



Music

and your brain

Music is fun and relaxing. It allows us to express ideas and feelings – but did you know it's also good for your brain? We've been doing some research and we've found six important benefits.

Thinking

When you listen to music, you use many different parts of the brain to **process** the rhythm, tune and sound. This **strengthens** a part of the brain called the corpus callosum, the bridge between the right and left side of the brain. People with a strong corpus callosum are better at solving problems, making decisions and planning. Studies also show that students' maths and reading skills improve if they study music.



Language

People who play a musical instrument for at least 14 months are better at learning both the grammar and pronunciation of foreign languages. Adults who only learnt music as children still have this ability. Why? People have been making and listening to music for over 500,000 years, but they've only been speaking languages for 200,000 years. Scientists believe that communicating through language developed from humans' original use of music. When you train musically, your language abilities develop too.



Focus

Background music without lyrics is good for studying or working as it can help you concentrate. How? It stimulates brainwaves – faster rhythms help you stay **alert** and concentrate for longer, and slower rhythms help you relax and feel less stressed or anxious.



Physical ability

Want to exercise for longer? Listen to music! When you get tired, the body sends a signal to the brain to stop, but listening to music **distracts** the brain from this. Not only that, it can help you exercise more efficiently and use less oxygen. The best **beats** are house, hip hop, pop and disco.



Memory

Listening to music improves memory because music activates the parts of the brain involved in controlling memory. Hearing a favourite old song can bring back strong memories of an **occasion** or time when you used to listen to it.



Mood

Have you ever felt happier after listening to music? When you listen to music, the brain releases dopamine, the 'feel-good' chemical. Being in the audience at a live music event or performing with others also improves mood.



Did you know

A typical teen spends up to four hours a day listening to music. That's about 6,280 songs a year!

Present perfect simple and present perfect continuous

- 1 Read the examples and complete the rules with *states*, *time* and *experiences*.

Present perfect simple

I've **been** here for two hours.

I've **never sung** on stage.

I've **seen** Shawn Mendes in concert.

We use the present perfect simple to talk about:

- (...) we have or haven't had.
 - actions or (...) that started in the past and continue in the present.
 - actions where the (...) they happened in the past isn't important. If we say when, we must use the past simple.
- 2 Complete the sentences with the present perfect simple form of the verbs in brackets and your own ideas.
- I've never (...) (listen to) ...
 - I haven't (...) (hear) ...
 - My best friend (...) (write) ...
 - My parents (...) (see) ...

- 3 Read the examples and choose the correct option to complete the rules.

Present perfect continuous

People **have been making** music for many years.

They **haven't been practising** much recently.

What **have you been listening** to lately?

We use the present perfect continuous to talk about:

- actions that started in the **present/past** and continue in the **present/past**, to emphasise the duration or repetition of the action.
 - actions that have just finished when we **are/are not** interested in the results.
 - single/repeated** actions in the recent (unspecified) past, often with *lately*, *recently*.
- 4 Complete the sentences with the present perfect continuous form of the verbs in brackets.
- They don't know what to do because they (...) (not listen) to the teacher.
 - He didn't pass his music exam because he (...) (not practise) much lately.
 - He's very talented. He (...) (make) musical instruments for many years.

- 5 Read the examples and answer the questions.

Present perfect simple and present perfect continuous

He's **been writing** a new song. He's **finished** the first verse.

We've **been doing** some research. We've **found** six benefits of listening to music.

- Which tense do we use when the action is unfinished and the focus is on the **action** or **process**?
- Which tense do we use to show the present result of a finished action, when the focus is on the **result**?

- 6 Complete the text with the correct present perfect simple or continuous form of the verbs in brackets.



WONDAGURL is a music producer from Canada.

Her real name is Ebony Oshunrinde and although she's only in her 20s, she 1 (...) (achieve) a lot. She

2 (...) (produce) records since she was a teenager. Since then, she 3 (...) (work) hard to make a name for herself and 4 (...) (produce) records for artists such as Rihanna and Drake. More recently she 5 (...) (experiment) with a new sound, psychedelic rap, with singer Lil Uzi Vert and she 6 (...) (just start) mentoring other young producers. No doubt we'll be hearing a lot more about her in the future!

- 7 5 Read the questions. Correct the mistakes. Listen and check your answers.

- What music have you been listened to lately?
- Have you ever perform in public?
- Have you ever been listening to any rap songs?
- How long have you learning English?

- 8 Work in pairs. Ask and answer the questions in exercise 7.

- 9 Answer the questions to solve the Brain teaser.



TEASER

Four friends all play musical instruments.

- Ben hasn't been learning as long as Carla.
- Debbie has just started learning.
- Alex has been playing for six years.
- Carla began playing four years ago.

Who has been playing the longest? Can you put them in order of how long they have been playing?