



Tom's Diner – Suzanne Vega - Notes



- **Activity types:** game, gap fill, vocabulary.
- **Grammar:** Present Continuous, Prepositions.
- **Time/Level:** approx. 40 mins
- **Level:** Elementary / Pre-Intermediate.
- **Note:** Taken from her second album "Solitude Standing", Suzanne Vega wrote this in 1982. Inspired by a real life restaurant in New York (the bells referred to in the song are from the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, one block east), it simply describes what is happening in a certain moment in an *a capella* style. In 1990 two British producers called DNA added it to a dance beat, making the song hugely successful. Suzanne Vega was subsequently credited as the "mother of the mp3" – you and your students can read more about this, as well as find a link to a description of events in the song, at <http://measureformeasure.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/09/23/toms-essay/>

- 1) Cut out the following verbs to make sixteen small cards. There are thirteen verbs which students will guess, and three possible ways of demonstrating them.

feel	hitch up	kiss	listen
look	pretend	shake	straighten
sit	think	try	turn
wait	ACT	MIME	DRAW

- 2) Divide the classroom into three or four groups, depending on the number of pupils and their level. One person from each team will explain one of the verbs to his/her teammates. The selected student picks one verb at random, and one way of demonstrating it. The others must guess the verb.
- 3) Give the students a copy of the worksheet and ask them to listen and to complete the lyrics, using the correct verb in the Present Continuous or the correct preposition.
- 4) Allow students to check with each other, then correct in open class. With more advanced classes you can point out the verbs used in "somebody coming in", "someone watching me" and "on the outside looking inside" are in fact part of Participle Phrases. You can read more about this at http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/participle_phrases.htm
- 5) Note the prepositions and have a review of the adverbs of frequency.
- 6) Sing the song together.



Tom's Diner – Suzanne Vega



Complete the song with the following verbs in the Present Continuous, and the correct prepositions.

feel / hitch up / kiss / listen / look / pretend / shake / straighten / sit / think / try / turn / wait

I _____
 ___ the morning
 ___ the diner
 ___ the corner

I _____
 ___ the counter
 ___ the man
 ___ pour the coffee

And he fills it
 Only halfway
 And before
 I even argue

He _____
 ___ the window
 ___ somebody
 Coming ___

"It is always
 Nice to see you"
 Says the man
 ___ the counter

___ the woman
 Who has come in
 She _____
 Her umbrella

And I look
 The other way
 As they _____
 Their hellos

I' _____
 Not to see them
 And instead
 I pour the milk

I open
 ___ the paper
 There's a story
 ___ an actor

Who had died
 While he was drinking
 It was no one
 I had heard of

And I' _____
 ___ the horoscope
 And looking
 ___ the funnies

When I' _____
 Someone watching me
 And so
 I raise my head

There's a woman
 ___ the outside
 Looking inside
 Does she see me?

No she does not
 Really see me
 'Cause she sees
 Her own reflection

And I _____
 Not to notice
 That she' _____
 Her skirt

And while she' _____ her stockings
 Her hair
 Has gotten wet

Oh, this rain
 It will continue
 ___ the morning
 As I' _____

___ the bells
 ___ the cathedral
 I _____
 ___ your voice...

And ___ the midnight picnic
 Once upon a time
 Before the rain began...

And I finish ___ my coffee
 And it's time ___ catch the train





Tom's Diner – Suzanne Vega – Complete



I am sitting
In the morning
At the diner
On the corner

I am waiting
At the counter
For the man
To pour the coffee

And he fills it
Only halfway
And before
I even argue

He is looking
Out the window
At somebody
Coming in

"It is always
Nice to see you"
Says the man
Behind the counter

To the woman
Who has come in
She is shaking
Her umbrella

And I look
The other way
As they are kissing
Their hellos

I'm pretending
Not to see them
And instead
I pour the milk

I open
Up the paper
There's a story
Of an actor

Who had died
While he was drinking
It was no one
I had heard of

And I'm turning
To the horoscope
And looking
For the funnies

When I'm feeling
Someone watching me
And so
I raise my head

There's a woman
On the outside
Looking inside
Does she see me?

No she does not
Really see me
'Cause she sees
Her own reflection

And I'm trying
Not to notice
That she's hitching up
Her skirt

And while she's straightening her stockings
Her hair
Has gotten wet

Oh, this rain
It will continue
Through the morning
As I'm listening

To the bells
Of the cathedral
I am thinking
Of your voice...

And of the midnight picnic
Once upon a time
Before the rain began...

And I finish up my coffee
And it's time to catch the train