# The Logical Song – Supertramp – Notes

- **Activity types**: vocabulary, word formation, listening for specific words, discussion.

- **Level:** Intermediate

- **Time:** 30 mins.

- **Note:** Taken from Supertramps's 1979 album Breakfast In America, this is one of their best known hits. Wikipedia explains that the song is about a man who is taken away from the unspoilt immediacy of childhood, undergoes education and sees a future prepared for him lacking any spontaneity of reaction. He feels constricted in his freedom of speech, is put under pressure to conform and ends up confused, without a coherent self-image.

- **Keyword**: True self

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## A) WARM-UP ACTIVITIES

- Write the word **music** (or any another suitable word) on the board. Explain that this noun is a stem word from which you can form other words. Elicit the possible answers and write them on the board: **musician** (noun), **musical** (adjective), **musically** (adverb), **musicality** (noun), etc.

- Ask the students to make some more examples.

## B) LISTENING ACTIVITIES

- Tell the students that in the song they are about to listen to there are 20 missing words (one from the chorus is repeated twice: **asleep**). The stems of the missing words are given in capitals and must be changed to form the appropriate missing words.

- Give each student a copy of the worksheet and ask them to fill in the gaps according to the context. Do not play the song at this stage. If any help is needed, explain they have to form adjectives from nouns and verbs and adverbs from adjectives. The correct answers are in bold on the final page of theis worksheet.

- Play the song. Students check their predictions in pairs or in groups.

- Play the song again, correct and sing together.

## C) GRAMMAR FOCUS ON WORD FORMATION

- Ask the students to use some stem words in the song (like **simple**, **deep**, etc.) to form as many words as possible. In a weak class or at a lower level you can use this as a dictionary training activity.

- Make the students aware of how they can form words in English by adding prefixes (**un**-, **a**-, **mis**-, etc.), suffixes (-**ly**, -**al**, -**ful**, etc.) or by making internal changes (**long**/**length**). Point out some words may not change (**love** can be a noun or a verb, **hard** can be an adjective or an adverb), some may change pronunciation (**present** n. /'preznt/ - /**present** v. /pri'zent/), others may change spelling (**practice** n. /**practise** v.).

## D) SUGGESTIONS  FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- Elicit the meaning of the song (see Wikipedia explanation above).
  Media, friends, families, teachers, religious leaders and wider society can all pressurize you to conform to their many different expectations. But who are you? What are you really like? Are you afraid of disapproval? Do "the questions run too deep" for you?
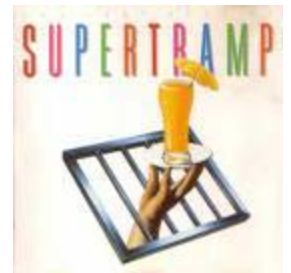
## Complete the song using the correct form of the words given.

When I was young, it seemed that life was so _____ **WONDER**,
a miracle, oh, it was _____ **BEAUTY**, _____ **MAGIC**.
And all the birds in the trees,
they'd be singing so _____ **HAPPY**,
oh, _____ **JOY**, oh, _____ **PLAY**, watching me.

But then they sent me away to teach me how to be _____ **SENSE**,
_____ **LOGIC**, oh, _____ **RESPONSE**, _____ **PRACTICE**.
And then they showed me a world
where I could be so _____ **DEPEND**,
oh, _____ **CLINIC**, oh, _____ **INTELLECT**, _____ **CYNIC**.

There are times when all the world's _____ **SLEEP**,
the questions run too deep
for such a simple man.
Won't you please, please tell me what we've learned
I know it sounds absurd,
please tell me who I am.

I said watch what you say, they'll be calling you a radical,
a liberal, oh, _____ **FANATIC**, _____ **CRIME**.
Oh, won't you sign up your name, we'd like to feel you're
_____ **ACCEPT**, _____ **RESPECT**, oh, _____ **PRESENT**,
a vegetable!

Oh, take, take, take it, yeah!

But at night, when all the world's _____**SLEEP**,
the questions run so deep
for such a simple man.
Won't you please, please tell me what we've learned
I know it sounds absurd
please tell me who I am,
who I am… who I am… who I am.

When I was young, it seemed that life was so **wonderful**,
a miracle, oh, it was **beautiful**, **magical**.
And all the birds in the trees,
they'd be singing so **happily**,
oh, **joyfully**, oh, **playfully**, watching me.


But then they sent me away to teach me how to be **sensible**,
**logical**, oh, **responsible**, **practical**.
And then they showed me a world
where I could be so **dependable**,
oh, **clinical**, oh, **intellectual**, **cynical**.

There are times when all the world's **asleep**,
the questions run too deep
for such a simple man.
Won't you please, please tell me what we've learned
I know it sounds absurd,
please tell me who I am.


I said watch what you say, they'll be calling you a radical,
a liberal, oh, **fanatical**, **criminal**.
Oh, won't you sign up your name, we'd like to feel you're
**acceptable**, **respectable**, oh, **presentable**,
a vegetable!

Oh, take, take, take it, yeah!


But at night, when all the world's **asleep**,
the questions run so deep
for such a simple man.
Won't you please, please tell me what we've learned
I know it sounds absurd
please tell me  who I am
who I am

who I am

who I am

who I am