

LEARN ENGLISH WITH MUSIC

I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)

Whitney Houston

COMPLETE LEARNING WORKBOOK

Go beyond the song

Connected speech, relative clauses and expressive English for loneliness, risk and desire.

23 verified learning cards / Level B1 / guided practice

SECTION 00

Your learning journey

Watch first, explore second, practise from memory and finish with the complete card library.

1 WATCH	Follow the official lyric video and synced cards.
2 EXPLORE	Study language, extended vocabulary, culture and sound.
3 PRACTISE	Complete the guided challenges without looking back.
4 REVIEW	Use the final 23-card library by category.

Three sources of value

Song language gives you patterns to reuse. **Extended vocabulary** helps you discuss the themes and music. **Context** helps you understand cultural references and form your own interpretation.

Official lyrics

[Open the official lyric video](#)

Listen, read and return to the workbook whenever you want to explore a language point in greater depth.

SECTION 01

Map the song

Separate the joyful dance vocabulary from the song's quieter grammar of loneliness and lasting connection.

STAGE	LEARNING LENS
Daylight	Confidence holds until evening
Nightfall	Loneliness becomes active
Chorus	Dance expresses desire for connection
Later verse	Passion must be strong enough to last

Listening challenge

For each stage, write one word for the sound and one for the speaker's emotional position. Then explain which language choice helped create that impression.

SECTION 02

Language Lab

Move beyond the quick cards: compare structures, notice register and learn how to avoid common mistakes.

LANGUAGE POINT	GO DEEPER	USE IT WELL
wanna and want to	Wanna is listening knowledge for informal speech, not standard formal writing.	I want to dance; never I wanna to dance.
enough position	Enough precedes nouns but follows adjectives.	Enough time; warm enough.
chase away	This separable phrasal verb means make something leave.	Chase the sadness away; chase it away.
up till now	This time phrase connects past experience to the present and suits the present perfect.	I have managed well up till now.
who relative clauses	Subject who cannot be omitted; object pronouns sometimes can.	Someone who loves me; someone I love.
sooner or later	The expression means eventually, at an unknown time.	Sooner or later, we must decide.
wind up -ing	It means eventually reach an often unexpected result.	We wound up staying home.
take a chance	It means accept risk; on introduces the person or opportunity.	Take a chance on the new plan.

SECTION 03

Extended vocabulary: go beyond the lyrics

This bonus language expands what you can say about the narrative, emotion, performance and production.

dance floor	noun	The open space in a club or at a party where people dance. <i>By midnight the dance floor was completely packed.</i>
to feel the beat	expression	To sense the rhythm of the music in your body, often the moment right before you start dancing. <i>As soon as she felt the beat, she was out of her seat.</i>
to let loose	phrasal verb	To stop worrying about looking silly and enjoy yourself completely freely. <i>After exams finished, the whole class let loose at the party.</i>
rhythm	noun	A strong, regular pattern of sound or movement, especially in music. <i>He has no sense of rhythm, but he dances anyway.</i>
to catch someone's eye	expression	To attract someone's attention, often in a romantic way, across a room. <i>A stranger across the bar caught her eye all evening.</i>
chemistry	noun (informal)	An instant, exciting connection between two people. <i>There was obvious chemistry between the two dancers from the first song.</i>
to yearn for	verb	To have a deep, sometimes painful desire for something you don't currently have. <i>After months alone, he yearned for company.</i>
to light up	phrasal verb	To suddenly become full of energy, brightness or happiness. <i>Her face lit up the second the music started.</i>
crowd	noun	A large number of people gathered together in one place. <i>The crowd cheered as the singer walked on stage.</i>
to spin someone around	verb phrase	To turn a dance partner quickly in a circle. <i>He spun her around twice before the chorus even started.</i>
heartbeat	noun	The rhythmic pulse of the heart - often used to describe excitement or nervousness. <i>Her heartbeat sped up the moment he asked her to dance.</i>
restless	adjective	Unable to relax or stay still, full of nervous or excited energy. <i>The kids grew restless waiting for the party to start.</i>

SECTION 04

Idioms and expressive English

Use these additional expressions to discuss the song's situations and themes in natural English.

