A Chant Lesson in 40 Minutes

Five chant activities, one rule, nothing to prepare. Two claps and your voice are the whole apparatus.

Before the bell

Write these three lines in the corner of the board and leave them there for the whole lesson. Students look at them far more often than they admit.

She works at night. He works at night. They work at night.

The forty minutes

Min	Game	You	The class
0–8	**The frame**	Clap four beats. Say the line alone, twice, on the beat.	Joins on the third round. No corrections yet.
8–16	**The moving slot**	Change one word. Two rounds per word, six words.	Keeps the frame, changes only the underlined slot.
16–24	**Split the room**	Point at each half on its beat.	One half says the frame, the other says the slot. Swap.
24–32	**Beat the drift**	Raise the tempo one step every four rounds.	Drops out when the line stops fitting. Last one standing wins.
32–40	**Their line**	Take one sentence from the class. Fit it to four beats.	Argues about the wording, then chants their own line.

Six things the beat exposes

These do not show up in writing and do not show up in slow speech. Over a pulse they are impossible to miss — by you or by them.

- Every word given the same weight.
- A pause before the verb while the form is assembled.
- The stress landing on the small word: *I DID go* for no reason.
- *-s* and *-ed* dropped when the tempo rises.
- A full vowel in *to*, *of*, *for*, *can*.
- The line finished late — one beat behind the room.

When to stop

The tempo keeps rising	You stopped keeping the beat. Clap it yourself.
Half the room is behind	Too fast from the start. Go slower than feels right.
Laughter, no English	The line is too silly or the material too young.
Perfect but lifeless	They have it. Change the slot or stop.

> Stop while it is still working. Four rounds that end on a clean one beat ninety seconds that end in giggling.

Make It Your Own

The same five activities work for any rule. Fill one row a week and by the end of term you have ten lessons that need no preparation.

Your rules

Rule	Four-beat line	What the beat exposed

Four things worth copying

- One frame per chant. Two frames teach neither.
- You keep the beat, never the class.
- Six words through the slot, two rounds each, then stop.
- Use it as a transition, not an activity: ninety seconds after the break is worth more than ten minutes in the middle.

The quiet trick

A beat is a shared clock. The moment the room is on it, a side conversation falls out of time and its owners hear it before you do. That is why the chant belongs after the break and in the last five minutes — the two places where asking for quiet costs you more than the lesson does.

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