

LEARN ENGLISH WITH MUSIC

Wannabe

Spice Girls

COMPLETE LEARNING WORKBOOK

Go beyond the song

Friendship, negotiation and fast 1990s conversational English.

17 verified learning cards / Level B1-B2 / 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 17-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.

Lyrics on video

[Open the lyric video used for this lesson](#)

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

SECTION 01

Map the song

Treat the song as a compact set of conditions for a relationship rather than only a chant.

STAGE	LEARNING LENS
Opening	Identify the speaker, situation and first useful pattern.
Development	Track the main contrast, image or relationship problem.
Hook	Notice how repetition changes emphasis and memory.
Late return	Retrieve earlier language under new vocal or narrative pressure.

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
want, would like and fancy	Want is direct; would like is polite; fancy is informal British English for desire or attraction.	Fancy is register- and region-sensitive.
give and take	As a noun phrase, give-and-take means reciprocal compromise. As verbs, give and take retain literal meanings.	Hyphens are common when the phrase modifies another noun.
get with and get along with	Get with is highly context-dependent; get along with clearly means have a good relationship.	Prefer the clearer form when ambiguity matters.
make + object + verb	Causative make takes a bare verb: make it last, make me laugh. In the passive, to returns: I was made to wait.	This active/passive contrast is a common exam point.

SECTION 03

Extended vocabulary: go beyond the lyrics

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

wannabe	noun / informal adjective	Someone who wants to be, or act like, another (often more successful) person - sometimes used a little mockingly. <i>He turned up in sunglasses acting like a wannabe rockstar.</i>
to get along (with someone)	phrasal verb	To have a friendly, easy relationship with someone. <i>My new flatmate and I get along really well.</i>
loyalty	noun	Firm and constant support for a person, group or cause. <i>She's shown nothing but loyalty to her oldest friends.</i>
to stick together	phrasal verb	To stay united and support each other, especially through difficulty. <i>Whatever happens at work, the two of us stick together.</i>
priorities	noun	The things a person treats as most important, especially when choosing between them. <i>After the baby was born, his priorities changed completely.</i>
a dealbreaker	noun, informal	A single condition or flaw that ends an agreement or relationship if it's present. <i>Rudeness to waiters is an absolute dealbreaker for me.</i>
chemistry	noun, informal	A natural, instant connection or spark between people. <i>The two lead actors had brilliant chemistry on screen.</i>
to hang out	phrasal verb	To spend casual, relaxed time with friends. <i>We usually hang out at the park after school.</i>
inseparable	adjective	So close that two people are almost never apart. <i>Since kindergarten, the twins have been inseparable.</i>
to figure someone out	phrasal verb	To come to understand a person's real character or intentions. <i>It took me months to figure him out.</i>
a crew	noun, informal	A close-knit group of friends who spend time and do things together. <i>The whole crew is meeting at the café before the gig.</i>
girl power	expression	A slogan celebrating female confidence, independence and solidarity, popularised in the 1990s. <i>The campaign's whole message was pure girl power.</i>

SECTION 04

Idioms and expressive English

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

to pass the test	extension	To prove yourself acceptable or suitable to someone after being judged. <i>My best friend didn't approve of him until he passed the test at family dinner.</i>
through thick and thin	extension	Staying loyal to someone through both good times and bad. <i>We've supported each other through thick and thin since university.</i>
two peas in a pod	extension	Two people who are extremely alike and almost always together. <i>My sister and her best friend are like two peas in a pod.</i>
no strings attached	extension	Without any conditions or hidden commitments. <i>She lent him the money with no strings attached.</i>
to call the shots	extension	To be the person who makes the important decisions. <i>In our friend group, Maya always calls the shots on weekend plans.</i>
to know someone inside out	extension	To understand a person completely, including their habits and quirks. <i>After a decade of friendship, I know her inside out.</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.

Non-rhotic British R	Across the song, the 'r' sound after a vowel simply disappears - in words like 'girl' and 'friends' the R only lengthens the vowel rather than being pronounced. This is the classic marker of most England accents, as opposed to American English.
The London glottal stop	The Spice Girls' delivery is soaked in Estuary English, the informal accent of London and the South-East: a 't' in the middle or at the end of a word often turns into a tiny catch in the throat instead of a clear consonant - so 'get it' sounds closer to 'ge'-i'.
Rapid-fire rap verse	Mel B's spoken-word verse is delivered fast and clipped, packing many syllables into very little time - a very 1990s British pop-rap style. Listen for how consonants get swallowed and words blur together at speed.
Casual contracted grammar	Because five different England accents (Leeds, Liverpool, Essex, Hertfordshire) blend in the group vocals, informal contractions like 'gonna' and 'wanna' are pronounced slightly differently by each singer - a good ear-training exercise in regional variation within a single accent family.

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.

"Wannabe" was the debut single of the Spice Girls, released in the UK on 8 July 1996 (it had appeared slightly earlier in Japan) ahead of the group's first album, *Spice*. It was written by all five members together with producers Matt Rowe and Richard "Biff" Stannard, and famously recorded in under an hour at Strongroom Studios in London in December 1995 - a session so quick it became part of the group's origin story.

The song's chart run was extraordinary. It entered the UK Singles Chart at number 3 and climbed to number one the following week, where it stayed for seven weeks. In the US, it debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 on 25 January 1997 at number 11, the highest chart debut by a British act at that time, before reaching number one on 22 February 1997 and holding the top spot for four consecutive weeks.