to dance the night away	extension	To spend the whole night dancing and enjoying yourself, often until very late. <i>We danced the night away and didn't get home until 4am.</i>
to sweep someone off their feet	extension	To make someone fall for you suddenly and completely, often through one unexpected romantic moment. <i>He swept her off her feet with one unexpected dance.</i>
Mr. Right / Mrs. Right	extension	The perfect romantic partner someone is hoping to eventually find. <i>She's convinced Mr. Right is out there somewhere - she just hasn't met him yet.</i>
to paint the town red	extension	To go out and celebrate energetically, usually moving from place to place at night. <i>It's her birthday, so we're painting the town red tonight.</i>
it's now or never	extension	Used to say that this exact moment is the only chance you'll get, so you have to act immediately. <i>The train doors were closing - it was now or never.</i>

Make the language yours

Complete the exercises later in the workbook to check meaning, structure and register.

SECTION 05

Pronunciation as performance

A sung voice is not a neutral accent sample. Listen for concrete features, then compare theatrical delivery with everyday speech.

The American 'wanna' and 'gonna'	Right in the title, 'want to' collapses into 'wanna' - a hallmark of relaxed American singing and everyday speech. Listen for the same kind of reduction on other function-word pairs across the track.
A fully pronounced, rhotic R	Unlike the British and Australian voices elsewhere in this catalogue, Houston's American R is heard wherever it appears after a vowel: in words like 'somebody', 'everywhere' and 'first' you get a strong, curled R rather than a dropped one.
Gospel-rooted melisma	Trained in church choirs from childhood, Houston stretches single syllables - especially on 'dance' and 'somebody' - across several musical notes instead of one, a technique borrowed directly from African-American gospel singing.
Crisp, punched consonants on the chorus	Houston's classically trained diction keeps her T's and D's hard and clear even while belting at full volume, giving the hook its explosive, percussive attack instead of a softer pop breathiness.

Three-pass shadowing

1. Tap only the stressed beats.
2. Reproduce the phrase slowly and clearly.
3. Contrast a natural spoken version with the musical performance.

SECTION 06

Context and creative choices

Discover the cultural and creative decisions that shaped the song, then listen again with this context in mind.

"I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)" was written by George Merrill and Shannon Rubicam, the husband-and-wife duo behind the band Boy Meets Girl, and produced by Narada Michael Walden. Walden has said he initially found the demo too country-and-western sounding for Houston, so he reworked the arrangement to give it the driving, danceable groove that became its signature - while Houston herself contributed uncredited work on the lyrics and is credited as the song's vocal arranger.

The song served as the lead single from Houston's second studio album, *Whitney*, released on 1 June 1987 by Arista Records. The album made history in its own right: it debuted at number one on the *Billboard* 200, making Houston the first female artist ever to open at the top of that chart, and it then held the position for eleven consecutive weeks.

On the *Billboard* Hot 100, "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" reached number one on 27 June 1987 and stayed there for two weeks. It was Houston's fourth consecutive chart-topping single, part of an unmatched run that eventually reached seven consecutive number-one hits between 1985 and 1988 - a Guinness World Record that broke the previous record of six shared by the Beatles and the Bee Gees, and one Houston still holds alone.

The song brought Houston the 1988 Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance, while Narada Michael Walden won that year's Grammy for Producer of the Year, Non-Classical. Its music video, directed by Brian Grant and choreographed by Arlene Phillips - the same team behind her earlier hit "How Will I Know" - became one of the defining dance-pop videos of the MTV era.

Decades later, the song's reputation has only grown: *Billboard* has named it among the greatest pop songs of all time, and its title was borrowed for the 2022 Whitney Houston biopic. In this catalogue, it stands as the pure uptempo dance-pop counterpart to the ballads and mid-tempo tracks around it - American English at full, joyful volume.

SECTION 07

Practice zone

Complete every activity without looking back, then use the answer key to correct your work independently.

A. Complete

1. We have ____ time. (enough/enoughly)
2. It is warm _____. (enough/enoughly)
3. She wound up _____. (staying/to stay)
4. Someone ____ understands called. (who/which)

B. Choose

5. Formal: want to/wanna.
6. Eventually: sooner or later/at once.
7. Accept risk: take a chance/make a chance.
8. Remove sadness: chase away/chase up.

