

Five Feet High and Rising by Johnny Cash

How high's the water, **mama**?
Two feet high and **risin'**
How high's the water, **papa**?
Two feet high and **risin'**

We can make **it** to the road in a homemade boat
That's the only thing we got left that'll float
It's already over all the wheat and the oats
Two feet high and **risin'**

How high's the water, **mama**?
Three feet high and **risin'**
How high's the water, **papa**?
Three feet high and **risin'**

Well, the **hives** are gone
I've lost my bees
The chickens are sleepin'
In the willow **trees**
Cow's in water up past her **knees**
Three feet high and **risin'**

How high's the water, **mama**?
Four feet high and **risin'**
How high's the water, **papa**?
Four feet high and **risin'**

Hey, come look through the window pane
The bus is comin', gonna take us to the train
Looks like we'll be **blessed** with a little more rain
4 feet high and **risin'**

How high's the water, **mama**?
Five feet high and **risin'**
How high's the water, **papa**?
Five feet high and **risin'**

Well, the rails are washed out north of town
We gotta **head** for higher ground
We can't come back till the water comes **down**
Five feet high and **risin'**

Well, it's five feet high and **risin'**

Comment [HW1]: connect this song to units on weather or disasters or stories about living on a ranch or a farm

Comment [HW2]: Introduce both the story and singer; let students know that this is a famous song that discusses the distress of people whose livelihood depends on the weather

Comment [HW3]: Treat this as a mini-drama. Who are the people in the story? Who is the narrator? What is his role?

Comment [HW4]: Teach once stanza at a time, after listening to the whole song first. Don't overexplain, however.

Comment [HW5]: "make it" is an important idiom that students should know.

Comment [HW6]: probe for pronoun reference. What is "it"?

Comment [HW7]: nice opportunity to show that songs often use colloquial language (comin' and goin')

Comment [HW8]: Explain hives in relationship to "bees". Ask students to use context clues to guess what "hives" might mean and why they are important

Comment [HW9]: Draw students' attention to the images used in this song. Ask them to imagine a video, what would they see? (draw it?)

Comment [HW10]: In the U.S., good writing uses lots of concrete language - better than all the animals are in trouble

Comment [HW11]: point out that speeches, poetry and songs rely on the power of repetition to being force to the language. Do students know other examples?

Comment [HW12]: You may want to point out the note of sarcasm here

Comment [HW13]: students should be able to guess this word

Comment [HW14]: As follow-up ask students if they have ever been in or heard of a similar situation. Make the connection back to Katrina and have students retell the Katrina story as a language experience story. Consider writing a short story and recording it.

Comment [HW15]: For more speaking practice, have students think about what might happen next to that family. What will they find when they come back? How will they survive.