

Teacher's Guide: The Story Behind "Vivir Mi Vida"

Spanish cultural video lesson for novice to intermediate high school students

Target Audience: High School Spanish Students (Novice to Intermediate)

Theme: Culture, Identity, Vocabulary, Listening & Speaking

Lesson Duration: 45–60 minutes

Materials Needed:

- "Vivir Mi Vida – Music That Inspires Joy | Forum by Prométour" video with Yahya
- "Vivir Mi Vida" by Marc Anthony (official music video, YouTube)
- Student handout
- Projector or screen
- Optional: map of Morocco, Spain, and the Americas; images of Marc Anthony, RedOne, salsa instruments, and Maghreb culture

Lesson Overview

This high school–level Spanish lesson introduces students to the cultural journey of the song "Vivir Mi Vida," from its North African (Maghreb) roots to its rebirth as a Latin salsa anthem.

Through a short video and simple follow-up activities, students engage with Spanish vocabulary, discover how one song traveled from Morocco to New York, and explore how music can carry many cultures and identities at the same time.

The goal is to boost cultural awareness and foster enthusiasm for the Spanish language through a fun, relatable music context that works for novice learners.

Procedure (Step-by-Step)

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Ask students what they already know about Marc Anthony, salsa music, and the song "Vivir Mi Vida." You can ask first in English, then write simple Spanish versions on the board. Play a short clip of the song so students can hear whether they recognize it.

- What do you know about salsa music? (songs, instruments, dance steps) / ¿Qué sabes sobre la salsa? (canciones, instrumentos, pasos de baile)
- Do you know the singer Marc Anthony? If yes, what do you know about him? / ¿Conoces al cantante Marc Anthony? Si lo conoces, ¿qué sabes de él?
- Have you heard the song "Vivir Mi Vida"? / ¿Has oído la canción "Vivir Mi Vida"?
- Did you know this song originally came from North Africa? Let's find out how! / ¿Sabías que esta canción viene del norte de África? ¡Vamos a descubrir cómo!

2. Watch "Vivir Mi Vida - Music That Inspires Joy | Forum by Prométour"

(7 minutes)

Introduce the video to the class: We're going to watch a video created by Yahya, a student from Morocco, who tells the story behind the song and where it comes from.

Play the "Vivir Mi Vida" video with Yahya. During the first viewing, students can focus on the general idea: the song has North African roots and became a global Latin hit.

During the second viewing, students can listen for words and ideas they recognize, such as Marruecos, salsa, ritmo, identidad, alegría, Maghreb, and cultura.

3. RedOne: Global Sound, Moroccan Soul (10 minutes)

Distribute the student handout and choose a student to read the section "**Meet RedOne: Global Sound, Moroccan Soul**" to learn his full story.

Summarize the reading: RedOne (Nadir Khayat) is a music producer born in Tétouan, Morocco, a city where Arabic, French, and Spanish blend in everyday life. He has written hits for global stars like Lady Gaga, Shakira, and Jennifer Lopez. In 2012, he teamed up with Algerian singer Cheb Khaled, the King of Raï music, to create the French-Arabic hit "C'est la Vie." Keep the explanation simple for novice learners. Show a map and ask students to find Morocco and Algeria. Point to the countries that make up the **Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia)**.

4. Watch "Marc Anthony - Vivir Mi Vida (Official Video)" 2 Times (10 minutes)

Now play the official "Vivir Mi Vida" music video so students hear the finished salsa version.

During the first viewing, students simply enjoy the song and focus on its energy and mood: How would you describe the feeling of the music? Is it happy, sad, calm, or full of life?

During the second viewing, students listen for Spanish words and phrases they recognize, such as voy a reír, voy a bailar, vivir mi vida, and pay attention to the salsa rhythm, the horns, and the percussion. Ask students how the music makes them feel and whether they can still sense the North African spirit underneath the Latin sound. This prepares them for Part 2 and Part 3 of the worksheet.

5. Marc Anthony and the Journey of the Song (10 minutes)

From the student handout, read aloud the section "Marc Anthony Adds the Voice of Latin New York" to learn his full story.

