

COMMUNICATION

# Discussing music, memory and emotion

**LEVEL**

Intermediate (B1)

**NUMBER**

EN\_B1\_2053X

**LANGUAGE**

English

## Learning outcomes

- I can explain how music makes me feel using a range of adjectives.
- I can talk about the memories I connect with a particular song, artist or album.

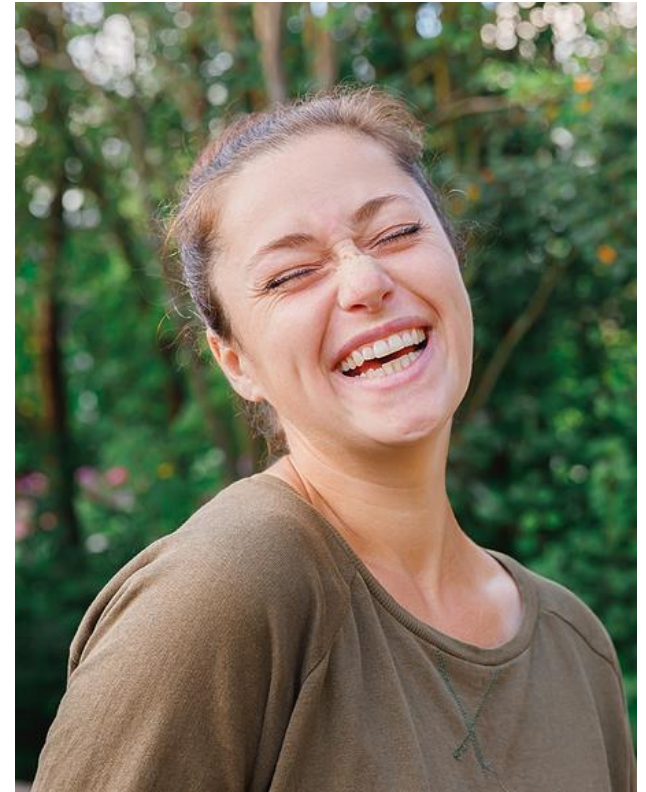




## Warm-up

**Do you use music  
to change your  
mood?**

**Share your answer with the  
rest of the class.**





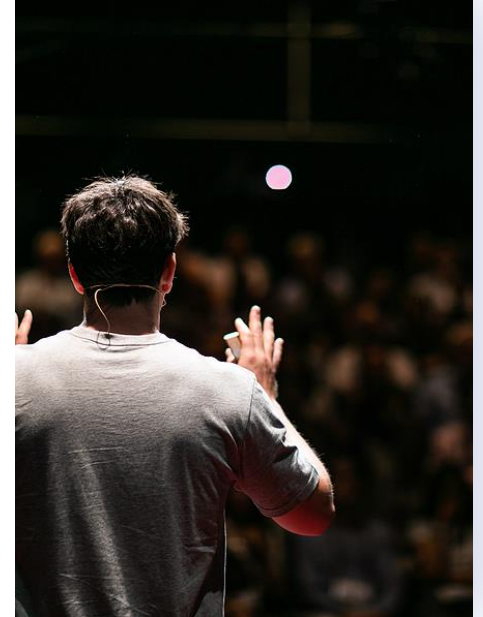
# TED Talk – the power of music

1. **Read** the first part of Dan Levi's TED talk.
2. Then **answer** the questions below.

Hi, my name is Dan Levi. Thank you for coming to my TED Talk. Music plays a very important role in our lives. It can affect our mood. It can make us feel relaxed or anxious, dreamy or focussed. It can also transport us to a specific time in the past. Let me give you an example.

I work as a social worker. For my job, I visit nursing homes and bring music to residents with dementia. I ask family members to write down a list of songs their loved ones used to listen to. Then I create a playlist on an MP3 player for them.

Whenever they listen to the music from their past, they have surprising and beautiful reactions. Some people are able to tell me exactly when and where they were when they first heard the song.



