

Topic task: Using music to help with topic preparation

Level: ISE I

Focus: Topic task

Aims: To listen to different pieces of music, and then express and request opinions and impressions

Objectives: To formulate a wide variety of questions after listening to pieces of music and to answer questions relating to pieces of music

Topic: Music

Language functions: Describing the future – informing and expressing intentions, giving opinions, preferences and reasons, and asking for opinions and information

Lexis: Vocabulary specific to the topic of music

Materials needed: Music playing device (eg mobile phone, MP3, computer, radio, TV, CD player), three or more pieces of music

Timing: 1 hour

Preparation

1. Prepare three pieces of music to play to students, preferably from a range of music – for example, pop, rock, classical, heavy metal (on a mobile phone, MP3, computer, etc).
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2. Ask students to bring in one piece of music to play on their own devices, for example, their mobile phones or their MP3 players.
 3. If any students play a music instrument, you could ask them to play a short piece of their favourite music.

In class

1. Write on the board in large letters '**MUSIC**'. Ask for words that the students think of when they see this word, for example, happy, sad, loud, romantic, pop, CD, money, famous, concerts, party, disco, etc. Write some of these words on the board.
2. Explain to the students that they are going to listen to some pieces of music and to practise asking and answering questions about them. This will help them to speak more naturally, which is something that they need to do in the Topic task of the exam. Tell the students that they will be using music to help them with their ideas.
3. Write '**PIECE 1**' on the board.
4. Play piece 1. Ask students to listen and be ready to tell everyone their opinion.
5. Ask students questions about the music, for example: '*Have you ever heard this piece of music?*', '*When did you last hear it?*', '*Did you like it? Why/why not?*' (Try to exploit the language requirements of ISE I).
6. In groups of four, ask students to think of as many questions as they can about that piece of music using these prompts: '*Do you ...?, What kind of ...?, Who is ...?, Have you ever ...?, When you were younger ...?, If you have a choice, what ...?, What were you doing the last time you ...?, What music might you ...?, What do you need to ...?, Do you prefer ...?*'
7. Ask students to write down 10 questions on a piece of paper.
8. Write '**PIECE 2**' on the board.
9. Play piece 2. Ask students to listen and be ready to ask and answer questions as above (in number 6).
10. Students ask each other their questions, taking it in turns in their groups of four.
11. Students exchange their question papers (as in number 7) with another group.
12. Write '**PIECE 3**' on the board.

Preparation activities for ISE I Speaking & Listening

13. Explain to the students they are going to work in pairs this time so that they can talk to a different person (a good idea at this stage would be to move students around, so they are working with different people).
14. Play piece 3.
15. Students ask and answer their questions in pairs.
16. Now bring the class back together as a group. Ask them a few general questions, for example:
 - ▶ *Which piece of music did you prefer, and why?*
 - ▶ *When is music important?*
 - ▶ *Do people of different ages listen to different music? Why?*
 - ▶ *Did you listen to different music when you were younger?*
17. Explain that music is often chosen as a topic for ISE I and four questions need to be filled in on the topic form. Draw an example of a topic form on the board and ask which questions from this activity could be used. They need to think of a title for their topic. For example, 'My favourite pop group'.
18. Ask students to think of their own questions based on a piece of music or a music group they like. Then, in pairs, practise asking and answering these questions. Explain that the topic part of the exam lasts for up to four minutes.
19. Finally, ask the students if they enjoyed listening to music in their English class. Did it help to inspire them to think of questions? Would they have chosen different pieces of music? Why?

Extension activity

The more advanced students can be asked to think of their favourite piece of music and describe it to the class. While the students are describing their favourite music, the class have to ask questions and try to guess what it is.

Further support activity

Students finding the task difficult can be asked to practise forming questions: *Do you like ...?, What kind of music ...?, When do you ...?, When did you ...?, How often do you ...?*

Homework

Listen to a piece of music of your choice and write down some questions about it. Then, practise answering questions with a classmate or friend. Prepare a piece of music to play to the class and write down some questions to ask the class. Also be prepared to tell the class why you chose this piece of music.