

Does a song conjure painful memories? Try to rehabilitate it, say scientists

Level 1: Elementary

Article summary: This article explains the effect that music has on memory and how people can change the negative associations and memories that they have with particular songs.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Writing, Speaking

Language focus: Zero conditionals

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use the key words in the correct form to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

1. *evict*
2. *avoid*
3. *affair*
4. *emotions*
5. *link*
6. *event*
7. *rehabilitate*
8. *associations*
9. *engage*
10. *cause*

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to let students consider the effect that music can have on someone and how it can bring up painful memories of the past. Ask students to share stories about music from their past that brings them happy or sad memories. Be sensitive to any very painful memories students may have and steer them away from those discussions.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do this task individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

Key:

1. *avoids*
2. *affair*
3. *emotions*
4. *associations*
5. *caused*
6. *evicted*
7. *rehabilitate*
8. *event*
9. *engage*
10. *linked*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students mark the sentences True (T) or False (F) based on the information in the article. Encourage students to correct any that are false.

Key:

1. *False – Bonnie associates the song Bitter Sweet Symphony with a sad childhood memory—being evicted from her home.*
2. *True*
3. *True*
4. *False – According to Dr. Stephanie Leal, people always remember small details best when they listen to music that causes moderate emotions.*
5. *True*
6. *False – Professor Renee Timmers suggests that engaging with painful music is the best way to change the association they have.*

Does a song conjure painful memories? Try to rehabilitate it, say scientists

Level 1: Elementary

4. Key language

- a. This activity introduces students to the form of zero conditionals and shows how *if* and *when* can be at the start of a sentence or in the middle, but there is a difference in punctuation.

Key:

1. c
2. d
3. a
4. b

- b. Ask students to complete the sentences in zero conditional. Remind them that both halves of a zero conditional should be in the present simple.

Key:

1. *When she sings, everyone just stops what they are doing.*
2. *The radio has a camera, and if people walk past, loud music starts playing. It's hilarious!*
3. *There are musicians who, if they see the notes on paper, hear the music in their head.*
4. *My dad relaxes when he listens to slow songs.*
5. *The band plays for longer when they play in their hometown.*
6. *If she hears a song by Oasis, she remembers her friends from university.*

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to create a flowchart that describes step by step how someone could change how they feel about a song.
- b. Students then present their ideas to the class. Ask them to include zero conditionals to describe the effect of music on memory.