1. Do you know what TED stands for?
2. Who do you think Dan is speaking to?

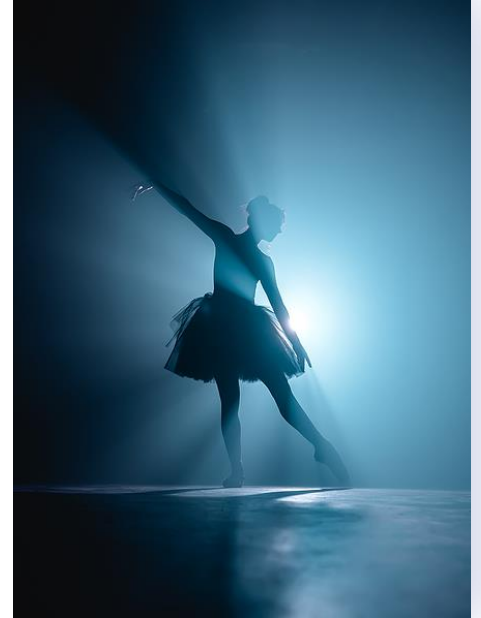
# TED Talk – the power of music

1. **Read** the second part of Dan Levi's TED talk.
2. Then **answer** the questions below.

The most memorable reaction came from a woman named Anna. Anna is 91 years old and used to be a prima ballerina. Anna's family asked me to create a playlist with the music from *Swan Lake*. When Anna was younger, she performed as Princess Odette with the Bolshoi Ballet.

It was truly moving—as soon as Anna heard the 'Swan's Theme' she lifted up her arms and started to dance. She was transported back in time.

I believe that listening to music reactivates areas of the brain connected to memory and emotion. It makes me think about the songs that have played an important role in my life and the memories I connect with them.



1. What kind of music did Anna's family ask to be put on the playlist?
2. Why do you think Anna started to dance when she heard the music?



# Matching

**Match** the words on the left to their definition on the right.

1

**nursing home**

**a**

an illness that affects mental abilities, such as memory

2

**dementia**

**b**

a list of songs

3

**memorable**

**c**

to put something back into action

4

**to reactivate**

**d**

a place where elderly people live and get medical care

5

**playlist**

**e**

easily remembered because of being special



# Categorise

1. **Categorise** the adjectives into one of the boxes below. If you know what a word means, try to explain it to your classmates or teacher. 2. Then, **brainstorm** more adjectives related to music and how music makes you feel.



1

dreamy

2

aggressive

3

pumped up

4

calm

5

nostalgic

6

uplifting

7

exciting

8

bubbly

Words I know/have seen  
before

Words I don't know/have  
never seen before



# Fill in the blanks

As a group or in breakout rooms, **complete** these sentences with the best word from the red box.

- 1 Whenever I hear this song, I feel \_\_\_\_\_. I always think about the road trip I took when I was 18 – that was 25 years ago!
- 2 I like listening to the lyrics of \_\_\_\_\_ music when I feel sad. The positive words always make me feel better.
- 3 My mother thinks heavy metal music sounds \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Before going on a long run, I get \_\_\_\_\_ by listening to my favourite song.
- 5 I like to listen to music that makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_ before bed to help me fall asleep.

aggressive  
pumped up  
calm  
nostalgic  
uplifting



# Whenever vs. when

1. **Read** the sentences. 2. **Answer** the questions in the blue box.



**Whenever** I hear this song, I feel nostalgic.



It always makes me think about the road trip I took **when** I was 18.

- Which highlighted word means 'every time that'?
- Which highlighted word talks about a specific time?
- Do you remember a specific memory **whenever** you hear a song?
- **When** was the first time you heard this song?



This song is so  
**catchy!**

My parents like to  
listen to the **hits**  
from the 1960s.

This song has  
been **stuck in my**  
**head** for weeks!



Is a **catchy** song a  
good song?

Do you think the **hits**  
from the past are  
better than the **hits**  
today?

What would you do  
to forget a song that  
was **stuck in your**  
**head**?



# Create a personal playlist

- 1. **Complete** the instructions in the red box.
- 2. Then **share** your answer with the rest of the class.

Take 5 minutes to think about the songs that are important to you, or to a close friend or family member.

Then write down **5 songs max** and share your playlist with the rest of the class.



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# Time to talk!

Take turns choosing a question **below** and **ask a classmate** to find out more about them.