Explain that in 2013 Marc Anthony, a Puerto Rican-American singer from New York, heard "C'est la Vie" and recognized its universal energy. With RedOne's blessing, he rewrote the lyrics completely in Spanish and rebuilt the music as salsa-pop, creating "Vivir Mi Vida." He added salsa horns, Caribbean percussion, and his signature power-voice. Point out that the song traveled from the Maghreb to New York, carrying the same message of joy.

6. Students Complete the Worksheet activities (10–15 minutes)

Students complete the worksheet (Parts 1–3) based on the video, the reading, and the song. The worksheet is intentionally simple and written in accessible Spanish so novice students can participate without feeling overwhelmed.

7. Vocabulary Practice (5 minutes)

Review the key words from the worksheet. Ask students to repeat each word and connect it with a simple meaning or image.

- la canción
- la salsa
- el ritmo
- la identidad
- la cultura
- el orgullo
- Marruecos / el Magreb

8. Simple Speaking Practice (5–10 minutes)

Students practice one or two simple Spanish sentences using the sentence starters below, with a partner or as a quick exit-ticket activity.

- “Vivir Mi Vida” es...
- La canción me hace sentir...
- Me gustaría visitar... porque...
- Una cosa que aprendí es...

9. Wrap-Up Reflection (5 minutes)

To conclude, students complete the final reflection section of the worksheet (Part 3). They can answer in Spanish with a word, a phrase, or a simple sentence.

Optional Discussion: Music, Identity, and Culture

Use the video as a springboard for a short discussion about how music, language, and identity connect.

- How can one song belong to more than one culture?
- Why does music cross borders so easily?
- What does “Vivir Mi Vida” tell us about identity?
- How does the music we listen to tell our own stories?

Assessment

- Formative: teacher observes participation during vocabulary practice, video discussion, and the simple speaking activity.
- Summative: completed student worksheet.
- Optional: students create a mini “music journey” map or give a one-minute presentation about how the song traveled across cultures.

Differentiation & Support

- Use visuals and gestures for key vocabulary.
- Pair novice learners with more experienced students.
- Provide sentence starters such as “La canción me hace sentir...” and “Una cosa que aprendí es...”.

- Allow students to respond with one-word answers, short phrases, drawings, or complete sentences.
- Replay short parts of the video and pause after key words.

Cultural Extension Ideas

- Locate Morocco, Algeria, Spain, and the Americas on a map and trace the song's journey.
- Research one artist mentioned in the lesson (RedOne, Cheb Khaled, or Marc Anthony).
- Compare the languages spoken in Tétouan (Arabic, French, Spanish) with languages spoken in students' own communities.
- Listen to "C'est la Vie" by Cheb Khaled and compare it with "Vivir Mi Vida."
- Create a class playlist of songs that mix cultures or languages.

Teacher Reflection (Optional Notes)

- What worked well?
- How was student engagement?
- Which vocabulary words were easiest or hardest?
- What would you modify for next time?

Sample Responses / Answer Key

The answers below represent key ideas students may identify from the video, the reading, and the song.

Part 1 - Comprehension

1. **Where is Yahya from?** → Morocco.
2. **Where was RedOne (Nadir Khayat) born?** → Tétouan, Morocco.
3. **Who sings "Vivir Mi Vida"?** → Marc Anthony.
4. **What was the original name of the song before Marc Anthony?** → "C'est la Vie" (by Cheb Khaled, produced by RedOne).

Part 2 - Reading and Listening

5. **Why did Marc Anthony decide to create "Vivir Mi Vida"?** → He heard "C'est la Vie" in 2013 and recognized its universal energy.
6. **What did he add to the song to make it sound Latin? (two things)** → Salsa horns and Caribbean percussion (also his signature power-voice).
7. **What is the message, and how does the music make you feel?** → The message is one of joy, resilience, and cultural pride — about enjoying life and living in the moment. Feelings will vary (for example: happy, energetic, like dancing).

Part 3 - Think about it

Answers will vary. Encourage students to use one idea from the text and one from listening. Example: From the text, the song sounds entirely Latin but keeps the spirit of the Maghreb underneath, and it began as a French-Arabic song before becoming Spanish salsa — so one song can carry several cultures. From listening, students may notice the joyful salsa rhythm, the Spanish lyrics, and the danceable energy that feels both celebratory and universal.