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# *The X Factor*

WORKSHEET A

Tens of millions of television viewers around the world have become familiar with the musical talent show *The X Factor*, which originated in the UK in 2004 and has since become an international franchise. In some countries the name is different — for example, *Factor X* in Spanish-speaking countries and *XSeer Al Najah* in Arabic-speaking countries — but the format is usually the same: aspiring pop singers or groups compete in front of a small group of judges, and a large studio audience, for the prize of a lucrative recording contract. The US version of *The X Factor* will begin broadcasting in September next year, with its creator, Simon Cowell, as one of the judges.

The British version of the show has been enormously successful, watched by an average of around 13 million people — more than a fifth of the UK population. The studio audience is extremely enthusiastic (at times almost hysterical) and the four judges, who give their opinions immediately after each performance, are usually booed if they make negative comments. The TV audience votes by telephone for their favorite act, and the results are announced in a follow-up show. The two acts who receive the fewest votes from the public normally have to perform again in the follow-up show, and then their fate is in the hands of the judges: the one the judges think has sung better stays in the competition, but the loser is eliminated.

As the competition progresses, the performers are in the public eye for far longer than the two evenings a week they are on TV: their talents (or lack of), personalities, and off-stage behavior are also discussed endlessly by gossip magazines and tabloids, their faces frequently appearing on the front pages. Feelings run so high that campaigns for or against certain contestants are launched on social networking sites.

In the UK, winning *The X Factor* guarantees that a singer or group will be able to make a lot of money from their music, at least in the short term. In most years, for example, the debut single by the winner, released in December, has reached the top of the British singles charts by Christmas.

Some people, however, think the program has too much influence on the music-buying public, which is why in 2009 there was a successful campaign to encourage people to buy an alternative single and thereby ensure the song by *The X Factor*'s winner wouldn't be number one at Christmas. The campaign is being repeated this year. Another kind of protest against the 2010 competition was when a lot of people tried to undermine it by voting every week for the contestant with by far the worst singing voice — he was finally eliminated only in late November.

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# *The X Factor*

## WORKSHEET B

### Exercise 1

Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F), or if the text doesn't say (D).

1. The contestants on the British version of *The X Factor* perform in London.
2. The winner in 2010 was the contestant with the worst singing voice.
3. There are three judges.
4. The song by the winner of the 2009 competition was number one at Christmas that year.
5. The studio audience usually likes it when the judges make negative comments.
6. The TV audience for the program increases as the competition progresses.
7. The judges decide which two acts have to perform again in the follow-up program.
8. The judges are the same people every week.
9. Spain has its own version of *The X Factor*.
10. Every country in Europe has its own version of *The X Factor*.

### Exercise 2

Answer the questions below.

1. What kind of British newspapers endlessly discuss the contestants on *The X Factor*?
2. What do the winners of the competition receive?
3. When was the program first shown on British TV?
4. On average, what proportion of the British population watches *The X Factor*?
5. What example of the show's "influence on the music-buying public" is given in the text?
6. In what way have campaigns in 2009 and 2010 tried to undermine this influence?

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# *The X Factor*

WORKSHEET C

### Exercise 3

The text from Worksheet A has been copied below, but now contains twenty mistakes: can you find and correct them?

Tens of millions of television viewers around the world have become family with the musical talents show *The X Factor*, which originaled in the UK in 2004 and has since become an international franchise. In some countries the name is different — for example, *Factor X* in Spanish-speaking countries and *XSeer Al Najah* in Arabic-speaking countries — but the format is usually the same: perspiring pop singers or groups compete in front of a small group of judges, and a large studio audience, for the prize of a ligrative recording contract. The US version of *The X Factor* will begin bigcasting in September next year, with its creator, Simon Cowell, as one of the judges.

The British version of the show has been enormously successful, watched by an average of around 13 million people — more than a fiveth of the UK population. The studio audience is extremely enthusiastic (at times almost hysteria) and the four judges, who give their opinions immediately after each performance, are usually bood if they make negative comments. The TV audience votes by telephone for their favorite act, and the results are announced in a follow-up show. The two acts who receive the fewest votes from the public normally have to perform again in the follow-up show, and then their face is in the feet of the judges: the one the judges think has sung better stays in the competition, but the loser is eliminated.

As the competition progresses, the performers are in the public eye for far longer than the two evenings a week they are on TV: their talents (or lack of), personals, and off-stage behavior are also discussed endlessly by goss magazines and tabloids, their faces frequently appearing on the front pages. Feelings run so high that campaigns for or against certain contestants are launched on social networking sites.

In the UK, winning *The X Factor* guarantees that a singer or group will be able to do a lot of money from their music, at least in the short team. In most years, for example, the debu single by the winner, released in December, has reached the top of the British singles charts by Christmas.

Some people, however, think the program has too much influence on the music-buying public, which is why in 2009 there was a successfull campaign to encourage people to buy an alternative single and thereby ensure the song by *The X Factor*'s winner wouldn't be number one at Christmas. The campaign is being repeated this year. Another kind of protest against the 2010 competition was when a lot of people tried to overmine it by voting every week for the contestant with by far the worst singing voice — he was finally liminated only in late November.

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# *The X Factor*

WORKSHEET D

Tens of millions of television viewers around the world have become (1) **familiar** with the musical (2) **talent** show *The X Factor*, which (3) **originated** in the UK in 2004 and has since become an international (4) **franchise**. In some countries the name is different — for example, *Factor X* in Spanish-speaking countries and *XSeer Al Najah* in Arabic-speaking countries — but the format is usually the same: (5) **aspiring** pop singers or groups compete in front of a small group of judges, and a large studio audience, for the prize of a (6) **lucrative** recording contract. The US version of *The X Factor* will begin (7) **broadcasting** in September next year, with its creator, Simon Cowell, as one of the judges.

The British version of the show has been enormously successful, watched by an average of around 13 million people — more than a (8) **fifth** of the UK population. The studio audience is extremely enthusiastic (at times almost (9) **hysterical**) and the four judges, who give their opinions immediately after each performance, are usually (10) **booed** if they make negative comments. The TV audience votes by telephone for their favorite act, and on Sunday evening the results are announced in a follow-up show. The two acts who receive the fewest votes from the public normally have to perform again in the follow-up show, and then their (11) **fate** is in the (12) **hands** of the judges: the one the judges think has sung better stays in the competition, but the loser is eliminated.

As the competition progresses, the performers are in the public eye for far longer than the two evenings a week they are on TV: their talents (or lack of), (13) **personalities**, and off-stage behavior are also discussed endlessly by (14) **gossip** magazines and tabloids, their faces frequently appearing on the front pages. Feelings run so high that campaigns for or against certain contestants are launched on social networking sites.

In the UK, winning *The X Factor* guarantees that a singer or group will be able to (15) **make** a lot of money from their music, at least in the short (16) **term**. In most years, for example, the (17) **debut** single by the winner, released in December, has reached the top of the British singles charts by Christmas.

Some people, however, think the program has too much influence on the music-buying public, which is why in 2009 there was a (18) **successful** campaign to encourage people to buy an alternative single and thereby ensure the song by *The X Factor*'s winner wouldn't be number one at Christmas. The campaign is being repeated this year. Another kind of protest against the 2010 competition was when a lot of people tried to (19) **undermine** it by voting every week for the contestant with by far the worst singing voice — he was finally (20) **eliminated** only in late November.