

WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

Woody Guthrie's New Year's Resolutions 1943

Woody Guthrie (1912-1967) was the great American folk singer, trade unionist and socialist, who amongst others, heavily influenced Bob Dylan. In the middle of World War Two on 1st January, 1943, Woody wrote down 33 "Rulin's", as he called them, or **resolutions**, as we say today, for 1944 in his notebook.

(Editor's note: In standard English "Rulin's" would be "rulings".)

Woody lived the life of a **hobo**, travelling the **length and breadth** of the USA with his guitar, singing about the struggles of the poor, fighting injustice and supporting working class people.

He is best known for his song This Land is Your Land which many people consider to be the USA's alternative national anthem.

Woody's resolutions reveal a lot about the life he lived and his hopes, dreams, responsibilities and worries. However, some of them are obviously **tongue in cheek!**

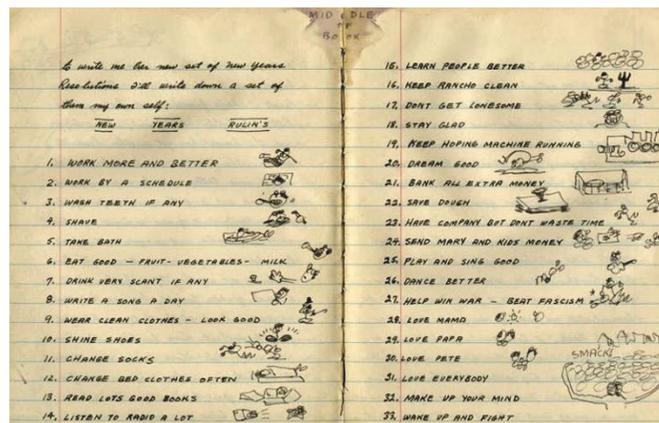
1. *Work more and better*
2. *Work by a schedule*
3. *Wash teeth if any*
4. *Shave*
5. *Take bath*
6. *Eat good — fruit — vegetables — milk*
7. *Drink very **scant** if any*
8. *Write a song a day*
9. *Wear clean clothes — look good*
10. *Shine shoes*
11. *Change socks*
12. *Change bed clothes often*
13. *Read lots good books*
14. *Listen to radio a lot*
15. *Learn people better*
16. *Keep **rancho** clean*
17. *Don't get **lonesome***
18. *Stay glad*
19. *Keep hoping machine running*
20. *Dream good*
21. *Bank all extra money*
22. *Save **dough***
23. *Have company but don't waste time*
24. *Send Mary and kids money*
25. *Play and sing good*
26. *Dance better*
27. *Help win war — beat fascism*
28. *Love mama*
29. *Love papa*
30. *Love Pete**
31. *Love everybody*
32. ***Make up your mind***
33. *Wake up and fight*

Although Woody's resolutions were written 78 years ago, most of them speak to us today. He wanted to be a better person and to get rid of his bad habits. The resolutions also show the **turmoils** creative people go through. Woody felt he had to know people better, read more and listen to the radio so he could write at least a song a day.

Woody wrote down his "Rulin's" at the time of world war and his resolutions reflect his personal and political concerns for both his loved ones and the whole of humanity. *Turn to page 2*

14/01/21 / Keyword: resolutions

2020 has been a tough year. Coach John looks at some "Rulin's" made in 1943 at a time of great turmoil and wonders if our 2021 resolutions will be more profound



On 1st January, 1943, Woody Guthrie wrote his "Rulin's" in the centre pages of his journal.

Useful vocabulary

resolution: a promise made to yourself, usually at New Year

hobo: a travelling, homeless person

length and breadth: everywhere, North, East, South and West

tongue in cheek: ironic, flippant

scant: not a lot, minimal

rancho: a hut or group of huts for housing ranch workers

lonesome: lonely

dough: mixture of flour and liquid, ingredients for bread and colloquial term for money

make up your mind: decide

turmoils: disturbance, confusion, a time of uncertainty

Let's chat about that!

1. **What did you learn about Woody's lifestyle from his resolutions?**
2. **Which bad habits did Woody want to get rid of?**
3. **What do you imagine Mary and the kids thought about Woody's life?**
4. **Which of Woody's resolutions do you think are 'tongue in cheek'?**
5. **Are there any of Woody's resolutions which you will add to YOUR list for 2021?**

LIVE! English Events

Come and socialise in English!



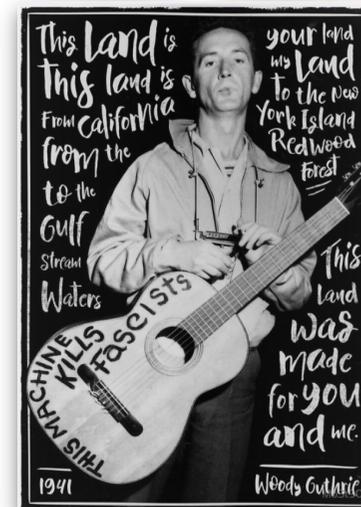
<u>Coffee Saturdays</u>	<u>Sports Dive</u>	<u>Cinema Nights</u>
1st Saturday 11:00	2nd Friday 18:30	Last Friday 19:30
3rd Oct ✓	16th Oct ✓	30th Oct ✓
7th Nov ✓	13th Nov ✓	27th Nov ✓
5th Dec ✓	11th Dec ✓	Not in Dec ✓
9th Jan	22nd Jan	29th Jan
6th Feb	12th Feb	26th Feb
6th Mar	12th Mar	26th Mar
Not in April	16th Apr	30th April
8th May	14th May	28th May
5th Jun	11th Jun	25th Jun



Maybe the events of 2020 have changed the way you look at the world and your resolutions for 2021 are different to the usual ones...

**Pete Seeger, the US folksinger and social activist who died in 2014.*

Written by ECP coach John Hird



10 COMMON RESOLUTIONS

Have you made & kept any of these?

1. Exercise more
2. **Lose weight**
3. Get organised
4. **Learn a new skill or hobby**
5. Live life to the fullest
6. **Save more money / spend less money**
7. Quit smoking and/or drinking alcohol
8. **Spend more time with family and friends**
9. Travel more
10. **Read more**

Chat with your colleagues and ECP coach!

John's Top 3 predictions for 2021

WHAT ARE YOURS?

1. Home and flexible working will continue but companies and workers will have to negotiate the pros and cons and who benefits.
2. The idea of well funded health and other public services will have majority support in society.
3. The vaccines will work and a kind of 'normality' will return but it cannot be predicted how we will use our newly acquired super powers...

Writing Competition!

The best stories will win a prize!
Ask your ECP coach for details!

In January, why not write us a story (true or fictional) based on some of the arguments you witnessed over Christmas?

Use the phrasal verbs from December's WEP. Did anyone **storm off** during Christmas dinner? Or were you all able to **laugh it off** and enjoy the meal?