

Pan pipes, pinot noir and productivity: the hidden power of music

Level: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. Scan the article to find music genres. Write these in the box.

b. Add any other music genres you know.

c. Which of the music genres in the box are good background music in these places?

- a hotel spa
- a café that serves lunch and afternoon tea
- a gym
- a supermarket
- a fashionable clothes shop

2 Short discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

- What song sounds like strawberries?
- What music makes you think of bitter lemons?
- Are you a musical person?

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3 Key words

a. Write the correct words from the wordpools next to the definitions below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

culture

increase

lush

screechy

therapy

1. making a loud, high, and unpleasant noise _____
2. rich (in sound) and making you feel pleasure _____
3. ideas, beliefs, and ways of behaving of a particular society _____
4. a form of treatment for an illness or medical condition _____
5. become bigger in number or size _____

ballad

concentrate

distracting

familiar

soothing

6. making you feel more calm and more relaxed and less nervous, worried, or upset

7. well known to you or easily recognized by you _____
8. stopping you from concentrating on something _____
9. give all your attention to the thing you are doing _____
10. a love song _____

b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences.

1. Massage is a very old form of _____.
2. Stop talking now and _____ on your work.
3. I'm sure I know him from somewhere – he looks very _____.
4. The people in that area mostly share the same language and _____.

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- 1 A new exhibition at Manchester's Science and Industry Museum asks visitors to match music with tastes. Does this music sound sweet, sour, bitter, salty?
- 2 At first, I don't say anything because I don't want to sound silly. But then the screechy music suddenly makes me think of bitter lemons and the lush sounds make me see strawberries.
- 3 "The exhibition is about the way music affects our bodies and minds," says museum curator Steven Leech. "Most people who don't play an instrument say they are 'unmusical'. They forget that there is music everywhere in everything we see, hear and do."
- 4 Co-curator Emily Scott-Dearing says culture is important, too. "In western music, we connect major keys with happiness, and minor keys with sadness," she says, "but that is not the same in all cultures."
- 5 We know that music can relax us. The exhibition, called Turn It Up, looks at group music-therapy sessions in care homes and how, for example, music can help people with dementia.
- 6 Music also affects us in other ways. French or German music in supermarkets can increase the amount of French or German wine that shoppers buy.
- 7 Playing classical music and not muzak or pop in a café can increase sales by 20%. Classical music in shops makes people spend more money and buy luxury items.
- 8 Fast music makes people shop more quickly. That is why music by marching bands is sometimes played at London's Waterloo train station – it stops people hanging about. Underground stations also play soothing music to encourage people to be calm.
- 9 Can listening to music help you sleep well? "Familiar music can make you feel comfortable and can help you go to sleep," Leech says.
- 10 Memory is another part of the show. The BBC radio programme Desert Island Discs shows how important music is to a person's life.
- 11 Turn It Up tries to answer many questions. For example, what music is best for a call centre to use while callers are on hold? The answer is: pleasant music without words.
- 12 Should we listen to music while we work? The answer is: it helps with mechanical tasks but is distracting if you need to concentrate and think a lot.
- 13 And what is the safest music to listen to while driving? Heavy metal! No, I'm joking – ballads are best.

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4 Understanding the article

a. Are these statements true or false according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. Turn It Up is the title of a new study at Oxford University.
2. The author says that heavy-metal music tastes of bitter lemons, not strawberries.
3. Everybody around the world feel sad when they hear minor keys and happy when they hear major keys.
4. Music can help people with dementia and other illnesses.
5. Music that we know very well can help us get to sleep.
6. Heavy metal is the best type of music to play while driving your car.

5 Key language

a. Match the words to make pairs from the article. Find them in the article to check your answers. Talk about their meanings and look up any you do not know.

- | | |
|---------------|----------|
| 1. care | a. hold |
| 2. luxury | b. tasks |
| 3. hanging | c. home |
| 4. on | d. items |
| 5. mechanical | e. about |

b. Now use the word pairs to complete these sentences.

1. I hate calling the bank – they put you _____ for a long time.
2. Why are those kids _____ outside my house?
3. Factory workers usually listen to music while they do _____.
4. Last week, we moved my grandmother into a _____.
5. This shop sells some really expensive _____.

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6 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

- What type of music do you listen to while you are driving?
- Is it OK for teenagers to listen to music while they do their homework?
- Do you listen to music at work?

7 In your own words

a. Desert Island Discs is a BBC Radio 4 programme. Each week, the interviewer asks a guest which eight songs they would take to a desert island.

Imagine you are a guest on this show. Which songs do you take with you? Write the names of the songs and the artists that perform them below, as well as the reasons why these songs are important to you.

song or music and artist	reason
<i>e.g., 'All of me' by John Legend</i>	<i>My wife and I danced to this song at our wedding.</i>

Work in pairs. Tell you partner about your desert island discs.