

The Mozart Effect

Language

Music vocabulary, Question words, Comparatives and superlatives

Level

Elementary; (equivalent to CEF level A2)

Comment

In this lesson students read about a study into the effect of Mozart's music on young people. If you have access to Mozart's 1781 Sonata for Two Pianos in D major then bring it to the class. Alternatively, use another piece of classical music, preferably by Mozart.

How to use the lesson

- 1 Write the following on the board: *c l _ s s _ c _ l m _ s _ c*. Ask for the students' help to complete the words using vowels (*a, e, i, o, u*). The answer is 'classical music'. What other types of music do students know? Encourage students to name different types such as jazz and pop but don't write any of the names on the board. Give students copies of the worksheet and ask them to do exercise 1 in small groups.
- 2 As students do the activity, play the classical music you have brought to class as background music. When they have finished, check any vocabulary problems and then ask them to work individually to complete exercise 2. Invite some students to share their answers with the rest of the class.
- 3 Ask students if they can identify the type of music you are playing. Do they know the composer or the name of the piece? Explain that they're going to read an article about a specific piece of music. On the board write: *Sonata for Two Pianos in D major*. Ask students to read the article and find out why this piece of music is important. Students report back on what they read and then do exercise 3 in which they complete questions and then look for the answers by reading the article again. Check answers.
- 4 In pairs, students decide if the sentences in exercise 4 are true or false. They should do this first from memory and then confirm their answers by consulting the text. Check answers, making sure students correct the 'false' sentences.
- 5 Write the adjective *good* on the board. Can students tell you the comparative and superlative forms? Write *better* and *the best* on the board. Explain that in exercise 5 students have to decide if they should use the comparative or superlative form and write the correct answer. Check answers.
- 6 Students decide in exercise 6 whether they agree or disagree with the statements in exercise 5. They can do this activity in pairs or small groups. Open out the discussion to involve the whole class, allowing students to exchange opinions.
- 7 Find out how many students own personal music players. How often do they listen to music during the day? When do they usually listen to music? In exercise 7, students name songs or pieces of music they like to listen to when they do different things.
- 8 Students compare their lists in exercise 8 and try to find another student with similar tastes in music. Invite some students to explain what musical tastes they share.

Focus on the first situation in the list and discuss the benefits of listening to music while you study. Did the students work better at the beginning of the class when you played the classical music? What different kinds of music did the students choose to play while studying?

- 9 If you'd like to extend the activity, ask students to write about a piece of music that is important to them and to bring the piece of music to the next class. At the next class, students read out what they've written about the piece of music and play an extract.

Answer key

1

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| 1 blues | 4 dance | 7 jazz | 10 rock |
| 2 classical | 5 electronic | 8 pop | 11 soul |
| 3 country | 6 folk | 9 reggae | 12 world |

2 Students' own answers

3

- 1 When (1781)
- 2 Where (at the University of California)
- 3 Why (because only 36 students took part in the study and it was impossible to repeat it successfully)
- 4 What ('The Mozart Effect')
- 5 Who (Jakob Pietschnig)
- 6 How many (40)

4

- 1 False. There is no evidence to show that it makes young people more intelligent.
- 2 True.
- 3 False. The scientists looked at 40 other studies involving 3,000 young people.
- 4 True.
- 5 True.
- 6 False. Learning to play a musical instrument can have an even more positive effect.

5

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 better | 3 more relaxing | 5 the worst |
| 2 happier | 4 the greatest | 6 more positive |

6–8 Students' own answers

Related websites

The following websites might be useful, for either yourself or your students.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/7707157/Listening-to-Mozart-does-not-increase-intelligence.html>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100510075415.htm>