

ESCUELA  
OFICIAL  
DE  
IDIOMAS  
OVIEDO

CENTRO DE AUTOAPRENDIZAJE

IDIOMA: INGLÉS

PRÁCTICA: COMPRENSIÓN ORAL

NIVEL: CICLO SUPERIOR

MATERIAL: CINTA-CD / CUESTIONARIO / SOLUCIONES

TEMA: VOCABULARIO

More than four decades after making his first musical mark with *The Drifters*, Ben E. King's voice remains one of the most expressive instruments in musical history. Time and experience have brought added nuances to his gift and when he sings, there's nothing like it in the world.



## Ben E. King

Born in Henderson, North Carolina, **Ben E. King** had his first formal experience in hometown church choirs. Later, his family moved to New York City's Harlem and it was there that Ben E. founded his first group while attending James Fenimore Junior High School. The group was called The Four B's (for Ben E., Billy, Billy & Bobby). They were neighborhood buddies and marked Ben E.'s first singing experience outside of gospel music. "The best that I could get out of that group, though," Ben E. recalls, "was marrying Betty, the sister of brothers Billy and Bobby".

A series of groups and performances followed. Then, one day in 1959, Ben E. was singing in his father's restaurant and the manager of a group called The Five Crowns stopped in. That was really when it all began to happen for Ben E. King. The promising young group, with the new addition of Ben E. King (not yet 21) was chosen to take The Drifters name and step into their shoes - the original Drifters had disbanded, leaving their manager with contracts to fulfill. King was the featured lead vocalist and occasional composer on several of their recordings including "There Goes My Baby", the first record by the group to reach the Top 5, and "Save The Last Dance For Me".

After leaving the group in 1960, he recorded the classic single "Spanish Harlem" (1961), which maintained the Latin quality of the Drifters' work and deservedly reached the US Top 10. The follow-up, "Stand By Me" (1961), was even more successful and was followed by further hits, including "Amor" (1961) and "Don't Play That Song" (1962). Throughout the

following period, King's work was aimed increasingly at the pop audience: "I (Who Have Nothing)", "I Could Have Danced All Night" (both 1963) and "It's All Over" (1964).

"Seven Letters" and "The Record (Baby I Love You)" (both 1965) prepared the way for the rhetorical "What Is Soul?" (1967), which effectively placed King alongside such soul contemporaries as Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett. King later re-signed with his former company and secured a US Top 5 hit in 1975 with "Supernatural Thing Part 1." In 1977, a collaboration with the Average White Band resulted in two R&B chart entries and an excellent album, "Benny And Us."

King's later recordings included "Music Trance" (1980) and "Street Tough" (1981). In 1986, "Stand By Me" was included in a film of the same name, reaching the US Top 10 and number 1 in the UK.

Many critics and music observers insist that it was Ben E.'s gospel-rooted, high pitched vocal delivery both with The Drifters and then on his own, that has influenced every high tenor R&B vocalist to come along since.

## Ben E. King

① Before you listen to *Stand by me*, make sure you know the meaning of the following words and expressions that appear in the song:

- |           |             |               |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| a. tumble | b. crumble  | c. shed       |
| d. tear   | e. whenever | f. as long as |

Read the definitions below. It will help you to understand the song properly.

- a. verb [I] = to fall quickly and without control:  
I lost my footing and tumbled down the stairs.
- b. verb [I][T] = to break, or cause something to break, into small pieces:  
She nervously crumbled the bread between her fingers.  
The cliffs on which the houses are built are starting to crumble.
- c. verb [T] = shed tears/blood/light, etc. to produce tears, light, blood etc:  
She shed a few tears at her daughter's wedding.  
So much blood has been shed (= So many people have been badly hurt or killed) in this war.
- d. noun [C] = a drop of salty liquid which flows from the eye, as a result of strong emotion, especially unhappiness, or pain:  
Tears of regret/happiness/laughter  
Did you notice the tears in his eyes when he talked about his daughter?
- e. adverb, conjunction = every or any time:  
I blush whenever I think about it.  
Whenever I go there they seem to be in bed.  
I try to use olive oil whenever possible.
- f. adverb = if (used to say that something must happen before something else can happen):  
I can come as long as I can leave by 4.00.  
You can bring all your friends just as long as I know how many are coming.

Stand

by

me

② Read the lyrics of **Stand by me** you will find below. All the words belong to the song, but some of them are not in the correct place.

Listen to the song as many times as you need and try to put the words back to the original place.

When the light has come  
 And the sky is dark  
 And the mountains is the only land we'll see  
 No, I won't be afraid  
 No, I won't be afraid  
 Just as long as you stand  
 Stand by me

*Chorus*

So darling, darling  
 Stand by me  
 Oh, stand by me  
 Oh, stand  
 Stand by me  
 Stand by me

If the tear that we shed  
 Should crumble and cry  
 Or the moon should tumble to the night  
 I won't fall, I won't fall  
 No, I won't look upon a sea  
 Just as long as you stand  
 Stand by me

*Chorus(twice)*

And darling, darling  
 Stand by me  
 Oh, stand by me  
 Oh, stand  
 Stand by me  
 Stand by me

Whenever you're in trouble  
 Won't you stand by me  
 Oh, stand by me  
 Oh, won't you stand  
 Stand by me  
 Stand by me

③ Go to the KEY page and check out your answers.

④ Can you explain the title of the song? What does *stand by* mean?

## KEY

## Ben E. King

When the **night** has come  
 And the **land** is dark  
 And the **moon** is the only **light** we'll see  
 No, I won't be afraid  
 No, I won't be afraid  
 Just as long as you stand  
 Stand by me

*Chorus*

So darling, darling  
 Stand by me  
 Oh, stand by me  
 Oh, stand  
 Stand by me  
 Stand by me

If the **sky** that we **look upon**  
 Should **tumble** and **fall**  
 Or the **mountains** should **crumble** to the **sea**  
 I won't **cry**, I won't **cry**  
 No, I won't **shed** a **tear**  
 Just as long as you stand  
 Stand by me

*Chorus(twice)*

And darling, darling  
 Stand by me  
 Oh, stand by me  
 Oh, stand  
 Stand by me  
 Stand by me

Whenever you're in trouble  
 Won't you stand by me  
 Oh, stand by me  
 Oh, won't you stand  
 Stand by me  
 Stand by me

Stand  
by  
me

④ Can you explain the title of the song? What does *stand by* mean?

*stand by somebody* (phrasal verb)

to continue to support or help someone who is in a difficult situation; to be available and ready to act if needed or called upon.