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Ready-to-use ESL/EFL Lessons by Sean Banville

**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

**The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

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## **Bananas ripen better with Mozart**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1011/101128-bananas.html>

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# THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1011/101128-bananas.html>

Scientists have shown that Mozart has a positive effect on many things, but the great composer himself might be surprised that his music helps bananas ripen. A Japanese fruit company, Toyoka Chuo Seika, claims its bananas taste better after being exposed to Mozart's music for a week. The company has special "ripening chambers" that play wall-to-wall Mozart to its Philippine bananas non-stop for a week. Company officials say "String Quartet No. 17" and "Piano Concerto No. 5 in D major" are particularly good at sweetening the fruit. The company is very confident its methods work. It has started selling its fruit as "Mozart Bananas" in local supermarkets. A spokesperson believes the bananas will become a hit throughout the rest of Japan once word gets out.

Toyoka Chuo Seika is not the first Japanese company to experiment with classical music to produce better tasting food. The "Japan Times" newspaper reports this is the latest in a trend spanning ten years. It writes: "Over the past few decades, a wide variety of foods and beverages have been exposed to classical vibrations — soy sauce in Kyoto, udon noodles in Tokyo, miso in Yamagata, maitake mushrooms in Ishikawa and "Beethoven Bread" in Nagoya, to name a few." The paper reports on a 1973 study into music and plants by botanist Dorothy Retallack. It says: "After playing various kinds of music to plants for three hours daily, she found they "preferred" soothing classical, which made them flourish. Rock and country, on the other hand, had either a debilitating effect or none at all."

# WARM-UPS

**1. BANANAS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about bananas. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*scientists / Mozart / ripen / composer / exposed / piano concerto / fruit / confident / experiment / classical music / trend / soy sauce / botanist / soothing / rock music*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. MOZART:** Unbelievable!!! Make some crazy stories. Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Mozart and...	Its positive effects on these things	Why?
computers		
aliens		
ants		
airplanes		
English		
hair		

**4. MOZART'S MUSIC:** Students A **strongly** believe Mozart's music has a positive effect on things; Students B **strongly** believe it doesn't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. MUSIC:** How do these kinds of music affect people? Talk about them with your partner(s). Change partners and share again.

- classical
- rock
- hip-hop
- pop
- opera
- techno
- country
- jazz

**6. RIPE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'ripe'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1011/101128-bananas.html>

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. A company says the music of Mozart helps bananas taste better.     | T / F |
| b. The company says bananas can actually hear Mozart's music.         | T / F |
| c. The bananas need a week of Mozart for the ripening to take effect. | T / F |
| d. The company is selling its "Mozart Bananas" all over the world.    | T / F |
| e. Japanese food companies have experimented with music for a decade. | T / F |
| f. No Japanese company has experimented with music and drinks.        | T / F |
| g. A while back a Japanese bakery baked "Beethoven Bread".            | T / F |
| h. A botanist did a study in 1973 and found plants loved rock music.  | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. effect       | a. rooms      |
| 2. claims       | b. report     |
| 3. chambers     | c. news       |
| 4. particularly | d. stretching |
| 5. word         | e. especially |
| 6. trend        | f. impact     |
| 7. spanning     | g. do well    |
| 8. study        | h. fashion    |
| 9. soothing     | i. says       |
| 10. flourish    | j. relaxing   |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Mozart has a positive effect               | a. sweetening the fruit |
| 2. his music helps                            | b. or none at all       |
| 3. play wall-to-                              | c. ten years            |
| 4. particularly good at                       | d. gets out             |
| 5. once word                                  | e. better tasting food  |
| 6. experiment with classical music to produce | f. flourish             |
| 7. a trend spanning                           | g. on many things       |
| 8. a wide variety of                          | h. bananas ripen        |
| 9. made them                                  | i. foods and beverages  |
| 10. had either a debilitating effect          | j. wall Mozart          |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1011/101128-bananas.html>

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Scientists have shown that Mozart has a \_\_\_\_\_ effect on many things, but the \_\_\_\_\_ composer himself might be surprised that his music helps bananas ripen. A Japanese fruit company, Toyoka Chuo Seika, \_\_\_\_\_ its bananas taste better after being exposed to Mozart's music for a week. The company has special "ripening \_\_\_\_\_" that play wall-to-wall Mozart to its Philippine bananas non-\_\_\_\_\_ for a week. Company officials say "String Quartet No. 17" and "Piano Concerto No. 5 in D major" are \_\_\_\_\_ good at sweetening the fruit. The company is very \_\_\_\_\_ its methods work. It has started selling its fruit as "Mozart Bananas" in local supermarkets. A spokesperson believes the bananas will become a hit throughout the rest of Japan once \_\_\_\_\_ gets out.

