

**Paper Reference(s) 4EB1/01**  
**Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)**

**English Language B**  
**PAPER 1**

**Time: 3 hours**

**Source Booklet**

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THE QUESTION PAPER.**

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## **Text One**

### **Why Do We Love Music So Much?**

**adapted from a blog by Isabelle Mohr**

**In this passage, the American writer explains why music is so important to her.**

**The black and white photograph shows a woman wearing headphones and dancing. There is a mobile phone in her right hand.**



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**Turn over**

Text One continued.

**Never Be Like You<sup>1</sup>** – a very popular electronic/dance song in 2016

**Arctic Monkeys<sup>2</sup>** – an English rock band

**Glass Animals<sup>3</sup>** – a British electronic/pop band

For the longest time, I thought that my music-filled childhood – cello and piano lessons as well as music theory classes and so forth since I was four – were the reason behind why now, many years later, music still holds such a profound power over me. When I'm upset, I turn to my playlists on Spotify with slow melodies and lyrics that seemingly encompass the hurt rippling through my body. When I sit at my desk trying to write in the midst of another round of writer's block, I turn to the beautifully written scores for some of my favorite movies in the hope that their creative energies will flow through the sounds coming from my speakers and into me. 5 10

Prior to the COVID pandemic, when I used to sit in front of my mirror putting on a full face of make-up before going out with my friends on the weekends, I would play the songs that generated an adrenaline rush that would prepare me for the night of dancing. It wasn't till I moved in with my new roommate almost six months ago that I realized, through listening to her 15 20

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Text One continued.

old record player as we lay on the floor and stared at the ceiling in silence one night, that I wasn't the only one in this apartment who was under the control of the rhythmic melodies flowing from the speakers on the shelf.

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While music affects every individual on this planet differently, I believe that we all share the same experiences that music can create – no matter what genre. A close friend of mine started a playlist at the start of our college career and would only add songs to it when a song resonated that much with her. She has not looked at or listened to it once, saying instead that when she does finally graduate she wants to listen back to all the songs that at some point in her life meant something to her.

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While I have no such playlist, even though I really wish I had, I have a collection of songs that unlock a hidden compartment of emotions and memories that had since been stored away. For instance, **Never Be Like You**<sup>1</sup> by Flume unlocks the memories of me riding the bus in the mornings on the way to my summer music camp, and **505** by the Arctic Monkeys<sup>2</sup> reminds me of the time my roommate and I drove with the windows down. There are even other songs, such as **Heat Waves** by the Glass Animals<sup>3</sup>, that bring

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Text One continued.

about an indescribable feeling that has me sitting in awe. I'm sure I'm not the only one with a collection of tunes that just hits a little differently.

When I found a particularly small book on one of my mother's coffee tables when I was home on winter holiday, titled **How Music Can Make You Better**, curiosity got the better of me. Written by opera singer and PhD professor at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Indre Viskontas, **How Music Can Make You Better** is a short but in-depth book about music and its effects on our species. It is broken down into three major sections that encompass how music affects us as humans – how our brains interpret sound into music, how music heals us, and how music heals or breaks societies.

Written in the grey text on odd blue-colored pages, Viskontas manages to explain why music affects us the way it does. We can listen to music as a distraction – a filler for empty sound – or we can really listen to music. Either way, Viskontas believes that 'listening to music lets us work through our emotions in a safe environment and walk away if the feelings get too intense'. We find meaning behind the notes, the shifts in rhythm and tempo, and in the lyrics if they are provided. Listening to sad music when we're

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**Text One continued.**

not feeling all too great about ourselves allows us to 'evaluate ourselves and the world more accurately' simply because when we're sad 'we tend to see life more clearly'. Yet we can also use music to motivate ourselves through a hard workout since 'music can make your energy consumption more efficient and some studies show that people are more motivated when listening to music', which may also explain the need for music when cleaning your room or studying for your next exam. 75 80

So whether you are my roommate listening to her alternative playlist while cleaning dishes, or me listening to cinematic classical compositions while writing this article, or even someone who has to have no noise in order to focus – for even silence can be music – music brings something into each of our lives that is entirely our own. 85

We have personalized experiences and reactions to every song we hear. We love one song that another may dislike; either way music is entirely our own. 90  
Through music we heal, bond, share experiences, and have a safe space to feel and explore our emotions, all while still maintaining a sense of individuality.

