

Pakistan's youth put their faith in rock'n'roll

Level 2 • Intermediate

1 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

parody	insurgent	piracy	hamstrung	gig
turmoil	wannabe	renounce	breakthrough	auditorium

1. A _____ is someone who wants to be famous or successful.
2. A _____ is a public performance, especially of jazz or popular music.
3. If you _____ something, you state formally that you no longer believe in it or support it.
4. _____ is a state of excitement or uncontrolled activity.
5. _____ is the crime of making illegal copies of DVDs or CDs.
6. A _____ is a time when you begin to be successful at something.
7. An _____ is the part of a theatre, cinema or concert hall where the audience sits.
8. A _____ is a literary or musical work that copies a serious work in a humorous way.
9. If you are _____, you are prevented from doing what you want to do.
10. An _____ is someone who belongs to a group of people fighting to take control of their country by force.

2 Find the information

Read the text quickly and find the answers to these questions

1. How many people came to the new band's first gig?
2. How many came to their second gig?
3. How many students have signed up for the Guitar School?
4. When did satellite television arrive in Pakistan?
5. where do Pakistani musicians publicize themselves?
6. What will the capacity of the Rock Musicarium be?

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Never mind the Taliban – Pakistan's youth put their faith in rock'n'roll

Country's internal turmoil is feeding underground music scene and popular guitar school

Declan Walsh

1 September, 2009

- 1 Wannabe rock stars don't have an easy time in Pakistan. Last month a new band, Poor Rich Boy, appeared on the stage of a cramped café in Islamabad for their breakthrough gig. On the first night, one person turned up. "It was the night of the world cricket finals. Bad timing," said the group's guitarist, Zain Ahsan. The second gig was better – 30 people came along – but it brought its own dark worries. "I asked the owner, 'What if a bomb goes off?'" said Ahsan. "She said, 'Don't worry, I'll be with you.'"
- 2 Even in a summer of Taliban violence young Pakistanis are continuing to rock. An underground music scene is quietly growing in the country's major cities, fed by the Internet and the passion of mostly amateur bands. In Lahore a pair of unemployed rockers have built on that enthusiasm with a new school for rock'n'roll. "We weren't getting a lot of gigs, and we needed to survive," said co-founder Hamza Jafri. "So we thought we'd try this."
- 3 The Guitar School, as it is known, has been surprisingly successful. Around 40 students have signed up, ranging from surly teenagers in jeans to more practised musicians, such as Ahsan, looking to improve their skills. Classes take place in a small room lined with egg boxes; the school's teaching style is reflected in its motto: "Play it like you feel it." Many come from wealthy families that might once have disapproved of music, Jafri said. "People associated it with the red light district and sexual entertainment." But a popular new television show featuring live performances, *Coke Studio*, has given rock music a new respectability.
- 4 On a recent afternoon a woman brought in two shy teenage daughters for lessons. "It will do them good to learn," she said. But making it to the next stage is difficult and sometimes dangerous. For the past six months almost all public performances in Lahore have stopped since extremist attacks on a performing arts festival and the Sri Lankan cricket team. The Pakistani music industry itself is disorganized and hamstrung by massive piracy.
- 5 But the country's internal chaos is also producing creativity. Pakistanis have a rich musical tradition, with its roots in Sufism, but modern musicians have generally avoided political issues. But the new single from Jafri's band, co-VEN, is a parody of Pakistan's controversial alliance with the US. "There's a lot of foreign pressure on our government to attack people in the tribal areas," he said.
- 6 Others make fun of the turmoil. The Islamabad band Bumbu Sauce – the name comes from a Pot Noodles packet – recently brought out *Jiggernaut*, a single that mixes references to kung fu, talking dogs and the Taliban. Guitarist Shehryar Mufti is not worried the insurgents might take the joke badly. "Their argument is with the government, not the people," he said. "I think rock music is low on their list of priorities."
- 7 Pakistani rock was boosted by the arrival of satellite television in the 1990s. Today the musicians, many self-taught, publicize themselves through networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace, and Pakistan's growing number of FM radio stations. And despite the security concerns, a new concert scene is appearing.
- 8 On a sultry Saturday night hundreds of young people, mostly dressed in jeans and T-shirts, crowded into a new outdoor auditorium on the edge of Islamabad called the Rock Musicarium. "People are hungry for music; they want to get out," said the venue's founder, Zeejah Fazli. When it opens officially in November, the venue will have a recording studio and capacity for 600 people, said Fazli, who estimates there are 20 rock bands in Islamabad alone. But, he admitted,

