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## GLOSSARY

**extensive** – large, thorough, and complete, with many different kinds of something

\* Henry has extensive knowledge of home building because he worked for an architect for three years.

**collection** – a group of many of the same type of things, such as stamps, music, books, coins, or dolls

\* The library has a large collection of books on the U.S. Civil War.

**genre** – a type or style of music, books, or movies

\* Her favorite movie genres are romantic comedies and horror.

**album** – the group of songs on one CD or record created by a musician or band

\* How many of Madonna's albums do you own?

**artist** – a musician

\* Michael Jackson is a very well-known American artist.

**track** – one song on an album; one song in a collection of music

\* The first three tracks are fast songs, but the rest of the tracks on this album are slower.

**cued up** – ready to play, used when talking about music or videos

\* I've already cued up the movie, so all you need to do is hit 'play'.

**beat** – rhythm; the repeating, regular sound in a song where one note is louder or stronger than the other notes

\* Gerome likes to listen to music with a fast beat when he goes running.

**to be blown away** – to be very favorably impressed by something; to like something very much and more than one expected to like it

\* They were blown away by Ichiro's performance on the trumpet.

**mix** – the arrangement or combination of voices, instruments, music, and other sounds in a recorded song

\* Karina's voice wasn't very good the day they recorded the song, but the producers were able to hide it in the mix.

**bass** – low-pitched sounds, like a man's voice or a bass guitar

\* Jazz music often sounds better if you turn up the bass.



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**treble** – high-pitched sounds, like a woman’s voice or a violin

\* That reporter’s voice is so high and annoying! Is there any way to turn down the treble?

**volume** – loudness; the intensity of sound and how easily one can hear it

\* Could you please turn up the volume on the TV? I can’t hear what the actors are saying.

**vocalist** – singer

\* Leichi is a talented vocalist who loves to sing on stage.

**sound engineer** – a person whose job is to improve the way that recorded music sounds before it is sold

\* Ashley is a sound engineer who has worked with some famous bands.

**to cover (something) up** – to hide something; to do something so that another thing cannot be heard or seen

\* Sergei was really embarrassed by what happened, but he tried to cover it up by laughing.



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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. What does Victoria think of J.D.'s music collection?
  - a) She thinks it's unusual.
  - b) She thinks it's expensive.
  - c) She thinks it's large.
  
2. Why doesn't J.D. like the song very much?
  - a) Because it doesn't have a good rhythm.
  - b) Because it's hard to hear the high notes.
  - c) Because it's too loud.

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**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**track**

The word “track,” in this podcast, means one song on an album: “Claudia picked her favorite tracks from different albums and put them all on one CD.” A “track” is also an oval- (circular-) shaped course that people, horses, or cars race around: “Running around the track four times is approximately equal to one mile.” The phrase “to be on the (right/wrong) track” means to be doing something correctly/incorrectly: “Please show me the first article so that I can read it and see whether you're on the right track before you begin writing the other articles.” Finally, the phrase “to lose track of (someone or something)” means to not know what is happening or where someone or something is: “Karlie became very scared when she lost track of her children at the zoo.”

**beat**

In this podcast, the word “beat” means rhythm or the repeating, regular noise in a song: “She moved her feet to the beat as she listened to music.” A “beat” can also be the repetitive movements of one's heart as it moves blood through one's body: “He has a resting heart rate of 56 beats per minute.” Another meaning of “beat” is the physical area or topic that someone works on: “Who is the education beat reporter for that newspaper?” Or, “None of the policemen want to work the downtown beat.” As a verb, “to beat” means to hit someone: “She left her husband because he was beating her.” The informal and rude phrase “beat it!” is used to tell someone to go away or leave a place: “Don't say, ‘beat it’ to your little brother. It isn't nice.”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

American Top 40 is a popular, weekly radio program that “counts down” the 40 most popular songs in the United States, “announcing” (saying) and playing them one at a time, starting with the 40<sup>th</sup> most popular song and ending with the most popular song.

