HEY NOM DISCUSSION HINTS

OPENING DISCUSSION

Here are some questions you can ask to begin and guide the discussion. You will also see possible responses. You don’t have to ask them all or do them in order.

This is not an exhaustive discussion. It is just to get some thoughts going.

See “BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE” at the end of this document to give you some basics.

1. What does the word CREOLE mean to you?

Students might know about food. They might also confuse CREOLE with Cajun.

2. What does the language sound like?

They might focus on the French aspect.

If they know French, they will notice a difference in the Creole accent.

3. Do you recognize any words?

The interjections “Hey” are just that. They have no meaning.

Words they are most likely to pick up on are”

-Non (Man. They might think it means “name”.

-Vilaj (Village)

-Levé (Get Up. They might recognize the word from *levee*, the raised banks of a river.)

4. What do you think of the music?

5. What musical instruments do you hear?

Electric guitar, percussion, accordion. The accordion is often the dominant instrument in Zydeco music.

6. Do you think the singer is American?

He is. The vocalist is LeRoy Etienne, born and raised in south Louisiana. His first language was Louisiana Creole (LC) (Kréyol.)

7. Do you know any of these words?

* Creole- Originally meant someone of Old World Ancestry (French, Spanish, African, etc) who was born in the New World

-Creoles of Color- Multi-racial Creoles who were descended at least partly from Africans.

-Creolization/Creolité- The process of mixing cultural aspects of Europe, Africa, and America that brought about the creation of a new culture.

-Zydeco- Creole folk music of south Louisiana.

-Free People of Color- A term for people of African ancestry in the South who were not enslaved. Small in most southern states, much larger in parts of Louisiana.

8. Were you aware that large groups of multi-racial people lived in the South before the American Civil War?

**DISCUSSION AFTER DISTRIBUTION OF LYRICS**

The composer, who also sings and plays percussion, refers to this as a work song. It is about a typical day of a South Louisiana working person who needs to get up and get the day going.

He is about to go to work. He also plans to get some money and go to town with his wife or girlfriend and buy something.

Kréyol is not the language of highly educated people who learn it in school. It is a language used by average working class people who pick it up from family members and neighbors. It is largely used by People of Color, though some whites speak it, and more whites would speak Louisiana Cajun, which is similar in some ways.