



VIVA LA VIDA by Coldplay

DISCUSSING THE TOPIC

1. How much do you know about kings and queens? Which of these countries have a king or queen?

Spain Denmark Belgium Thailand Swaziland Saudi Arabia England The Netherlands

2. Think of differences between a king and a president. Discuss with a classmate and write some ideas.

A king would...

A president would...

3. Now, how is being a king today different now than it was a long time ago (15th century, for example)? Do you know any famous ones?

VOCABULARY

4. Match the verbs with the nouns to form phrases from a song.

blow down

call

give

hold

roll

rule

shatter

someone's name

the dice

the doors

the key

the windows

the word

the world

5. Listen to the song and fill in the gaps with the phrases.

used to rule

feel the fear

gave the word

used to roll

can't explain

wicked and wild wind

what I had become

used to own

when I ruled the world

I _____ the world,
Seas would rise when I _____
Now in the morning I sleep alone,
Sweep the streets I _____
I _____ the dice,
_____ in my enemies' eyes
Listen as the crowd would sing:
"Now the old king is dead! Long live the king!"
One minute I held the key,
next the walls were closed on me
And I discovered that my castles stand
upon pillars of salt and pillars of sand

I hear Jerusalem bells are ringing, Roman Catholic choirs are singing
Be my mirror, my sword, and shield, My missionaries in a foreign field
For some reason I _____, Once you know there was never,
Never an honest word...that was when I ruled the world

It was the _____,
blew down the doors to let me in
Shattered windows and the sound of drums,
people could not believe _____
Revolutionaries wait
for my head on a silver plate
Just a puppet on a lonely string—
Oh who would ever want to be King?

I hear Jerusalem bells are ringing, Roman Catholic choirs are singing
Be my mirror, my sword, and shield, My missionaries in a foreign field
For some reason I can't explain, I know Saint Peter won't call my name
Never an honest word...and that was when I ruled the world

ANALYSING THE LYRICS

6. How do you think the king is feeling? Why?

Regretful / Happy / Satisfied / Confused / Proud / Nostalgic / Sad / Revengeful / Grateful

7. Read the following extracts from the song. Discuss with your classmates the situations they may refer to.

“One minute I held the key, next the walls were closed on me”

“And I discovered that my castles stand upon pillars of salt and pillars of sand”

(Note: "pillars of sand" is a reference to the biblical parable given by Jesus about the fool who built his house on sand, and the wise man who built it on solid rock.)

“Never an honest word...that was when I ruled the world”

“Revolutionaries wait for my head on a silver plate”

“Just a puppet on a lonely string”

“I know Saint Peter won't call my name”

(Note: this refers to the popular tradition of St. Peter guarding the gates of Heaven. He is often depicted in art as holding its keys.)

8. Now, look at the cover of the album, a painting by Eugene Delacroix. Can you see any connection with the song?



GRAMMAR FOCUS

9. Look at these sentences and phrases from the song. Do they refer to things that happen in the present or in the past? How often did they happen?

“I **used to** rule the world.”

“...the streets I **used to** own.”

“The crowd **would** sing: now the old king is dead, long live the king.”

“Seas **would** rise when I gave the word.”

10. What do you think is the function of the words in bold?

11. Let's read the information below about *used to* and *would*.

used to

Use *used to* to refer to something that was normal or habitual in the past.

It can refer to actions: "I *used to roll the dice*, and feel the fear in my enemies' eyes."

or to states: "I sweep the streets I *used to own*."

would

We can also use the modal verb *would* when talking about habitual actions or routines in the past.

"Seas *would rise* when I gave the word." "The crowd *would sing*..."

Would in this sense cannot be used for states: "~~I sweep the streets I would own.~~"

CREATIVE MOMENT

12. Look at the following kings. Complete the lyrics of the song with an appropriate situation.

Elvis Presley, King of Rock & Roll

I used to _____

People would _____ when _____

Listen as the crowd would _____.

King Kong

I used to _____

People would _____ when _____

Listen as the crowd would _____.

Burger King

I used to _____

People would _____ when _____

Listen as the crowd would _____.

13. Write a diary entry. Imagine it was written by a retired king, and he remembers his days on the throne. Think of the type of king he was, his rule, and how he feels about the old days.