The show was created in 1970 by a man named Casey Kasem. He “hosted the show” (was the main person who spoke on the show) from 1970 to 1988, providing information about each of the most popular 40 songs, such as who sang them and whether they had already been in the list of the top 40 songs in earlier weeks. He provided “bios” (biographies; information about a person’s life) for a few of the musicians and told stories about how they had created the songs.

Listeners could “call in” (participate in a radio show by using one’s phone) to ask questions about the songs. They could also “request” (ask for) “dedications,” where Casey would say that a certain song was being played for a certain person, perhaps because someone wanted to express love for that person by having his or her name said on the radio right before a “meaningful” (filled with meaning and importance) song was played.

In 1988, another person began hosting American Top 40, so Casey created a similar show called Casey’s Top 40. Many radio stations decided to “broadcast” (play on the radio) only Casey’s show. In 1998, Casey renamed his show to be American Top 40 again, and he continued hosting it for another five years. Beginning in 2004, another man began hosting the show, but Casey continues to host related programs, including American Top 20 with Casey Kasem and American Top 40 with Casey Kasem. Casey Kasem’s radio shows were very popular and many people today can easily recognize his “distinctive” (different from others) voice.

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – b



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 481: Listening to Music.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 481 – can you believe it? My name is Dr. Jeff McQuillan, I'm the host of ESL Podcast, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful – and I do mean beautiful – Los Angeles, California.

We have a website, yes we do. It's eslpod.com. On it, you can find a Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is a dialogue between Victoria and J.D. It's going to talk about listening to music and uses a lot of vocabulary we use to describe music. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Victoria: I see that you have a really extensive music collection.

J.D.: Yeah, I like a lot of different genres of music.

Victoria: Do you have the new J.McQ album? He's my favorite artist. I just got it and I like all of the tracks on it.

J.D.: No, I haven't heard it yet. Do you have it on your MP3 player?

Victoria: Yeah, here, I've cued up the first track.

J.D.: Hmm...I like the beat of the first song, but I'm not blown away by the rest of it. It's also a really bad mix. The bass is up too high; you can hardly hear the treble. Is the whole album like that?

Victoria: Yeah, I guess so. I didn't notice. Maybe the volume wasn't up high enough.

J.D.: No, it was up high enough. Maybe he's just not that good a vocalist and the sound engineers are trying to cover it up in the mixing.

Victoria: Are you kidding? He's an amazing singer. Come on, listen to another track. I'm sure you'll change your mind.



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J.D.: No, thanks. I'd rather listen to a bunch of fighting cats than listen to anymore of J.McQ!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Victoria saying, "I see that you have a really extensive music collection." "Extensive" means large, thorough, and complete, with many different kinds of something. You might say to someone, "He has an extensive library," it has lots of different books about lots of different topics. A "collection" is just a group of things, so when Victoria says to J.D., "you have a really extensive music collection," she means he has a lot of albums, CDs, other recordings of music.

J.D. says, "Yeah, I like a lot of different genres of music." A "genre of music" is a type or a style of music; it can also be used to describe a type or a style of book or of a movie – different genres of movies. Notice that the person's name here is J.D., those are actually initials. Usually they would stand for something: the "J" could be John or James or even Jeff. Sometimes people use their initials as, effectively, their name, and that's what J.D. is using here. I actually have a friend whose first and last initials are "J" and "D," sometimes people would call him J.D.

Anyway, J.D. has a lot of different types of music. Victoria asks him, "Do you have the new J.McQ album? He's my favorite artist." An "album" is a group of songs on a single CD (or compact disc) or on what we used to call "records." Well, they're still called records; they're not as popular anymore, although some people still like them. These were large black discs made out of vinyl. An album is a collection of 8-10, maybe more songs from the same singer or the same band. The word "artist," here, just means musician. It can be used to refer to someone who is a painter or a sculptor, but in talking about music it simply means the musician.

