

Music to our ears

This month our activities will focus on the topic of music. Our B2 First and C1 Advanced students will practise Use of English with a text about studying music in schools. Our B1 Preliminary and B2 First students will watch a video about songwriting and will write an article about a song they like. Finally, our young learners will practise reading and writing sentences about music. Happy teaching!

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1. Do we need music in schools?

Level: B2 First / C1 Advanced

Skills: Use of English, Speaking and Writing

Interaction: Individual, in pairs and whole class activity

Time: 75 mins



Warm up (10') – whole class activity

- What kind of music do you enjoy listening to? Why?
- Who are your favourite singers or musicians? Why do you like them?
- Do you play any instruments? Which ones?
- Do you think music should be taught in schools? Why (not)?
- What advantages or disadvantages could this have?

Use of English (10') – individual activity

Read the text below and think of a word which best fits gaps 1-8. Use one word in each gap.

Do we need music education in schools?

"Without music, life would be a mistake" – Friedrich Nietzsche

Does the widespread belief that those 1. _____ study music generally perform better academically have any truth to it? A head teacher at a primary school in England certainly believes that music was the key to transforming his students' literacy and numeracy results. But is there a causal relationship 2. _____ studying music and getting good results in other disciplines? And are there other benefits to a musical education?

Plenty of studies suggest that children who attend music classes achieve higher scores. There is scientific evidence behind the argument, as research shows that studying music can cause positive changes to the brain. This could explain 3. _____ education that includes a strong measure of music also supports performance in other subjects such as maths or languages.

4. _____ or not music improves academic results, it may be beneficial in many other ways. Some argue that the sense of belonging brought about by the community aspect of music-making can offer children the right emotional backdrop in 5. _____ for them to thrive. It also offers priceless transferable skills which can be used throughout an individual's career and professional development. 6. _____ from the obvious teamwork and perseverance skills, music-making involves problem-solving, and develops 7. _____ to detail and analysis, all of which are essential in professional life. Music graduates invariably become valuable employees as they have broad skills that make them readily adaptable.

Sometimes countries view music and arts education as a luxury addition in the curriculum, rather than an integral cornerstone. Indeed in some parts of Europe the responsibility for musical education has 8. _____ taken out of schools, and is offered only as an optional extra-curricular activity. While compulsory school curricula ensure more equal educational opportunity, this approach of placing music education outside the school setting may lead to unequal take-up of provision and may reinforce social inequity.

Adapted from Eurostat (2018)

Follow-up (10') – in pairs

Compare answers in pairs working together to explain why you chose this word. Then look at the key and correct your answers. What was the problem with the questions you got wrong? Now answer the following questions:

- Do you think that attending music lessons can improve academic performance in other subjects?
- What other advantages of studying music are mentioned in the text?
- What disadvantages do you think there could be to learning music in school?

Writing (45') – individual activity

Your class has attended a conference about the importance of the arts in education. Your teacher has asked you to write an essay in answer to the question below:

Some people say that it is not important to teach the arts in schools. Do you agree with this view?

Write about

1. Employability
2. Personal development
3. Your own idea

Write your essay in 220-260 words.

Key

Use of English

Do we need music education in schools?

"Without music, life would be a mistake" — Friedrich Nietzsche

Does the widespread belief that those 1. **who** study music generally perform better academically have any truth to it? A head teacher at a primary school in England certainly believes that music was the key to transforming his students' literacy and numeracy results. But is there a causal relationship 2. **between** studying music and getting good results in other disciplines? And are there other benefits to a musical education?

Plenty of studies suggest that children who attend music classes achieve higher scores. There is scientific evidence behind the argument, as research shows that studying music can cause positive changes to the brain. This could explain 3. **why** education that includes a strong measure of music also supports performance in other subjects such as maths or languages.

4. **Whether** or not music improves academic results, it may be beneficial in many other ways. Some argue that the sense of belonging brought about by the community aspect of music-making can offer children the right emotional backdrop in 5. **order** for them to thrive. It also offers priceless transferable skills which can be used throughout an individual's career and professional development. 6. **Aside / apart** from the obvious teamwork and perseverance skills, music-making involves problem-solving, and develops 7. **attention** to detail and analysis, all of which are essential in professional life. Music graduates invariably become valuable employees as they have broad skills that make them readily adaptable.

Sometimes countries view music and arts education as a luxury addition in the curriculum, rather than an integral cornerstone. Indeed in some parts of Europe the responsibility for musical education has 8. **been** taken out of schools, and is offered only as an optional extra-curricular activity. While the compulsory school curricula ensures more equal educational opportunity, this approach of placing music education outside the school setting may lead to unequal take-up of provision and may reinforce social inequity.

Follow-up – possible answers

Do you think that attending music lessons can improve academic performance in other subjects?

Students' own answers.

What other advantages of studying music are mentioned in the text?

The sense of belonging and community aspect of making music can offer children an emotional backdrop which helps them thrive. It offers transferable skills useful for professional development. It involves skills such as teamwork, perseverance, problem-solving, analysis and attention to detail. Music graduates are valuable employees as they are adaptable with broad skills.

What disadvantages do you think there could be to learning music in school?

Students' own answers.