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the project depends on the six-month lull in attacks on the capital continuing.

- 9 For some wealthy Pakistanis, rock music represents the cultural tensions of their life, which is divided between western influences and the conservative direction their society is taking. "On one side kids feel like they are in England; on the other this strict Islamic thing is going on. It's not good for people's sanity," said Jafri.

- 10 About five years ago Junaid Jamshed, the country's most famous pop star, renounced music and returned to religion. Now he appears on religious chat shows with a long, curly beard. But most aspiring rock stars say they can live with the difference. In the soundproof room at the Lahore guitar school, 17-year-old Danish Khwaja strummed his guitar, long hair flopping over his forehead. "It's kind of cool doing stuff you love," he said.

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First published in *The Guardian*, 01/09/09

3 Comprehension check

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the text?

1. It's easy to become a rock star in Pakistan.
2. There have been no Taliban attacks on Islamabad for the past six months.
3. The Internet is helping the underground music scene to grow.
4. The founders of the Guitar School expected it to be a great success.
5. Rock music is high on the list of things the Taliban are planning to attack.
6. Most wannabe rock stars say they cannot live with the difference between western influences and the strict Islamic direction their country is taking.

4 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. A noun meaning *a particular interest or activity and the places or people that are involved in it*. (para 2)
2. A noun meaning *a short statement that expresses a principle or aim*. (para 3)
3. A three-word expression meaning *an area with a lot of prostitutes*. (para 3)
4. A noun meaning *the quality of obeying the moral or social standards that are accepted by most people*. (para 3)
5. An adjective meaning *not arranged according to a clear plan or system*. (para 4)
6. A three-word expression meaning *to make jokes about something in an unkind way*. (para 6)
7. A noun meaning *a quiet period during a very active or violent situation*. (para 8)
8. A verb meaning *hanging in a loose, heavy and uncontrolled way*. (para 10)

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5 Adjectives

Match the adjectives from the text with their meanings.

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. cramped | a. done for pleasure and not as a job |
| 2. amateur | b. unfriendly and rude |
| 3. surly | c. having a large amount of money |
| 4. wealthy | d. hoping and trying to be successful at something |
| 5. massive | e. unpleasantly hot and humid |
| 6. controversial | f. small and crowded |
| 7. sultry | g. extremely large in amount or degree |
| 8. aspiring | h. causing disagreement or disapproval |

7 Word building

Complete the table.

	verb	noun
1.	violent	
2.	respectable	
3.	sane	
4.	creative	
5.	enthusiastic	
6.	entertaining	

6 Discussion

Does music play an important part in your life? If so, how? If not, why not?

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KEY

1 Key words

1. wannabe
2. gig
3. renounce
4. Turmoil
5. Piracy
6. breakthrough
7. auditorium
8. parody
9. hamstrung
10. insurgent

2 Find the information

1. one
2. 30
3. 40
4. in the 1990s
5. through networking websites (Facebook and MySpace)
6. 600

3 Comprehension check

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. F
6. F

4 Find the word

1. scene
2. motto
3. red light district
4. respectability
5. disorganized
6. make fun of
7. lull
8. flopping

5 Adjectives

1. f
2. a
3. b
4. c
5. g
6. h
7. e
8. d

6 Word building

1. violence
2. respectability
3. sanity
4. creativity
5. enthusiasm
6. entertainment