



Quand j'étais à Tremé

Lesson Objective

To understand and use the imperfect tense to describe what people used to do in town through music, listening, phonics, and cultural exploration.

Level: Year 9 / GCSE Foundation–Higher transition

Pupils have prior knowledge of town vocabulary and present tense verbs.

Activity 1 – Pre-Teaching Vocabulary & Culture Starter

Before listening, introduce key vocabulary and cultural references from the song.

Vocabulary

- chanter – to sing
- éviter – to avoid
- le vaudou – voodoo
- le gombo – okra
- les écrevisses – crawfish
- bouillir – to boil

Suggested Routine

1. Teacher models pronunciation
2. Students repeat chorally
3. Students match French words to English meanings
4. Brief explanation of Tremé and Louisiana culture

This reduces cognitive load before listening and provides cultural context for the song.

Activity 2 – Grammar Noticing Task

Display several verbs from the lyrics before listening:

- j'étais
- je chantais



Quand j'étais à Tremé

- je voyais
- j'évitais

Ask students:

“What pattern do you notice?”

Highlight imperfect endings:

- -ais
- -ait
- -ions

Explain briefly:

“The imperfect tense is often used to describe repeated actions or what life used to be like in the past.”

Students then predict what kinds of activities Maya used to do in Tremé.

Activity 3 – Pre-Listening Prediction Grid

Before hearing the song, students receive the lyrics with gaps. They predict:

- what type of word fits
- whether the missing word is a verb or noun
- possible imperfect endings
- clues from surrounding words

Example Prompt

“Could this verb describe a repeated action in the past?”

Students then listen once without stopping to focus on gist, rhythm, and repeated imperfect forms.

This develops grammatical anticipation and listening resilience.

Activity 4 - Gap Fill – *Ma vie à Tremé*



Quand j'étais à Tremé

Complète les paroles avec les verbes à l'imparfait.

Verbs Support Box

chantais – voyais – promenais – évitais – entendais – regardais – sentais – faisais

Quand j'étais jeune, à Tremé, je _____ tout le temps,
Avant, je _____ dans les rues en chantant.
Même, je _____ un spectacle de vaudou,
Je me _____, je _____ du gombo partout.
Le soir, je _____ avec ma mère,
Et j'_____ les alligators près de la rivière.
Un jour, j'_____ de la musique très fort,
Aujourd'hui, je pense encore à Tremé et au port.

Answers:

Quand **j'étais** jeune, à Tremé, je **chantais** tout le temps,
Avant, je **me promenais** dans les rues en chantant.
Même, je **regardais** un spectacle de vaudou,
Je **me sentais**, je **voyais** du gombo partout.
Le soir, je **faisais** avec ma mère,
Et **j'évitais** les alligators près de la rivière.
Un jour, **j'entendais** de la musique très fort,
Aujourd'hui, je pense encore à Tremé et au port.

Activity 5 – Phonics Gap Hunt

Replay the song. Students complete the missing words while focusing on pronunciation patterns.

Students:

- underline imperfect endings they hear
- identify silent endings
- circle nasal sounds or repeated phonics patterns



Quand j'étais à Tremé

Example

Avant, je _____ dans les rues en chantant.

Students use phonics and context clues to complete the gaps accurately.

This helps learners connect pronunciation to spelling under authentic listening conditions.

Activity 6 – Creative Imperfect Tense Writing Task

Students create their own short verse about what they used to do in their town or neighbourhood.

Suggested Structure

- Quand j'étais jeune...
- Je jouais...
- Je regardais...
- J'écoutais...

Students may:

- use the song as a model
- use sentence builders or dictionaries
- include cultural or personal references

Extension

- perform their verse aloud
- add opinions and justifications
- compare life “before” and “today”

This develops fluency, retrieval, and independent manipulation of the imperfect tense in a meaningful context.