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Apple iTunes sees billionth download

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Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

27 February, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Apple iTunes sees billionth download

An American teenager became part of history yesterday when he downloaded the billionth song from the Apple iTunes music store. The 16-year-old did not know when he spent 99 cents to buy the song *Speed of Sound* by British group Coldplay that he would soon be in the news. The track's title is a good reminder of how fast progress in the industry is. Apple's online store is just three years old, and to sell a billion songs in that time is totally amazing. At the start of the millennium, few people had heard of an mp3 and iPods hadn't been invented. By contrast, sales of CDs have halved in many parts of the world.

The teenage record maker, Alex Ostrovsky from Michigan, won lots of digital goodies as a reward for his purchase. A representative from Apple phoned Alex to congratulate him and tell him he would receive an iMac computer, 10 iPods and a \$10,000 gift card for the iTunes store. At first, he thought it was a joke and nearly shouted down the telephone. Alex said: "I was really skeptical. I didn't even know there was a competition. But the guy knew the details of my mum's credit card." Apple CEO Steve Jobs was also happy. He said the Internet would continue to play a huge role in music sales.

WARM-UPS

1. MY MUSIC HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about your history with music. Was music a big part of your life when you were younger? How about now? How has the way you buy and listen to music changed over the years?

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

Teenagers / music / history / iTunes / 99 cents / the speed of sound / reminders / online stores / CDs / jokes / skepticism / shouting / credit cards / the Internet

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. FAVORITES: Tell each other your musical favorites. Use these examples in your conversations:

- Song to relax to
- Song when you're stressed
- Song of all time
- Song you love to hate
- Song to sing in the bath/shower
- Band
- Singer
- Lyrics
- Instrument
- Album

4. WHICH FORMAT? In pairs / groups, discuss the pros and cons of these music formats. Which do you like / dislike and why?

- Vinyl
- CD
- Cassette tape
- MD
- MP3
- Live
- Video
- Other

5. MUSIC FORMAT OPINIONS: What do you think about these opinions?

- a. I prefer to buy an album, CD or single with a cover than to download a song.
- b. It's better to be able to buy a few songs you like than pay for a whole CD.
- c. There is nothing wrong with illegally downloading mp3 files.
- d. iPods are the best products in the stores today.
- e. Internet music stores are much better than real CD stores.
- f. The Internet will mean many new bands can become famous.
- g. It's better to wait for mp4 or mp5 to come out before buying a music player.
- h. MP3s are the best thing ever to happen to music.

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

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Apple's iTunes music store just sold its one billionth song. | T / F |
| b. A U.S. teenager made history by selling one billion songs online. | T / F |
| c. Songs on the Internet are sold at the speed of sound. | T / F |
| d. Sales of CDs have increased twofold in many parts of the world. | T / F |
| e. The teenager got lots of digital goodies as a prize. | T / F |
| f. The teenager shouted at an Apple representative down the phone. | T / F |
| g. The teen spent many nights downloading songs to win the prize. | T / F |
| h. A CEO said music downloads will play a huge role in music sales. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| a. teenager | initially |
| b. spent | reduced by half |
| c. track | major |
| d. progress | agent |
| e. halved | paid |
| f. goodies | doubtful |
| g. representative | improvement |
| h. at first | youth |
| i. skeptical | prizes |
| j. huge | song |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. An American teenager | he thought it was a joke |
| b. buy the song <i>Speed of Sound</i> | in many parts of the world |
| c. a good reminder of how fast | play a huge role in music sales |
| d. few people had heard | Alex to congratulate him |
| e. sales of CDs have halved | progress in the industry is |
| f. won lots of digital goodies as a | for the iTunes store |
| g. A representative from Apple phoned | became part of history |
| h. a \$10,000 gift card | by British group Coldplay |
| i. At first, | of an mp3 |
| j. the Internet would continue to | reward for his purchase |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Apple iTunes sees billionth download

An American teenager _____ part of history yesterday when he downloaded the billionth song from the Apple iTunes music store. The 16-year-old did not _____ when he spent 99 cents to buy the song *Speed of Sound* by British _____ Coldplay that he would soon be in the _____. The track's title is a good _____ of how fast progress in the industry is. Apple's online store is just three years old, and to sell a billion songs in that time is _____ amazing. At the start of the millennium, few people had _____ of an mp3 and iPods hadn't been invented. By _____, sales of CDs have halved in many parts of the world.

totally
group
became
contrast
news
heard
reminder
know

The teenage record _____, Alex Ostrovsky from Michigan, won lots of digital goodies as a _____ for his purchase. A representative from Apple phoned Alex to congratulate him and tell him he would _____ an iMac computer, 10 iPods and a \$10,000 _____ card for the iTunes store. At first, he thought it was a _____ and nearly shouted down the telephone. Alex said: "I was really _____. I didn't even know there was a competition. But the guy knew the _____ of my mum's credit card." Apple CEO Steve Jobs was also happy. He said the Internet would continue to play a _____ role in music sales.

