

You probably already know that music is a great way to learn and practice English. Choosing who to listen to can be difficult, though, as there are so many great artists and music genres available. Choosing who to listen to can be almost as difficult as learning English.

In these handouts, we're going to look at some of the more popular western artists. We'll talk a little bit about their personal lives and also learn the lyrics (words) from one or two of their more popular songs. Questions about the artists and their music can be sent to me at teacher@englishforlife.ca.

Mention the name Carlos Santana and every Canadian and American will know exactly who you're talking about. While many good musicians come and go after their 15 minutes of fame, there are a few who are here to stay. Carlos Santana is one of those.

Born Carlos Humberto Santana Barragán, the young man lived his early years in a small Mexican city, Autlán de Navarro, in the state of Jalisco. His father was a **mariachi** musician who taught young Carlos to play the violin and guitar at an early age. The young man wasn't content to just play what was immediately available and began seeking out musicians who would influence his later career. From California pop star [Richie Valens](#) to [BB King](#) and John Lee Hooker, Miles Davis and John Coltrane, and even Jimmy Hendrix, Santana **absorbed** music styles the way a sponge absorbs water. These influences would both bless and curse his career, though, over the years.

From Autlán, the Santana family moved to Tijuana, Mexico, near the American border and San Diego. Santana made the most of the opportunity, playing with a **variety** of bands until the family moved once again to the Bay area of San Francisco. Here he was invited along with other musicians to fill in for the Butterfield Blues Band, whose singer had shown up drunk and unable to perform. Santana made an immediate impression upon the audience and Fillmore Auditorium owner Bill Graham with his **unique** blend of guitar playing. Santana joined several musicians he had met while performing on the street to form his first band, the Santana Blues Band.

The band was quickly signed to a contract by Columbia Records, who shortened the band name to "Santana", began recording the band's first record and got them a spot playing at the Woodstock Art and Music Festival (which would become one of the greatest and most **influential** concerts in music history). The concert was filmed and the band was included in the movie footage, making them international stars almost overnight. The pressure of the band's sudden fame, however, led to problems within the band: drug use, artistic differences and personal conflicts that created a **revolving door** of band members.

On top of this, Carlos Santana wanted to experiment and push the **boundaries** of music. The band's first few records sold well and produced hit songs such as "[Black Magic Woman](#)" and "[Oye Como Va](#)". Their music combined traditional rock 'n roll patterns with influences from jazz, blues, salsa and African-rhythm music. No one else was doing this and Carlos Santana became a **distinct** figure in the music industry right out of the gate.

His and the band's **fortunes** wouldn't last, though, and his creative **experiments** began to alienate fans; even though the band's music was **critically successful**, record sales dropped and band members continued to come and go (two of whom would go on to create another successful rock band, Journey). Santana gained legal possession of the band's name in 1973 and reformed the band with new members. It didn't help and sales continued to drop. Carlos Santana responded by releasing two solo albums in 1979 and 1980, and a third solo album in 1987.

Carlos' solo work led to **collaborations** with a wide array of other musicians and a continued **evolution** in his style. The album [Supernatural](#), released in 1999, contained collaborations with a who's-who of musical talent and won a record 8 Grammy Awards, including album of the year.

Today, Carlos Santana is considered one of the greatest musicians of his time and is regularly sought out by musicians who want to work with him. His list of awards and accomplishments is legendary, even as he continues to work and perform from his new home in Las Vegas. His **peers** and fans all believe that his influence on contemporary music will be unmatched for a long, long time.