2. The secret to songwriting

Level: B1 Preliminary / B2 First

Skills: Listening, Speaking and Writing

Interaction: Individual, in pairs and whole class activity

Time: 65 minutes



Warm up (10') – whole class activity

- What kind of music do you like? Why?
- Is there a genre of music that you don't like? Why?
- Who are your favourite singers or musicians? Why do you like them?
- Can you sing or play a musical instrument?
- What do you think is important for a song to be successful?
- How has music changed over the years?

Listening (15') – in pairs and individual activity

You are going to watch a [video](#) about writing songs. Look at these expressions from the video. What do you think they mean? Discuss them with your partner and teacher.

- To top the charts
- To be a major player
- To cut to the chase
- To be in tune with something

Now read the questions below and write an answer. You will watch the video twice.



1. What does Max Martin do?

2. Which information did Chris Dalla Riva collect about number one songs?

3. What is the average intro length of Max's number one songs?

4. Which invention gave us access to a greater choice of music?

5. When do songwriters get paid for streaming?

Useful vocabulary

- **A hit** – something very popular or successful
- **A (record) label** – a company that records and sells music
- **A single** – a song sold alone
- **Catchy** – describes a song which is easy to remember
- **A trend** – a tendency or change in behaviour

Definitions adapted from Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2023)

Writing (40') – individual activity

You see this announcement in an English-language magazine.

Articles wanted

My favourite song

What is your favourite song? What is the song about? Why do you like it?

Write an article answering these questions for the chance to win two tickets to the London Music Festival. The best articles will be published in next month's issue.

Write your article in 140-190 words.



Suggested answers

Listening

1. What does Max Martin do?

He writes songs.

2. Which information did Chris Dalla Riva collect about number one songs?

The songs, artists, songwriters and labels.

3. What is the average intro length of Max's number one songs?

Nine seconds.

4. Which invention gave us access to a greater choice of music?

Streaming platforms like YouTube and Spotify.

5. When do songwriters get paid for streaming?

When a song plays for more than 30 seconds.



3. Music time!

Level: Pre A1 Starters, A1 Movers & A2 Flyers

Skills: Speaking, Reading and Writing

Interaction: individual, pairs and whole class activity

Time: 30-35 minutes



Warm up (10') – whole class activity

- Do you like listening to music? Why?
- How often do you listen to music?
- What is your favourite song?
- Can you play an instrument? Which one?
- Do you like dancing to music?

Look at the picture below.

- What are the people doing?
- Which instruments can you see?



Reading and Writing (10') – individual activity (A1 Movers, A2 Flyers)

Complete the sentences with one word

1. The boy with the guitar is wearing grey _____.
2. One guitar is brown and one guitar is _____.

Answer the questions

3. What is the girl in the yellow skirt doing? _____.
4. Which instruments are the children playing? _____.

Now write two sentences about the picture

5. _____.
6. _____.

Reading (10') – in pairs (Pre A1 Starters)

Find the words in the word search.

Flippity word searches are designed to be printed, not played online.



I	J	T	S	C	B	Z
R	A	D	I	O	L	G
W	D	S	N	G	I	U
O	U	A	G	U	S	I
M	I	N	W	E	T	T
P	O	H	L	M	E	A
S	P	L	A	Y	N	R

Word Direction: → ↓ ↘ ↗

- guitar
- music
- play
- sing
- listen
- piano
- radio
- song

Reading (15') – in pairs (A1 Movers, A2 Flyers)

Read the definitions below and find the word in the word search.

Flippity word searches are designed to be printed, not played online.



Word Direction: → ↓ ↘ ↗

Clues

1. A large musical instrument with black and white keys
2. A performance of music by singers or musicians
3. To move your body and feet to music
4. A musical instrument played by hitting it with your hand or sticks
5. A raised area where singers or actors perform.
6. A musical instrument with strings played with your fingers or a plectrum
7. To hear and pay attention to
8. Sounds made by musical instruments or voices for people to listen to
9. To make music on an instrument
10. A piece of equipment used to listen to music
11. To make musical sounds with your voice
12. A short piece of music with words that people sing

Definitions adapted from Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press, 2023)

Suggested answers

Warm up

What are the people doing?

They are singing, dancing, playing the piano, playing the guitar, reading and writing.

Which instruments can you see?

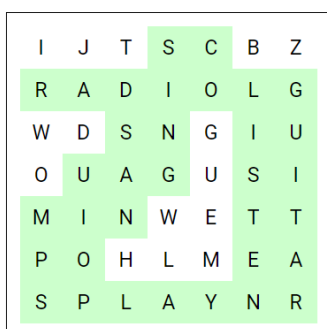
A piano, a drum and two guitars.

Reading and Writing

1. The boy with the guitar is wearing grey **trousers**.
2. One guitar is brown and one guitar is **red**.
3. What is the girl in the yellow skirt doing? **She's dancing**.
4. Which instruments are the children playing? **A piano and a guitar**.

Reading (Pre A1 Starters)

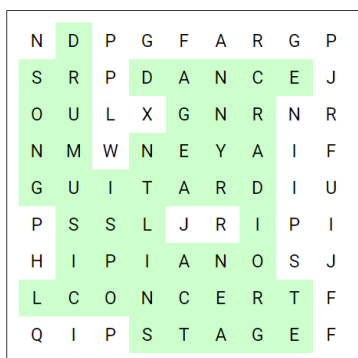
ty word searches are designed to be printed, not played online.



Word Direction: → ↓ ↘ ↗

Reading (A1 Movers, A2 Flyers)

Flippity word searches are designed to be printed, not played online.



Word Direction: → ↓ ↘ ↗



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