- Do you like singing in front of other people?
- Is there a radio station you like to listen to?
- Do you listen to music more for the melody or for the lyrics?
- What kind of music do your parents listen to?
- What do you like to listen to when you're feeling down?
- Is there a song that reminds you of someone?
- What do you think the world would be like without music?





# End of the lesson

Idiom

**You sound like a broken record!**

**Meaning:** Someone who repeats the same thing over and over again.

**Example:** You've told me a thousand times already! *You sound like a broken record.*

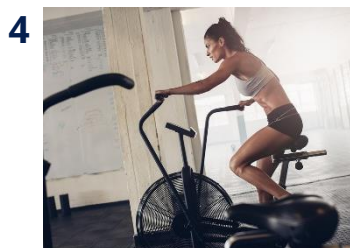


# Additional practice



# Match the words to the pictures

Choose **adjectives** that best describe the music people might be listening to in these pictures. Think of **three of your own adjectives** for three of the pictures. **Explain** your answers.



a pumped up

b nostalgic

c excited

d ...

e ...

f ...



# Write a list

Look at the pictures and adjectives you discussed in the previous activity. **Make a list** of the songs that make you feel each of the emotions you matched to the pictures. **Explain when, where and why** you listen to each of the songs.

1



4



2



5



3



6



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# Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences to describe how music **affects your mood** and **routine**.

1 Whenever I want to \_\_\_\_\_, I listen to \_\_\_\_\_.

2 \_\_\_\_\_ helps me \_\_\_\_\_ when I \_\_\_\_\_.

3 When I \_\_\_\_\_, I always listen to \_\_\_\_\_.

4 On my journey to \_\_\_\_\_ I often listen to \_\_\_\_\_ because...

5 Whenever I exercise, I listen to \_\_\_\_\_ because...





# Discuss

**Think of a song** for as many of the boxes as you can. **Discuss your answers** with your teacher.

*Think of a song that...*

...reminds you of  
someone  
important to you

...reminds you of  
a film

...you like by an  
artist you hate

...you heard on  
the radio this  
week

...reminds you of  
a special day

...reminds you of  
when you  
moved into your  
current  
residence

...makes you  
laugh

...makes you  
smile

...reminds you of  
your childhood

...is by your  
favourite artist

...reminds you of  
your home  
country

...always gets  
you dancing

...reminds you of  
being a teenager

...is your all-time  
favourite

...reminds you of  
when you  
arrived in a new  
country



# Discuss

Answer the questions below.

**Does listening to music help you concentrate?**



**Has your taste in music changed over the years?**

# Answer key

**P.4:** 1. TED stands for technology, entertainment, and design. 2. Dan is speaking to an audience who is interested in the topic of the power of music.

**P.5:** 1. Anna's family asked that music from Swan Lake be included on her playlist. 2. When Anna listened to the music, she starting dancing because it brought up memories of when she was a ballerina and performed as Princess Odette with the Bolshoi Ballet.

**P.6:** 1. (d), 2. (a), 3. (e), 4. (c), 5. (b)

**P.8:** 1. nostalgic 2. uplifting 3. aggressive 4. pumped up 5. calm

**P.9:** Whenever means 'every time that'

When is used to talk about a specific time in the past



# Summary

## Why do people listen to music?

- Music has a very powerful effect on our emotions
- We listen to music to get pumped up, to relax and to remember key moments in our lives
- Some people just enjoy listening to melodies, but a lot of people also listen carefully to the lyrics

## The power of music

- Music can transport us back to how we felt a long time ago
- Dan Levi told a story of how music reactivated a retired ballet dancer's desire to dance
- This is just one example of the surprising and beautiful reactions music can cause

## Music and nostalgia

- Nostalgic songs make us remember memories and feelings from the past
- People enjoy feeling nostalgic because it reminds them of happy times
- Nostalgia can also be sad because these happy memories are in the past

## Playlists

- Streaming services make it very easy to put together huge playlists
- It is great fun to make playlists and share them with friends and family
- Artificial intelligence can also create playlists to give you more of the music you enjoy



# Vocabulary

playlist

nursing home

dementia

to reactivate

memorable

dreamy

aggressive

pumped (up)

calm

nostalgic

uplifting

excited

bubbly

whenever

when

hit (song)

catchy

It's stuck in my head!