Lyrics

Black Magic Woman lyrics

Got a black magic woman
Got a black magic woman
I've got a black magic woman
Got me so blind, I can't see
That she's a black magic woman
She's trying to make a devil outta me

Don't turn your back on me, baby
Don't turn your back on me, baby
Yes, don't turn your back on me, baby
Stop messing 'round with your tricks
Don't turn your back on me, baby
You just might pick up my magic sticks

Got your spell on me, baby
You got your spell on me, baby
Yes, you got your spell on me, baby
Turning my heart into stone
I need you so bad, magic woman
I can't leave you alone

Oye Como Va lyrics

¡Rrr, sabor!
Oye cómo va
Mi ritmo
Bueno pa' gozar
Mulata

Oye cómo va
Mi ritmo
Bueno pa' gozar
Mulata

Oye cómo va
Mi ritmo
Bueno pa' gozar
Mulata

Oye cómo va
Mi ritmo
Bueno pa' gozar
Mulata

¡Uh!

Smooth lyrics

Man, it's a hot one
Like seven inches from the midday sun
Well, I hear you whisper and the words melt everyone
But you stay so cool
My muñequita, my Spanish Harlem Mona Lisa
You're my reason for reason
The step in my groove

And if you said this life ain't good enough
I would give my world to lift you up
I could change my life to better suit your mood
Because you're so smooth
And it's just like the ocean under the moon
Oh, it's the same as the emotion that I get from you
You got the kind of lovin' that can be so smooth, yeah
Give me your heart, make it real, or else forget about it

But I'll tell you one thing
If you would leave it'd be a crying shame
In every breath and every word
I hear your name calling me out
Out from the barrio
You hear my rhythm on your radio
You feel the turning of the world, so soft and slow
It's turning you round and round

And if you said this life ain't good enough
I would give my world to lift you up
I could change my life to better suit your mood
Because you're so smooth

Well, and it's just like the ocean under the moon
Well, it's the same as the emotion that I get from you
You got the kind of lovin' that can be so smooth, yeah
Give me your heart, make it real, or else forget about it
Well, and it's just like the ocean under the moon
Oh, it's the same as the emotion that I get from you
You got the kind of lovin' that can be so smooth, yeah
Give me your heart, make it real, or else forget about it

Or else forget about it
Or else forget about it
Oh, let's don't forget about it
Give me your heart, make it real
Let's don't forget about it (hey)
Let's don't forget about it (now, oh, now, oh)
Let's don't forget about it (now, now, now, oh)
Let's don't forget about it (hey, now, now, oh)
Let's don't forget about it (hey, hey, hey)

vocabulary

mariachi	A Mexican music genre involving guitars, vocals violins and trumpets
absorbed	To learn about something completely
variety	A group of items belonging to a category but having some differences
unique	Different or one of a kind
influential	Having the ability to change something or influence it to change
revolving door	A group where the members change frequently
boundaries	Limitations; points where things stop moving or changing
distinct	Noticeably different from everything else
fortunes	Examples of wealth or luck
experiments	Acts which are done to prove an idea or to discover something new
critically successful	Admired by experts or critics, but not popular with most people
collaborations	Situation in which people work together to achieve a goal
evolution	The process of changing; the result of a changing situation or event
peers	People who have the same social or professional status

Article Research Sources

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- [Always Classic X101: Santana's 'Supernatural' Sweeps the Grammys](https://www.wxhc.com/on-this-day-february-23-2000-santanas-supernatural-sweeps-the-grammys/)
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YouTube videos

- [Ritchie Valens - La Bamba \(clip from the movie about Ritchie Valens\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSKJQ18ZoIA)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSKJQ18ZoIA>
- [B. B. King - The Thrill Is Gone \(Live at Montreux 1993\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fk2prKnYnI)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fk2prKnYnI>
- [Santana IV - Black Magic Woman \(2016\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2O81STmDGg)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2O81STmDGg>
- [Oye Como Va ft. Carlos Santana & Cindy Blackman Santana | Playing For Change | Song Around The World](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJZW8U9bbmM)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJZW8U9bbmM>
- [\(1999\) Santana - Supernatural \(Full Album\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kusyUCtaY-M)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kusyUCtaY-M>
- [Santana - Smooth \(Stereo\) ft. Rob Thomas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Whgn_iE5uc)
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