

Sources and ressources

video (youtube)

http://fr.youtube.com/watch?v=JPrAuF2f_oI%20

Lyrics

<http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/Pollution-lyrics-Tom-Lehrer/E439EF548F571DF548256A7D00258670>

Teacher's notes

- The interest I see in this song is looking for specific **vocabulary related to pollution**.
This song is also a good grammatical model for : **if sentences - 1st conditional (future risks)** , « **will** » (the future),
modal auxiliaries « **must** », « **can** », **the imperative, etc.**
and it's great for rhythm and pronunciation.

– Listening-

The teacher shows/plays the song once (video) and asks the students to identify the main subject and allows them to react.

On the second and third listening, students should try to identify vocabulary related to pollution but also information about the characters, places, etc. Students should be encouraged to identify words/sounds that rhyme. The teacher may give different listening tasks to different groups of students.

– Reading

The teacher hands out a lyrics worksheet (a copy of the lyrics) and ask the students to underline pollution vocabulary, if sentences, future, match rhymes, etc. and have them practise through discussion, reading, etc

– Writing / speaking/ singing:

Students train to sing the song along with the original song or without

Students improvise, write and/or sing a similar song or paragraphs « in the manner of ... » about their own country, city, school, or any other place they consider to be polluted.

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Example:

« If you visit Martinique
You will find it very exotic
Just two things you must beware
don't throw garbage , don't pollute the air!

....

See the fish and see the flowers
being killed by the polluters
You take your car to go to the city
but the traffic jams don't make it so easy »

Tom Lehrer – Pollution lyrics

(Time was when an American about to go abroad would be warned by his friends or the guidebooks not to drink the water. But times have changed and now a foreigner coming to this country might be offered the following advice.)

If you visit American city,
You will find it very pretty.

Just two things of which you must beware:

Don't drink the water and don't breathe the air.

Pollution, pollution,

They got smog and sewage and mud.

Turn on your tap and get hot and cold running crud.

See the halibuts and the sturgeons

Being wiped out by detergents.

Fish gotta swim and birds gotta fly,

But they don't last long if they try.

Pollution, pollution,

You can use the latest toothpaste,

And then rinse your mouth with industrial waste.

Just go out for a breath of air,

And you'll be ready for Medicare.

The city streets are really quite a thrill.

If the hoods don't get you, the monoxide will.

Pollution, pollution,

Wear a gas mask and a veil.

Then you can breathe, long as you don't inhale.

Lots of things there that you can drink,

But stay away from the kitchen sink.

The breakfast garbage that you throw in to the Bay,

They drink at lunch in San Jose.

So go to the city, see the crazy people there.

Like lambs to the slaughter,

They're drinking the water

And breathing <cough> the air.