

Level: Intermediate (B1)

Age: Teenagers

Time: 90 minutes – full lesson plan

Summary: In this lesson, students will:

1. look at the history of radio;
2. read an interview;
3. create their own radio programme.

Key skills: radio vocabulary, question forms

Materials: one copy of the A history of radio and A radio interview worksheets per student; enough extra copies of the A radio interview worksheet for every student to have one cut-up paragraph of the text

A HISTORY OF RADIO

1. Ask students:

- When did you last hear a radio interview?
- What station do you listen to? Why do you like it?
- What station do your parents / older relatives listen to? Why do you think they like it?

2. Give students copies of the A history of radio worksheet and focus on task 1, the text about the history of radio. Explain that the paragraphs are not in the correct order. The students should put the paragraphs into the correct order so that they tell the story of radio from the beginning to the present day.

Key: 1. h; 2. g; 3. d; 4. b; 5. f; 6. a; 7. j; 8. c; 9. i; 10. e

3. Check through the order. Then, students work in pairs on task 2 and prepare four questions based on the text. When they have written their questions, they take it in turns to ask their questions to the rest of the class. You may want to give them an example question before they begin: *What part did Guglielmo Marconi play in the history of radio?* (Answer: *He sent the first wireless message.*)

Key: students' own answers

A RADIO INTERVIEW

1. Explain that you want the students to imagine that they are going to interview a BBC radio presenter. In the Prepare the interview task, they will find some information about the presenter, as well some prompts to help them prepare questions for him. Tell them to form questions using the prompts.

Key (suggested answers): a. *In what ways do you think radio has changed over the past 20 years?*; b. *Do you*

think radio will still be here in another 100 years?; c. *Apart from playing music, you also interview musicians. Which interviews do you particularly remember?*; d. *Was there a particular radio show or presenter that you regularly listened to when you were young?*; e. *How would you describe your show?*; f. *Was radio important to you when you were growing up?*; g. *Your show is on BBC 6. Can you tell us about the station?*; h. *How about when you were a pop star with TRB? Did radio play an important part in your success?*; i. *Who decides what music you play on your show?*; j. *What do you like about working in radio?*

2. Check through the questions together and make sure they are the same in meaning to the suggested questions in the answer key.

3. Give each student one cut-up paragraph of the interview on the A radio interview worksheet. If you have more than ten students, split the students into two or more groups; otherwise, work as a whole class. Students must first read their paragraph and assign to it the correct question from the previous task. Go around and monitor, to make sure each student has the correct question – students should not confer with each other.

Key: 1. f; 2. d; 3. h; 4. g; 5. e; 6. i; 7. c; 8. j; 9. a; 10. b

4. Students now take it in turns to read out their text (in the order they appear on the worksheet). The rest of the class has to decide which question is being answered in each case.

5. Hand out a complete copy of the A radio interview worksheet to each student and get them to read the whole interview. Then, each student should prepare one question for the other students to answer, based on the information in the paragraph they were given in the last activity. Students then ask each other their questions, either whole class or in their groups, as appropriate. Who got the most correct answers?

6. Tell the students that you want them to imagine that they are going to present a one-hour radio show. How would they fill the time? What music would they play? Who would they interview? They should work in pairs or small groups and plan their show. Before they begin, point them towards the Phrasebook on the worksheet and go over the language. They should make use of it in their show.

7. When they have had time to complete the task, ask the students to choose a segment from the show that they can present to the rest of the class. Ask the groups to perform the segment from the show.

HOMEWORK TASK

Tell your students that listening to radio is a great way to improve their listening skills and vocabulary. For homework, they should choose an English-language radio show (probably using the internet), and make time every week to listen to it. They could feed back to the class on which show they chose, and who or what featured on the show most recently.



A HISTORY OF RADIO

1. Put the story of radio in the correct order.

- a. The first official commercial radio licence in the United States wasn't given until 1920. A few years later, there were hundreds of stations and thousands of listeners.
- b. The broadcast included Fessenden playing the violin. He also read the Christmas story from the Bible and played a recording of Handel's 'Largo'.
- c. During the Second World War, radio became the most important source for news and the first radio journalists appeared.
- d. Fessenden made the first broadcast of the human voice on 24 December, 1906, from Brant Rock, Massachusetts, USA.
- e. Digital technology now means producing radio shows is much easier and cheaper. The arrival of internet radio and podcasts means radio still has a future today.
- f. After the end of the First World War, Lee de Forest started broadcasting music and news in New York. However, most people thought radio should only be for two-way communication.
- g. Reginald Fessenden, a Canadian engineer who had worked for Thomas Edison, was convinced that the wireless telegraph could carry the human voice.
- h. The history of radio started in 1900, when Guglielmo Marconi sent a message from England to Canada by wireless telegraph. Before that, messages had been sent using wires.
- i. In the second half of the decade, television arrived and the future of radio was uncertain. Things changed in the 1950s, when rock 'n' roll arrived in the United States and young people wanted to listen to music on the radio.
- j. FM radio, which is better quality than AM radio, was invented in the 1930s, but wasn't used until the 1970s because no one thought better audio quality was important.



