



Sitting on the dock of a bay (by Otis Redding)

Level: Medium; Language: Past Simple, Narrative Tenses, Feelings, Reading Comprehension, Holidays, Sailing, Nature

Task 1: *This is a song about sitting next to the sea, thinking about life. Before you listen, do you understand these words and expressions from the song?*

Mini-dictionary:

a dock = the areas where boats “park” in a port or harbour

roll in, roll away = the movement of the waves of water into and out of the bay

to head = to go to

Frisco = San Francisco

leave me alone = leave me in peace

to roam = to travel with no definite destination

*Now listen to the song. Try to complete the gaps using **nouns**.*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCmUhYSr-e4>

Sitting in the morning _____

I'll be sitting when the _____ come(s)

Watching the _____ roll in

Then I watch them roll away again, yeah

I'm sitting on the dock of the bay

Watching the _____ roll away, ooh

I'm just sitting on the dock of the bay

Wasting time

I left my _____ in Georgia

Headed for the Frisco _____

'Cos I've had nothing to live for

And (it) look(s) like nothing's gonna come my way

So, I'm just gonna sit on the dock of the bay

Watching the _____ roll away, ooh





I'm sitting on the dock of the bay
Wasting time

Looks like nothing's gonna change
_____ still remains the same
I can't do what ten _____ tell me to do
So I guess I'll remain the same, listen

Sitting here resting my _____
And this _____ won't leave me alone, listen
Two thousand _____ I roam
Just to make this dock my home, now

I'm just gonna sit at the dock of a bay
Watching the _____ roll away, ooh
Sitting on the dock of the bay
Wasting time

Task 2: Was that difficult? If so, these are the nouns which you need in order to complete the song. Listen again and put them into the correct gaps.

tide sun miles loneliness everything home ships people
evening bones tide bay tide

Task 3: Read this information about the song and answer the True or False questions below:

"(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay" is a song co-written by soul singer Otis Redding and guitarist Steve Cropper. In August 1967, while sitting on a rented houseboat in Sausalito (California), Redding started writing the lyrics to the song. He completed the writing with the help of producer Steve Cropper, who was also a guitarist. The song incorporates seagull whistles and sounds of the waves crashing on the shore. Tragically, just three days after Redding and his band-mates finished





the final recording of the song, Redding and his five band-mates died in a plane crash that landed in Lake Monona, Wisconsin. (source: Wikipedia.com)

Two interpretations of the song from website songmeanings.com:

[icyhotness](#) on September 11, 2011

My Interpretation: A very beautiful song. The singer has gone all around the world, but it really doesn't feel like much has changed or gotten better in his life. He still finds he is lonely, and only wants to rest at the bay, where he reflects on what his life has become. It seems like he only wants the simple things in life because the expensive, luxurious things leave him feeling empty. I don't think it's a sad song. It's a song that represents a need for a sense of peace.

[Spudly](#) on October 14, 2008

My Interpretation: The song is about being down, depressed and poor. The whistling at the end was to fill the space that he didn't have lyrics for when he recorded it. Otis was going to go back and write lyrics and re-record it. Unfortunately he died and never had the chance to do this. Knowing that makes the song even more powerful. I think it's a depressing song that Otis couldn't properly finish.

Questions – Are these statements True or False?

Otis and Steve wrote this song while they were sitting on a dock.

The sounds of birds and the sea were added to the final version of the song.

Otis Redding died in the sea.

“Icyhotness” thinks that Otis travelled a lot during his life.

“Icyhotness” thinks that the song is anti-materialistic.

“Spudly” thinks that the end of the song is very powerful.

“Spudly” thinks that generally it is a sad song.

Task 4: *What's your interpretation of the song? Do you think it's optimistic or pessimistic? Why?*

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