C. Correct

9. I wanna to leave.
10. We have time enough.
11. The person called me who left.
12. She wound up to work late.

SECTION 08

Answer key

Check each answer and return to the Language Lab when a form or distinction is still unclear.

1. 1. enough
2. 2. enough
3. 3. staying
4. 4. who
5. 5. want to
6. 6. sooner or later
7. 7. take a chance
8. 8. chase away
9. 9. I want to leave / I wanna leave
10. 10. We have enough time
11. 11. The person who called me left
12. 12. She wound up working late

Review again

Cover the answers and repeat the activities after a few days. A delayed second attempt is a better test of learning than immediate rereading.

SECTION 09

Complete 23-card library

Use this compact summary for quick revision or return to the video cue when you want to hear a point again.

Vocabulary / 4 cards

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 0:30

The clock strikes

When a clock strikes a time, it sounds a bell to mark that hour. Strike is irregular: strike, struck, struck.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 1:08

Feel the heat

Feel the heat can mean experience warmth, excitement or pressure. The dance context favours physical and emotional intensity.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 1:40

Spin through town

Spin means turn quickly. The image of spinning through town combines physical movement with emotional restlessness.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 2:00

A love that burns

Burning love is a conventional metaphor for intense passion. The following enough to last questions whether intensity can become durability.

Grammar / 8 cards

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:40

Enough time vs warm enough

Enough comes before a noun but after an adjective: enough time, warm enough. This word order is a frequent learner error.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:50

I've done all right up till now

The present perfect summarises experience continuing to now. Up till now marks the time boundary and all right means satisfactorily.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:04

Want to + base verb

Want is followed by a to-infinitive: want to dance, want to feel. Wanna already contains to, so never add another to.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:12

Somebody who loves me

Who is the subject of the defining relative clause and cannot be omitted. Compare somebody (that) I love, where the pronoun is the object.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:56

A man who'll take a chance

Who will contracts to who'll. The relative clause specifies the kind of person the speaker wants.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 2:04

Adjective + enough + to-infinitive

Hot enough to last follows adjective + enough + to-infinitive. Compare enough heat to last, where enough precedes the noun.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 2:44

Hold me in his arms

Hold takes a direct object; in his arms describes position. English uses a possessive determiner before body-part nouns.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 3:35

Who still identifies the subject

Each return to somebody who loves me repeats a subject relative clause. Who cannot disappear because it performs the action loves.

Idioms / 4 cards

IDIOM / VIDEO 0:44

Chase the blues away

The blues means sadness; chase something away means make it leave. Together they describe using an activity to escape a low mood.

IDIOM / VIDEO 1:46

Sooner or later

Sooner or later means eventually, although the exact time is unknown. It often introduces something considered inevitable.

IDIOM / VIDEO 1:50

Wind up + -ing

Wind up feeling down means eventually reach that result, often unexpectedly. It is followed by an -ing form.

IDIOM / VIDEO 2:50

Take a chance

Take a chance means accept a risk or opportunity despite uncertainty. Common patterns include take a chance on someone and take a chance with something.

Culture / 5 cards

CULTURE / VIDEO 0:36

Daylight fading into night

The movement from sun to night shifts the song from public daytime confidence to private loneliness.

CULTURE / VIDEO 0:58

Loneliness calls: personification

Giving loneliness the human action call turns an emotion into an active force that arrives when night falls.

CULTURE / VIDEO 3:55

Call and response sustains participation

The extended ending uses short calls and repeated answers associated with communal dance music. Repetition invites participation rather than adding narrative events.

CULTURE / VIDEO 4:10

Don't you wanna...?

A negative question can function as an energetic invitation expecting agreement. In neutral speech, Do you want to dance? is less pressuring.

CULTURE / VIDEO 4:35

A negative question becomes an invitation

Near the end, the negative question expects an enthusiastic yes. This is pragmatic pressure used playfully; a neutral invitation would use Do you want to dance?

Pronunciation / 2 cards

PHONETICS / VIDEO 0:08

Wanna: listening form of want to

Wanna represents the connected pronunciation of want to before a verb. Recognise it in speech; use want to in formal writing.

PHONETICS / VIDEO 3:10

Later chorus: consonants ride the beat

In the extended chorus, stressed syllables align with the beat while smaller words compress. First keep the rhythm, then restore a clear spoken version.

Keep learning

[Return to the synced learning experience.](#)