in a song.
- **Level:** First part (up to Step 5) Pre-Intermediate (A2), second part Intermediate (B1/B1+)
- **Note:** From Geldof's second solo album *The Vegetarians Of Love*, released in 1990, this has been described as "an irreverent stab at apathy". In 1984 BBC footage of starving children in Ethiopia prompted Geldof to enlist his musician friends to record a charity single – it is estimated that Band Aid and the following year's Live Aid concert helped save the lives of over 6 million Ethiopians.

- 1) Give each student a copy of the folded worksheet and ask them to complete the two exercises.

Key:

Positive

come
laugh
fly
live
let in
swim
yes

Negative

go
cry
crash
die
lock out
sink
no

- 2) Students repeat "Yes or no" in chorus. Stress "yes", stress "no". No stress on "or". Do the same with the other six, but speak only the first word:
Teacher: fly
Class: fly or crash.
- 3) Play the first part of the song, up to "Where I'm going or where I've been / I don't mind at all". Students note which word comes first ("live" or "die"?). Do not give them the lyrics.
Write: I don't mind / I don't care / I don't care less / I couldn't care less on the board. Point out that they all express indifference.
- 4) Discussion: What should be care about in today's world? What should be not be indifferent to? Elicit:
 - other people's welfare, regardless of nationality
 - the economy
 - deforestation
 - global warming
 - the environment
 - culture
 - religion
 - hunger and thirst
 - disappearing animal species
 - political corruption
- 5) Ask students to unfold the worksheet and look at the lyrics. Play the second part of the song, from "I don't mind if the government falls" - students identify references to things we should care about.
- 6) Ask why Bob Geldof keeps repeating "I don't mind" and "I don't care". Does he really mean it? Tell the class about Band Aid and Geldof's other activities. Quote his words to a politician who was theorizing about ways of feeding the hungry in the world: "It's really very simple, Governor. When people are hungry they die. So spare me your politics and tell me what you need and how you're going to get it to these people."
- 7) Sing along with Bob.



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Match the opposites

come	crash
cry	die
fly	go
live	laugh
lock out	let in
sink	no
yes	swim

Rewrite the words in the correct column

Positive

Negative

FOLD

I don't mind if you go
 I don't mind if you take it slow
 I don't mind if you say yes or no
 I don't mind at all

I don't care if you live or die
 Couldn't care less if you laugh or cry
 I don't mind if you crash or fly
 I don't mind at all

I don't mind if you come or go
 I don't mind if you say no
 Couldn't care less baby let it flow
 'Cause I don't care at all

Na, na, na, etc.

I don't care if you sink or swim
 Lock me out or let me in
 Where I'm going or where I've been
 I don't mind at all

I don't mind if the government falls
 Implements more futile laws
 I don't care if the nation stalls
 And I don't care at all

I don't care if they tear down trees
 I don't feel the hotter breeze
 Sink in dusk in dying seas
 And I don't care at all

Na, na, na, etc.
 Let's go!

I don't care if culture crumbles
 I don't mind if religion stumbles
 I can't hear the speakers mumble
 And I don't mind at all

I don't care if the Third World fries
 Hotter there I'm not surprised
 Baby I can watch whole nations die
 And I don't care at all

I don't mind I don't mind I don't
 mind I don't mind
 I don't mind I don't mind
 I don't mind at all

Na, na, na, etc.

I don't mind at all, Come on boys!

I don't mind about people's fears
 Authority no longer hears
 Send a social engineer
 And I don't mind at all

Na, na, na, etc.

One more!

Na, na, na, etc.

I don't mind at all, let's go!

Pick it up now!

Let's go!

One more, last one!

I don't mind at all...

(Laughs) Let's listen...