2. In a pair, write four questions to ask the class about the story of radio.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

PREPARE THE INTERVIEW

You're going to read an interview with Tom Robinson, who spent 27 years as a recording artist and touring musician with the Tom Robinson Band (TRB) between 1975 and 2002 before becoming a radio presenter for the BBC.

Write the questions you think we asked. Here's a list of the information we wanted to find out.

a. radio changed over the past 20 years?

b. radio still here in 100 years?

c. interviews you particularly remember?

d. favourite show or presenter when young?

e. describe show?

f. radio important when growing up?

g. about BBC 6 Music?

h. radio important in pop career?

i. decide what music to play (who)?

j. what like about working in radio?



PHRASEBOOK

**How to sound like a radio presenter**

- Thank you for tuning in to Radio ...
- Today, on Radio ..., we'll be talking to ... / hearing music from ... / discussing ...
- And now, on Radio ..., we have a worldwide exclusive for you: the brand-new single from ...
- And now for the interview you've all been waiting for / the news / the weather.
- We're joining ... live on the streets of ... to hear people's views on ...
- Today, we're discussing ... Call us to share your views with our listeners, or to pose a question to today's guest.
- And, next, we're going over to ...
- A big thank you to all our listeners. Be sure to tune in again tomorrow. Till then, goodbye.



READ THE INTERVIEW

Read the interview and write the questions in the corresponding spaces.

Q.1 _____

Yes. I was born in 1950 and my family didn't even have a TV until I was 11 years old. So I grew up with the habit of listening to radio rather than watching television. In the mid-1960s, BBC music radio was still very conservative. The records that teenagers liked were very seldom played. So most of the music we heard at that time came from pirate radio ships outside British territory with powerful transmitters on board.

Q.2 _____

The pirate radio stations were finally closed down in mid-1967. In those last six months, a new disc jockey arrived on board the Radio London ship. The music that he played was so new and so different that he helped bring about a musical revolution in the United Kingdom that year. His name was John Peel.

Q.3 _____

Yes. In those pre-internet days, national radio was the only way people could get to hear a new band. If the BBC's national pop station, Radio 1, didn't play your record, then nobody would ever know it existed; but, luckily, they did play my first single, '2-4-6-8 Motorway'.

Q.4 _____

BBC 6 Music is a digital network dedicated to good-quality modern music, and the so-called Heritage tracks that have influenced today's musicians.

Q.5 _____

I try to play a mix of interesting new music and interesting old music. Younger listeners seem to enjoy hearing older rarities in amongst the newer, more familiar tracks. Older listeners of my own generation already know those, of course, but share my excitement at discovering the newer stuff.

Q.6 _____

The music on my show is a combination of tracks from the current station playlist, suggestions from my producer and a few oddities brought along by me. All radio stations have playlists. The great advantage about working at 6 Music is that the playlist unusually consists of pretty interesting music.

Q.7 _____

Brian Eno, Thom Yorke and Bob Geldof were all outstandingly articulate and interesting interviewees. Mark E Smith of The Fall was the scariest – talking to him felt like tiptoeing across the crater of a dormant volcano.

Q.8 _____

Making radio programmes you are always focused on the job in hand, not concerned with stuff like make-up, camera angles and lighting shots. And you preserve your anonymity because people don't know what you look like. That's a blessing in this celebrity-obsessed age.

Q.9 _____

The biggest change has been in recent years, with the arrival of fast internet. You can listen to a station in Australia just as easily as one in London. You can listen to BBC programmes at any hour of the day or night. So you no longer have to miss a favourite show. And, with podcasting, the possibility of making radio programmes is available to everyone – all you have to be is good.

Q.10 _____

Theatre and opera haven't disappeared, despite the arrival of radio, TV and cinema. And radio is very, very much cheaper to produce than TV, cinema, theatre or opera so the answer is a resounding 'yes'.