

MUSIC CULTURE IN THE UK

There are so many ways to discover, buy and listen to music. What's the best way? Read more to find out about the exciting music culture in the UK!

Music videos

British teenagers like to watch their music online. Watching music on video streaming sites on the internet is now more popular than listening to the radio with young British people. Popular videos can quickly become extremely popular internationally. Justin Bieber's song 'Baby' was the most watched music video on YouTube until 2012. Then, PSY's 'Gangnam Style' became the first video to get a billion views. Now, it's quite common for videos to pass the billion mark. Things can change quickly on YouTube!

Downloading music

Downloading music is a popular choice for young Brits. The BPI (an organisation which promotes the interests of British music) says that people in the UK prefer downloading singles rather than albums. In the UK you can download a single for about £1 and an album for around £10. Using file-sharing websites to download music is often illegal of course but some people still continue to get their music this way. Record companies and many musicians are very unhappy that people can listen to their music without paying for it.

Live music

The O2 in London is the second largest live music arena in Europe. There you can see world-famous bands such as One Direction, Justin Bieber, Scissor Sisters, Prince, The Rolling Stones, Elton John, and Take That. This massive stadium has space for 20,000 people. It also has 548 toilets! Tickets are not cheap. You can pay more than £50 to see a concert at The O2.

What about free live music? There are music festivals across Britain every year that are completely free of charge. Last year more than 150,000 people went to the Tramlines free music festival in Sheffield in the north of England. The two-day festival is held every July. Last year there were 900 performances in total including local bands as well as music from all over the world.

Music on TV

The X Factor is a British television music competition to find new talented singers. The 'X Factor' of the title refers to the difficult-to-define quality that makes a star. The show began in 2004 and is still popular. X Factor singers perform on a stage in front of the judges and a live audience. After the performance the audience at home can vote by phone for their favourite acts. Many winners then go on to get a UK number-one single. But you don't have to win The X Factor to become famous: One Direction, the massively popular British boy band, competed in 2010 but they didn't win, they came third!

What kind of music?

What are you and your friends listening to these days? Hip hop, dance, rock, heavy metal, rap, urban, reggae ... individual tastes are very varied amongst British teenagers. If a type of music exists then there's somebody who likes it. But a shopping centre in Birmingham, central England, recently discovered what kind of music some local teenagers don't like. This is what happened: shoppers and shop owners complained to the police about teenagers behaving badly in the shopping centre. When a new sound system started playing Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, the antisocial behaviour stopped. The young people causing problems had gone! Classical music was clearly not popular with these particular teenagers.

Task 1. Are the sentences true or false? Choose the correct answer.

1. British teenagers prefer the radio to YouTube videos.
2. Lots of people in the UK download music.
3. The O2 is the largest live music venue in the world.
4. There are free music festivals in the UK every year.
5. One Direction won a television music competition.
6. Classical music helped to solve a problem in a British shopping centre.

Task 2. Choose the correct verb form to complete the sentences.

1. British teenagers like _____ their music online.
2. If you are a British resident you can _____ a single for about £1.
3. Using file-sharing websites _____ music is often illegal.
4. Recording companies and many musicians are very unhappy that people can _____ their music without paying.
5. At The O2 in London you can _____ world-famous bands such as One Direction.
6. 'The X Factor' is a British television music competition _____ new talented singers.
7. The audience at home can _____ by phone for their favourite acts.
8. You don't have to win 'The X Factor' _____ famous.

Task 3. Put the words in the correct order to make questions.

1. Do/download/you/music _____ ?
2. CD's/buy/Do/you _____ ?
3. music/on your/phone/you listen/Do/to _____ ?
4. Do/you/music/watch/videos _____ ?
5. perform/any bands/you/live/Have/seen _____ ?
6. music/of/do/you/to/What kind/listen _____ ?
7. Do/to the/listen/you/radio _____ ?
8. been/Have/you/festival/to a _____ ?