Commercially, "Wannabe" became the best-selling single by a girl group in history, certified 4× Platinum by the BPI in the UK and Platinum by the RIAA in the US. It picked up British Single of the Year at the 1997 Brit Awards, International Hit of the Year and Best Selling British-Written Single at the 1997 Ivor Novello Awards, and Best Dance Video at the 1997 MTV Video Music Awards. A 2014 University of Amsterdam study even found it to be the most recognisable pop song of the previous 60 years among young English speakers.

Much of the song's cultural punch came from its music video: a single continuous take filmed by director Johan Camitz inside London's Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras, showing the five members bursting energetically through the building. Its raw, spontaneous feel helped the video take off on British music television and turned the group into an overnight press sensation months before the single itself topped the charts.

In this catalogue, "Wannabe" is the loudest, fastest and most chant-driven entry in British English: five different England accents - Leeds, Liverpool, Essex, Hertfordshire - layered into one anthem, next to a rapid spoken-word verse that rewards close listening. It sits at the opposite end of the British spectrum from the slow, gentle diction of Ed Sheeran's *Perfect* or Sam Smith's *Stay With Me*.

SECTION 07

Practice zone

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

A. Extended vocabulary in context

1. Choose the best term for this meaning: *Someone who wants to be, or act like, another (often more successful) person - sometimes used a little mockingly.*

wannabe / to get along (with someone)

2. Choose the best term for this meaning: *To have a friendly, easy relationship with someone.*

to get along (with someone) / loyalty

3. Choose the best term for this meaning: *Firm and constant support for a person, group or cause.*

loyalty / to stick together

4. Choose the best term for this meaning: *To stay united and support each other, especially through difficulty.*

to stick together / priorities

5. Choose the best term for this meaning: *The things a person treats as most important, especially when choosing between them.*

priorities / a dealbreaker

6. Choose the best term for this meaning: *A single condition or flaw that ends an agreement or relationship if it's present.*

a dealbreaker / wannabe

B. Retrieve the expression

7. Which expression matches this meaning: *To prove yourself acceptable or suitable to someone after being judged.?*

8. Which expression matches this meaning: *Staying loyal to someone through both good times and bad.?*

9. Which expression matches this meaning: *Two people who are extremely alike and almost always together.?*

10. Which expression matches this meaning: *Without any conditions or hidden commitments.?*

C. Accuracy check

11. Correct the form: **I listened the song carefully.**

12. Choose the careful form: **The contrast lead to a new meaning / leads to a new meaning.**

SECTION 08

Answer key

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

1. wannabe
2. to get along (with someone)
3. loyalty
4. to stick together
5. priorities
6. a dealbreaker
7. to pass the test
8. through thick and thin
9. two peas in a pod
10. no strings attached
11. I listened to the song carefully
12. The contrast leads to a new meaning

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 17-card library

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

Vocabulary / 2 cards

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 1:03

friendship never ends

Friendship is an abstract noun. Present simple presents the claim as a general principle or slogan.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 1:24

easy come, easy go

Easy come, easy go is a proverb suggesting things gained easily may be lost easily. Here it warns against casual commitment.

Grammar / 6 cards

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:09

I will tell you what I want

Will introduces a direct declaration. What I want is a fused relative meaning the thing that I want.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:18

what I really, really want

Really is an adverb intensifying want. Repetition increases insistence and creates the song's instantly recognisable hook.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:27

do not go wasting

Go + -ing can criticise entering an unnecessary activity: do not go wasting time.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:45

if you wanna be my lover

The real condition uses present forms: if you want to be. Wanna is informal spoken reduction, not formal spelling.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:36

here is a story

Here is introduces or presents something. With a plural noun use here are: here are the details.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 2:18

if you wanna be

The repeated condition returns after the character verse. Retrieval now happens at higher speed and with fuller vocal layering.

Idioms / 4 cards

IDIOM / VIDEO 0:36

make it last forever

Make + object + base verb gives make it last. Forever intensifies the desired duration.

IDIOM / VIDEO 0:54

get with my friends

In this context, get with means accept, connect with or get along with, not necessarily begin a romantic relationship.

IDIOM / VIDEO 1:15

give and take

Give and take means mutual compromise. A sustainable relationship cannot be entirely one-sided.

IDIOM / VIDEO 2:06

wind it all around

Wind something around means twist or wrap it. The unusual dance instruction relies on physical demonstration as much as words.

Culture / 3 cards

CULTURE / VIDEO 1:48

character introductions

The rapid verse presents each group member as a distinct persona, a key part of the Spice Girls' pop branding.

CULTURE / VIDEO 2:30

Girl Power and friendship

The song places friendship as a condition of romance. That message became central to the group's Girl Power identity.

CULTURE / VIDEO 3:03

one-take visual momentum

The lyric video echoes the original video's continuous movement, reinforcing the group's chaotic, collective energy to the end.

Pronunciation / 2 cards

PHONETICS / VIDEO 1:57

slam your body down: strong beats

Slam, body and down carry the rhythmic stress. The forceful consonants make the dance command sound percussive.

PHONETICS / VIDEO 2:45

zig-a-zig-ah: vocable

The famous closing phrase works as a vocable: sound chosen for rhythm and identity more than stable dictionary meaning.

Keep learning

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