Victoria says that J.McQ is her favorite artist, and I can understand why – he's got a great voice! She says, "I just got it (meaning I just bought it; I just was able to obtain it) and I liked all of the tracks on it." A "track" is one song on an album, or one song in a collection of music in this case. "Track" actually has a couple of different meanings; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

J.D. says, "No, I haven't heard it yet. Do you have it on your MP3 player?" your iPod, for example. Victoria says, "Yeah, here, I've cued up the first track." "To cue up (something)" means to make something ready to play, especially if you



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are talking about music or videos. For example, if you have a DVD player and you rent a movie – a DVD, your husband or wife might say, “I’ll cue up the movie while you make the popcorn.” “To cue up” means to get it ready to play, because, of course, when you buy a DVD with a movie on it there’s usually of bunch of other commercials and other things before the movie actually starts.

J.D. says, after listening to this song by J.McQ, he says, “Hmm...I like the beat of the first song, but I’m not blown away by the rest of it.” The “beat” (beat), here refers to the rhythm, the repeating regular song when you have one note stronger or louder than the other. There are a lot of very famous beats in popular music, sometimes you even hear the same beat in different types of music – or different songs, I should say. Well, J.D. likes the beat of the first song, but he was not blown away by the rest of it. By the way, “beat” has a couple of different meanings in English, so definitely take a look at our Learning Guide for some more explanations. “To be blown away” means to have a very favorable impression of something, to like something very much, much more than you expected it. “I went to see the movie [Slumdog Millionaire](#) and I was blown away by it,” I thought was very good, much better than I expected.

Well, J.D. is not blown away by J.McQ’s first song; he says, “It’s also a really bad mix.” A “mix” is the combination of voices, instruments, music, as well as other sounds in a recorded song. So, it’s the mixture of these different elements in the song. J.D. says, “The bass is up too high, and I can hardly hear the treble.” The “bass,” in music, are the low-pitched sounds – low, like this. That’s bass. You can also use the word to describe a bass guitar, which is a guitar that plays these very low notes. The opposite of “bass” is “treble.” “Treble” refers to the high notes, like you might hear in a woman’s voice.

J.D. asks, “Is the whole album like that?” meaning are all of the songs that way. Victoria says, “Yeah, I guess so. I didn’t notice. Maybe the volume wasn’t up high enough.” The “volume” refers to the loudness of music or sound. She’s saying that she didn’t notice these problems because perhaps the volume wasn’t up high enough. We talk about the volume being “high” when it’s loud, and “low” when it’s soft.

J.D. says, “No, it was up high enough. Maybe he’s not that good a vocalist and the sound engineers are trying to cover it up in the mixing.” A “vocalist” is someone who sings; it’s a singer. The “sound engineers” are the people who try to improve the recorded music before it is sold. So they record a singer, and then they do things to the recording to try to make it sound better. Sometimes they do things that make the voice sound a lot better than the person can actually sing, that way they cover up the problems. “To cover (something) up” is a



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phrasal verb meaning to do something so that no one else can see it or hear it. So they cover up the bad singing by doing these other things.

Victoria is somewhat angry at J.D., she says, “Are you kidding (are you joking)? J.McQ is an amazing singer (a great singer). Come on, listen to another track. I’m sure you’ll change your mind,” you’ll have a different opinion of J.McQ. J.D. says, “No, thanks. I’d rather listen to a bunch of fighting cats than listen to anymore of J.McQ!” Of course, fighting cats don’t sound very nice. But I’m guessing here that J.D. is a musician and he is a little jealous of J.McQ, because Victoria likes J.McQ’s music and J.D. is jealous; he wants to have all of the attention for himself. I’m pretty sure that’s what’s happening in this dialogue!

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by someone with an extensive knowledge of English, our very own Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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