*stop*

*claims*

*confident*

*word*

*positive*

*particularly*

*great*

*chambers*

Toyoka Chuo Seika is not the first Japanese company to \_\_\_\_\_ with classical music to produce better \_\_\_\_\_ food. The "Japan Times" newspaper reports this is the latest in a \_\_\_\_\_ spanning ten years. It writes: "Over the past few decades, a wide variety of foods and \_\_\_\_\_ have been exposed to classical vibrations — soy sauce in Kyoto, udon noodles in Tokyo, miso in Yamagata, maitake mushrooms in Ishikawa and "Beethoven Bread" in Nagoya, to \_\_\_\_\_ a few." The paper reports on a 1973 study into music and plants by \_\_\_\_\_ Dorothy Retallack. It says: "After playing various kinds of music to plants for three hours daily, she found they "preferred" \_\_\_\_\_ classical, which made them flourish. Rock and country, on the other \_\_\_\_\_, had either a debilitating effect or none at all."

*beverages*

*hand*

*tasting*

*botanist*

*soothing*

*experiment*

*trend*

*name*

Bananas ripen better with Mozart – 28th November, 2010

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## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1011/101128-bananas.html>

Scientists have shown that Mozart \_\_\_\_\_ many things, but the great composer \_\_\_\_\_ surprised that his music helps bananas ripen. A Japanese fruit company, Toyoka Chuo Seika, claims its bananas taste better \_\_\_\_\_ to Mozart's music for a week. The company has special "ripening chambers" that play wall-to-wall Mozart to its Philippine bananas \_\_\_\_\_. Company officials say "String Quartet No. 17" and "Piano Concerto No. 5 in D major" are particularly good \_\_\_\_\_. The company is very confident its methods work. It has started selling its fruit as "Mozart Bananas" in local supermarkets. A spokesperson believes the bananas will become a hit throughout the rest of Japan \_\_\_\_\_.

Toyoka Chuo Seika is not the first Japanese company to experiment with classical music \_\_\_\_\_ food. The "Japan Times" newspaper reports this is the latest in a trend spanning ten years. It writes: "Over the past few decades, a wide variety of \_\_\_\_\_ have been exposed \_\_\_\_\_ — soy sauce in Kyoto, udon noodles in Tokyo, miso in Yamagata, maitake mushrooms in Ishikawa and "Beethoven Bread" in Nagoya, to name a few." The paper reports on a 1973 study into music and \_\_\_\_\_ Dorothy Retallack. It says: "After playing various kinds of music to plants for three hours daily, she found they "preferred" soothing classical, \_\_\_\_\_. Rock and country, on the other hand, had \_\_\_\_\_ effect or none at all."

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# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1011/101128-bananas.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'positive' and 'effect'.

positive	effect

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shown</li><li>• surprised</li><li>• taste</li><li>• non</li><li>• particularly</li><li>• rest</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• tasting</li><li>• ten</li><li>• past</li><li>• few</li><li>• three</li><li>• none</li></ul>
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# STUDENT BANANAS SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1011/101128-bananas.html>

Write five GOOD questions about bananas in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# BANANAS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'banana'?
- c) What do you think of Mozart helping ripen bananas?
- d) Do you think Mozart really has a positive effect on many things?
- e) What do you think of bananas?
- f) How could Mozart possibly help bananas taste sweeter?
- g) Would you like to try the "Mozart Bananas"?
- h) What do you think of this as a marketing tactic?
- i) Do you think word will get out and "Mozart Bananas" will sell?
- j) How does different music affect you?

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# BANANAS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think of experiments with food and music?
- c) What do you know about bananas?
- d) What is the best way to eat bananas?
- e) Bananas are one of those foods that a lot of people don't like. Why?
- f) What effect might Beethoven have on bread?
- g) Do you think plants like or respond to music?
- h) Do you think music could change the taste of food?
- i) Do you think the owners of Toyoka Chuo Seika are bananas?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the owner of Toyoka Chuo Seika?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1011/101128-bananas.html>

Scientists have (1) \_\_\_\_ that Mozart has a positive effect on many things, but the great composer (2) \_\_\_\_ might be surprised that his music helps bananas ripen. A Japanese fruit company, Toyoka Chuo Seika, claims its bananas taste better after (3) \_\_\_\_ exposed to Mozart's music for a week. The company has special "ripening chambers" that play wall-to-(4) \_\_\_\_ Mozart to its Philippine bananas non-stop for a week. Company officials say "String Quartet No. 17" and "Piano Concerto No. 5 in D major" are particularly good at sweetening the fruit. The company is very confident its methods work. It has started selling its fruit (5) \_\_\_\_ "Mozart Bananas" in local supermarkets. A spokesperson believes the bananas will become a hit throughout the rest of Japan once (6) \_\_\_\_ gets out.