## Text Two

### Music Increases Your Brain Power

adapted from an article by Dave Tomar

**In this passage, the writer suggests that listening to music while studying is beneficial.**

**The photograph shows a man wearing headphones whilst sitting on a sofa looking at a laptop. His right hand is resting on the keyboard.**



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**Text Two continued.**

**Mix tape<sup>1</sup>** – a compilation of favourite pieces of music, typically by many different artists, recorded on to tape, CD or digital playlist by an individual

**Bob Dylan<sup>2</sup>** – an American singer/songwriter who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016

**Blonde on Blonde<sup>3</sup>** – one of Bob Dylan's albums of songs with thought-provoking lyrics

**We made you a mix tape<sup>1</sup>. It will make you smarter.**

Okay, obviously, that's a pretty lofty promise, but we've found tons of evidence that studying to the right kind of music can improve focus, concentration and productivity. It can even enhance your study experience by creating an association between good work habits and emotionally stimulating music. On top of that, music is just a generally awesome way to fill a quiet room. A pair of headphones can be a good antidote to a student lounge filled with chattering first-year students. A well-chosen album at a modest volume might be exactly what you need to drown out the sounds of your roommate, who doesn't realise the courteous thing to do is to put the phone on mute while incessantly mass-texting.

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**Text Two continued.**

**But there's more to it than that. Music is more than a defence against weapons of mass distraction: according to some researchers, it may actually play a key evolutionary role in our ability to interpret patterns, anticipate events, and create order out of the chaotic strands of human experience.** 20

**It's called the Mozart Effect, according to an article from The Learning Scientists website. The Mozart Effect is a brief enhancement of abilities in college students after listening to a Mozart piano sonata. The researchers, Rauscher, Shaw and Ky, conducted an experiment inviting students to listen to a Mozart piano sonata, relaxation music, or nothing at all (silence condition) before performing a task. The researchers found that participants' performance on the task improved after they had listened to the Mozart sonata compared to the other conditions.** 25 30

**This suggests two things: First, music can temporarily enhance your mental abilities. Second, it matters what kind of music you listen to.** 35

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**Text Two continued.**

## **Music of the Mind**

According to an American study conducted at the Stanford Cognitive and Systems Neuroscience Laboratory, music engages the parts of the brain that control your attention span, your ability to make predictions and the strength of your memory retention. **40**

According to one of the study's co-authors, Associate Professor of Music Jonathan Berger, music engages the brain over a period of time and the process of listening might be 'one way that the brain sharpens its ability to anticipate events and sustain attention.' **45**

## **Kill the DJ**

Naturally, not every kind of music is ideal for working. For starters, taste is a major factor. The study mentioned above was conducted using eighteenth century classical music. If listening to classical music makes you feel like a brooding super-villain from a James Bond movie, Beethoven will probably do more harm than good. That is, unless you're studying to become a brooding super-villain – in which case, there you go! **50** **55**

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**Text Two continued.**

**But it's not just about music that you find enjoyable. Something you may love when driving or jogging could be completely wrong for a night of cramming. Bob Dylan<sup>2</sup> is a genius. His lyrics are thought-provoking. His imagery is evocative. His insights are revelatory. But man, is he distracting!** 60

**Attempting to write an essay while listening to Blonde On Blonde<sup>3</sup> is impossible. It gets kind of hard to tell where his words end and yours begin.** 65

**Glenn Schellenberg, a Psychology Professor from the University of Toronto, explains the problem here. He suggests that 'The reason why it's a mess is you have cognitive limitations. If you're doing two things at once you don't focus as well'. But, says Professor Schellenberg, 'We know that music changes how you feel, and often it can change how you feel in a positive way'.** 70

**It's all about selecting the proper music for the proper occasion, the stuff that makes you feel exactly how you want to at exactly the right time.** 75

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**Text Two continued.**

## **Choose Wisely**

**All of this is to say that your study music should make you feel studious. Select something that stimulates without distracting, that energises without engaging, that motivates without dominating, that matches the tempo of your workflow and the mood of your moment.** 80

**A study conducted at the University of Wales found that students were equally distracted by lyric-based music that they liked and that they disliked. By contrast, students tended to be less distracted by music that was lyrically repetitive or just instrumental. Your study soundtrack should be largely comprised of sounds with minimal lyrical content. Look for instrumental music.** 85 90

**If you crave the stimulation of vocals without the distraction of the words, consider digging into the international scene. Every culture offers its own rich and diverse musical vocabulary. And because you probably have no idea what the words mean, there's a good chance you'll be able to keep your mind on your work.** 95

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## Text Two continued.

**And most importantly, try to mix it up. Use these 100 elements to create a playlist that flows alongside your work, that strides gently while you concentrate and climbs in tempo while you toil, that calms your anxiety when you need to chill, and kicks you into higher gear when your energy is flagging. You need a musical 105 companion that is always present, always on the same page as you, but never in your face.**

# Happy studying!

## **Sources taken / adapted from:**

**Text One:** <https://www.herculture.org/blog/2021/2/27/why-do-we-love-music-so-much>

**Photograph 1:** martin-dm/Getty Images

**Text Two:** <https://thebestschools.org/magazine/study-music-increases-your-brain-power/>

**Photograph 2:** Pixel-shot / Alamy Stock Photo