The Guardian

one stop english

AI used to create new and final Beatles song, says Paul McCartney

Level 3: Advanced – Teacher's notes

Article summary: Sir Paul McCartney has used AI to extricate John Lennon's voice from an old demo and complete a decades-old song.

Time: 60–90 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Listening (online in class or for homework)

Language focus: Hyphenated adjectives + nouns

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

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1. Warmer

The purpose of this activity is to introduce and get students engaged in the topic. Note down emergent language related to the theme on the board. If possible, have some Beatles music playing in the background.

2. Key words

a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Check answers and ask students to contribute any other knowledge about the meaning and use of each word. See comments in brackets below.

Key:
1. *extricate*
2. *demo, demos*
3. *boombox (Another term for this is* ghetto blaster.*)*
4. *ropey (primarily British)*
5. *reunion*
6. *chorus*
7. *shelve*
8. *rubbish (common collocations: absolute, utter)*
9. *scrap, scrapping*
10. *defect*
11. *bootleg (also used to describe alcohol)*
12. *linger, lingered*
13. *mount, mounted*
14. *scrub, scrubbing*

3. Comprehension check

a. Ask students to complete the task individually and compare their answers in small groups before checking with the whole class. Encourage students to read each question first and scan the text to find the relevant information.

Key:
1. *He will release the final Beatles song in 2023.*
2. *'Now and Then'*
3. *They mainly were apologetic love songs.*
4. *A dialogue editor used AI to extract the Beatles' voices for a documentary.*
5. *The three surviving Beatles compiled their Anthology series and released the first new material in over two decades.*
6. *verses*
7. *George Harrison thought the song wasn't very good. The song's recording was bad quality – there was background noise on it.*
8. *Fake songs by famous musicians were streamed hundreds of thousands of times before being removed.*
9. *He is both worried and excited.*

4. Key language

a. Ask students to complete this activity in pairs or small groups.

Key:
1. *an eight-hour(-long) epic*
2. *custom-made AI*
3. *surround-sound mixes*
4. *a career-spanning anthology*
5. *high-profile fakes*
6. *a home-recorded demo*
7. *an award-winning album*
8. *AI-generated content*

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b. Ask students to work in pairs to come up with their own examples and write questions. Then regroup them to ask and answer with another couple of students. Answers will vary. Here are some examples:

  • *Do you think the Beatles are an old-fashioned band?*
  • *Do you like sun-dried food?*
  • *Have you ever been in a self-driving car?*

5. Discussion

a. Allow students time to note down their ideas about each statement and encourage them to say why they agree or disagree with each one. Then put them into small groups and ask them to share their ideas.

6. In your own words

a. Ask students to research an AI-generated song online and find a short video about it. Have them prepare notes that they will use to present to the class by answering the questions. You can have students practise what they are going to say in pairs and give each other feedback before their final presentation.

b. Regroup students so that pairs are split into groups of four or five. Ask students to take turns to present. After they have presented, they can show each other the videos.

  As an extension, students can discuss the ethics of using AI to create new music.

  Alternatively, you can ask students to share an audio of their presentation along with a link to the video on an online platform and have them comment on a few.