Toyoka Chuo Seika is not the first Japanese company to experiment with classical music to produce better (7) \_\_\_\_ food. The "Japan Times" newspaper reports this is the latest in a trend (8) \_\_\_\_ ten years. It writes: "Over the past few decades, a wide variety of foods and beverages have been exposed to classical (9) \_\_\_\_ — soy sauce in Kyoto, udon noodles in Tokyo, miso in Yamagata, maitake mushrooms in Ishikawa and "Beethoven Bread" in Nagoya, to name a (10) \_\_\_\_." The paper reports on a 1973 study into music and plants by botanist Dorothy Retallack. It says: "After playing various kinds of music to plants for three hours daily, she found they "preferred" (11) \_\_\_\_ classical, which made them flourish. Rock and country, on the other (12) \_\_\_\_, had either a debilitating effect or none at all."

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |              |               |                |              |
|-----|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) shown    | (b) shows     | (c) showed     | (d) showing  |
| 2.  | (a) him      | (b) himself   | (c) his        | (d) he       |
| 3.  | (a) was      | (b) be        | (c) being      | (d) were     |
| 4.  | (a) ceiling  | (b) floor     | (c) carpet     | (d) wall     |
| 5.  | (a) was      | (b) has       | (c) is         | (d) as       |
| 6.  | (a) sentence | (b) paragraph | (c) word       | (d) letter   |
| 7.  | (a) tasting  | (b) tasted    | (c) taster     | (d) tastes   |
| 8.  | (a) spawning | (b) spanning  | (c) spooning   | (d) spinning |
| 9.  | (a) vibrated | (b) vibrates  | (c) vibrations | (d) vibrant  |
| 10. | (a) few      | (b) several   | (c) numerous   | (d) many     |
| 11. | (a) seething | (b) smooching | (c) soaking    | (d) soothing |
| 12. | (a) foot     | (b) hand      | (c) head       | (d) arm      |

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# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about bananas. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. MOZART BANANAS:** Make a poster about "Mozart Bananas". Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. BANANAS:** Write a magazine article about the bananas. Include imaginary interviews with people who believe Mozart's music helps ripen bananas and those who don't.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to the owner of the factory. Ask him/her three questions about "Mozart Bananas". Give him/her three ideas for other ways to sell bananas. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T      b. F      c. T      d. F      e. T      f. F      g. T      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. effect       | a. impact     |
| 2. claims       | b. says       |
| 3. chambers     | c. rooms      |
| 4. particularly | d. especially |
| 5. word         | e. news       |
| 6. trend        | f. fashion    |
| 7. spanning     | g. stretching |
| 8. study        | h. report     |
| 9. soothing     | i. relaxing   |
| 10. flourish    | j. do well    |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Mozart has a positive effect               | a. on many things       |
| 2. his music helps                            | b. bananas ripen        |
| 3. play wall-to-                              | c. wall Mozart          |
| 4. particularly good at                       | d. sweetening the fruit |
| 5. once word                                  | e. gets out             |
| 6. experiment with classical music to produce | f. better tasting food  |
| 7. a trend spanning                           | g. ten years            |
| 8. a wide variety of                          | h. foods and beverages  |
| 9. made them                                  | i. flourish             |
| 10. had either a debilitating effect          | j. or none at all       |

## GAP FILL:

### Bananas ripen better with Mozart

Scientists have shown that Mozart has a **positive** effect on many things, but the **great** composer himself might be surprised that his music helps bananas ripen. A Japanese fruit company, Toyoka Chuo Seika, **claims** its bananas taste better after being exposed to Mozart's music for a week. The company has special "ripening **chambers**" that play wall-to-wall Mozart to its Philippine bananas non-**stop** for a week. Company officials say "String Quartet No. 17" and "Piano Concerto No. 5 in D major" are **particularly** good at sweetening the fruit. The company is very **confident** its methods work. It has started selling its fruit as "Mozart Bananas" in local supermarkets. A spokesperson believes the bananas will become a hit throughout the rest of Japan once **word** gets out.

Toyoka Chuo Seika is not the first Japanese company to **experiment** with classical music to produce better **tasting** food. The "Japan Times" newspaper reports this is the latest in a **trend** spanning ten years. It writes: "Over the past few decades, a wide variety of foods and **beverages** have been exposed to classical vibrations — soy sauce in Kyoto, udon noodles in Tokyo, miso in Yamagata, maitake mushrooms in Ishikawa and "Beethoven Bread" in Nagoya, to **name** a few." The paper reports on a 1973 study into music and plants by **botanist** Dorothy Retallack. It says: "After playing various kinds of music to plants for three hours daily, she found they "preferred" **soothing** classical, which made them flourish. Rock and country, on the other **hand**, had either a debilitating effect or none at all."

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a    2 - b    3 - c    4 - d    5 - d    6 - c    7 - a    8 - b    9 - c    10 - a    11 - d    12 - b

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