

Task 1 UK groups and singers

- Look at this list of UK artists. Who do you know? What type of music do / did they make?
 - Robbie Williams
 - Elton John
 - East 17
 - Girls Aloud
 - The Pet Shop Boys
 - John Lennon
 - Queen
 - Cliff Richard
 - Spice Girls
 - David Bowie
 - George Michael
 - Blue
 - The Killers
 - Alexandra Burke
- Which type of music do you like best?

Task 2 Your music buying habits and tastes

Answer the questions in this questionnaire then ask your partner the questions.

- How often do you buy CD singles?
- Do you think downloading music from the Internet should be free?
- How often do you listen to or follow the music charts?
- Do you buy records if they are number one or high in the charts?
- Do you buy more music at Christmas or other times of celebration?
- Do you like listening to music at Christmas time? If so, what type? (religious, party music, romantic ballads etc.)

Task 3 Read and find out

- Which artists are the current favourites in the UK race for a Christmas number one single? (George Michael, Mariah Carey, Rolf Harris, Susan Boyle, The Killers, The Muppets)

- Are Christmas number one single's usually religious? (no, not necessarily)
- How old are the people who buy singles? (usually young [16-24] but at Xmas everyone buys them)
- Why are the UK charts different at Christmas time? (the people who buy the records are different and the types of record can be unusual)

The Christmas Number One

Every year, for a few short weeks around Christmas time, the UK charts go mad. It's the silly season. Groups and singers who normally make cool music release a single that they hope will be number one on Christmas Day. The Christmas number one single is written about in newspapers, talked about on the radio and people can even bet money in betting shops to see which single will win the race. It's like a horse race but this one is unpredictable. It is called the silly season because a totally unknown singer or even a single based on a cartoon character can steal the number one place from famous and popular artists!

Why? Because the people who buy CD singles at Christmas are different. During the year the average age range of singles buyers is 16-24 but at Christmas children, mums and dads and older people buy singles as presents or to play at school or office parties. The Christmas single must be the type of record that everyone in the family will like, from 6 to 60. This could be a religious song but it might just be a romantic ballad about love, peace or snow. Some famous Christmas singles are anthem songs which lots of people like to sing along to, others are just great to dance to and have no lyrics that refer to Christmas.

The race is now on. George Michael hopes to win the number one spot with a very Christmassy single called 'December song'. Mariah Carey could make it back into the Christmas chart with her 1994 festive hit, 'All I Want For Christmas Is You'. Rolf Harris, the veteran Australian singer is hoping to top the festive chart with 'Christmas In The Sun'. Susan Boyle, winner of a TV talent show will be pleased if her single 'Wild Horse' wins. Christmas is always a good time for a charity song so The Killers new single, 'Happy Birthday Guadalupe', in support of World Aids Day, could be in with a chance. There's even a chance that The Muppets could win the Christmas number one race with their version of 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. What would you buy?

Task 4. Christmas music

- Listen to these samples of Christmas chart music and decide which one is:

- Religious
 - A romantic ballad
 - Good for parties
 - An anthem
 - Silly or humorous.
- Ask and answer these questions in pairs.
 - Which single do you think should be number one?
 - Is there a single you like at the moment? Which one?
 - What's your favourite single of all time? Why?

Task 5 The video tie-in for higher levels

Watch three video clips and decide:

- Which video is the most effective and why?
- Has the video got anything to do with the song?
- If it tells a story
- The success of the Christmas number one can depend on the video produced to accompany the single. Robbie Williams and Nicole Kidman's romantic video, full of snow and love, made their song go to number one in 2001.
- What do you think are the key ingredients of a Christmas single video? (Remember that the music buying public are different at Christmas.)
- Plan a video for the George Michael single 'December song (I dreamed of Christmas)' or for another single you would like to be number one. Describe the situation, the location, what people should wear, what happens in the video.

Task 6 Pop quiz

Test everyone's knowledge of your country's charts. Prepare questions like these.

- Name the song: Who sang the song
- Give the month or year: When did have a hit single with
- Describe the song: Which single by talks about
- Know the singer: What is the singer 's real name?
- Know the nationality: Where are from?
- Say the age: How old is ?
- Know the real name: What is 's surname?
- Describe the type of music: What type of music does make?

- Know the band: Who sings with? Name 2 members of the group
- Know the songs: Sing 2 lines from the songbySing the chorus of

Task 7 Discussion: Manufactured pop and the charts.

- Many young people in the UK complain that the pop charts do not reflect their tastes.
- What about the charts in your country? Do they reflect the tastes of most young people?
 - How? Why not?
- Not many singles in another language ever make it to the UK chart. The UK record buying public prefer records in English.
 - What is the balance between English records and your own language records in your country?
 - Do you agree with this?
 - Was this the situation when your parents were young?
 - Is this changing?
- Do you prefer listening to music in your own language?
- Are the lyrics important?

The number of bands manufactured by record companies is increasing. Some of these artists cannot play instruments and do not write their own songs. There are also TV shows where young people compete to become a famous pop star.

- Is there much manufactured pop in your country?
- Do you like this type of music?
- Do you think TV shows offering the prize of "becoming famous" are a good thing?
- Would you go on a show to compete to become famous?