

1. *The X Factor*

This week's lesson is about the musical talent show that first appeared on British television in 2004 and has since become an enormously successful worldwide franchise: *The X Factor*.

Level

Upper intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B2 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Brainstorm on the subject of *The X Factor* (if your students' country has its own version of the show), or discuss its nearest equivalent in your students' country. Encourage them to describe the show's format, judges, famous recent participants, etc. What do they like/dislike about the programme, and why? If they were able to devise their very own version of *The X Factor*, in what ways would it differ from the current show?
2. Give your students between five and ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Tell them they are going to answer a series of questions on the text, but that they shouldn't write anything down at this stage.
3. Divide the students into pairs and hand out Worksheet B. Ask them to work together to complete the different types of comprehension questions in Exercises 1 and 2.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Next, ask the students to turn over their copies of Worksheets A and B or to hand them back to you temporarily. Keeping the students in their pairs, ask them to attempt Exercise 3 on Worksheet C, which contains the text from Worksheet A with twenty mistakes that they have to identify and correct. Point out that the mistakes are not evenly spaced: some lines in the text might have more than one mistake, and some have none. Also explain that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write any additional words.
6. Check answers in open class. If you wish, hand out Worksheet D, which contains the full text with all the mistakes corrected in bold.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. D 2. F 3. F 4. F 5. F 6. D 7. F 8. D 9. T 10. D

Exercise 2

1. Tabloids.
2. A lucrative recording contract.
3. 2004.
4. More than a fifth.
5. The fact that in most years since *The X Factor* first appeared on British TV, the winner's debut single has quickly reached number one in the singles charts.
6. By encouraging people to buy an alternative single ('Killing in the Name' by the American band Rage Against the Machine in 2009, and believe it or not, a studio recording of pure silence in 2010) and thereby ensuring the song by *The X Factor*'s winner wouldn't be number one at Christmas.

Exercise 3

See Worksheet D.

2. Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://xfactor.itv.com/2010/>

The official website of the British version of *The X Factor*. Challenging for upper intermediate level.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/topics/the-x-factor/>

Evidence of the British tabloids' fervent interest in *The X Factor*: an entire section of the *Daily Mirror* devoted to the programme. Challenging for upper intermediate level.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_X_Factor_\(TV_series\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_X_Factor_(TV_series))

Wikipedia provides a good overview of *The X Factor* — not only in Britain but also in the numerous other countries where it has become popular. Appropriate for upper intermediate level.