WORKING CHANTS

Poetry has always been a part of everyday life, and just as people now might listen to the radio while they work, in the days before radio, people still used words put to music to make their work go more easily and efficiently. Sailors sung sea shanties—often with one man singing a solo and the others joining in on the chorus – to make sure they all pulled on the ropes or capstan spars at the same time. Infantrymen still devise chants to help them keep a steady rhythm to make it easier to march long distances.

Here's an example based on a news article printed 10 December, 2002:

Police recruits put to the test

New police recruits put their fitness and leadership skills to the test yesterday when they completed the Bermuda Outward Bound assault course.

Leader:

I'm not sure but I'll soon see

Recruits:

I'm not sure but I'll soon see

Leader:

If police work's good for me.

Recruits:

If police work's good for me.

Scan today's edition of *your newspaper* for mention of people who do routine jobs: like stacking shelves in a shop, working in a factory assembly line or washing dishes in a restaurant. Employment ads might be a good place to start.

Cut out the reference and paste it in the space below. Then create a chant to help them complete their task more easily. Once you have finished, invite your classmates to perform your chant, with you taking the lead and them echoing you as a chorus.



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Hind Tennifer "Working Chants" The Royal Gazette Bermuda: Hamilton 2003
Hind, Jennifer. "Working Chants." The Royal Gazette, Bermuda: Hamilton, 2003.