details
reward
gift
huge
maker
joke
receive
skeptical

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Apple iTunes sees billionth download

An American teenager became _____ history yesterday when he downloaded the billionth song from the Apple iTunes music store. The 16-year-old did not know when he _____ 99 cents to buy the song *Speed of Sound* by British group Coldplay that he would soon be _____. The track's title is a good reminder of how fast progress in the industry is. Apple's online store is just three years old, and to sell a billion songs in that time is _____ amazing. At the start of the millennium, few people had heard of an mp3 and iPods hadn't been _____. By contrast, sales of CDs have _____ in many parts of the world.

The _____ record maker, Alex Ostrovsky from Michigan, won lots of digital goodies as a _____ for his purchase. A representative from Apple phoned Alex to _____ him and tell him he would receive an iMac computer, 10 iPods and a \$10,000 gift card for the iTunes store. At first, he thought it was a _____ and nearly shouted down the telephone. Alex said: "I was really skeptical. I didn't _____ know there was a competition. But the guy knew the _____ of my mum's credit card." Apple CEO Steve Jobs was also happy. He said the Internet would continue to play a _____ role in music sales.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'music' and 'history'.

- 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. STUDENT "MUSIC" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about music and music players.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- history
- spent
- news
- track
- amazing
- contrast
- won
- receive
- gift
- skeptical
- credit
- role

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of digital music?
- c. Have you ever downloaded music from the Internet?
- d. Are you surprised one billion songs have been downloaded from Apple's iTunes?
- e. Can you see any bad points about downloading music?
- f. What do your parents think about digital music and iPods, etc?
- g. Would you like to become a part of history?
- h. How important is music in your life?
- i. How have your musical tastes changed over the years?
- j. Do all of your friends have iPods or similar music players?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. How do you think mp3s and music downloads have changed music?
- d. Do you prefer browsing for music online or in real stores?
- e. What do you think of downloading music without paying for it?
- f. What punishment do you think should be given to people who illegally download music?
- g. Do you think there's a difference between downloading a song without paying for it and recording a song off the radio?
- h. Do you think CDs and cassette tapes will die out soon?
- i. Have you ever shouted at someone down the telephone?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

MUSIC DIARY: Complete the following music diary about the best music to listen to at the times listed in the left hand column.

To wake up to in the morning	
In the shower	
In the car / on the bus to work / school	
Lunchtime	
When you're really bored at school / work	
After work / school	
To fall asleep to at night	

Talk to each other about your diary.

How many people can you find who have similar musical diaries to you or whose musical schedule you would like to follow?

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 information about music downloads and illegal downloading (piracy). Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. LYRICS: Make a poster about the lyrics of your favorite song. Explain what they mean and how they make you feel. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Which other songs did you like the lyrics to?

4. MUSICAL FUTURE: Write an essay describing the future of music. Include sections on how and where we'll be buying it, and the different ways it will interact with our lives. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| a. teenager | youth |
| b. spent | paid |
| c. track | song |
| d. progress | improvement |
| e. halved | reduced by half |
| f. goodies | prizes |
| g. representative | agent |
| h. at first | initially |
| i. skeptical | doubtful |
| j. huge | major |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. An American teenager | became part of history |
| b. buy the song <i>Speed of Sound</i> | by British group Coldplay |
| c. a good reminder of how fast | progress in the industry is |
| d. few people had heard | of an mp3 |
| e. sales of CDs have halved | in many parts of the world |
| f. won lots of digital goodies as a | reward for his purchase |
| g. A representative from Apple phoned | Alex to congratulate him |
| h. a \$10,000 gift card | for the iTunes store |
| i. At first, | he thought it was a joke |
| j. the Internet would continue to | play a huge role in music sales |

GAP FILL:

Apple iTunes sees billionth download

An American teenager **became** part of history yesterday when he downloaded the billionth song from the Apple iTunes music store. The 16-year-old did not **know** when he spent 99 cents to buy the song *Speed of Sound* by British **group** Coldplay that he would soon be in the **news**. The track's title is a good **reminder** of how fast progress in the industry is. Apple's online store is just three years old, and to sell a billion songs in that time is **totally** amazing. At the start of the millennium, few people had **heard** of an mp3 and iPods hadn't been invented. By **contrast**, sales of CDs have halved in many parts of the world.

The teenage record **maker**, Alex Ostrovsky from Michigan, won lots of digital goodies as a **reward** for his purchase. A representative from Apple phoned Alex to congratulate him and tell him he would **receive** an iMac computer, 10 iPods and a \$10,000 **gift** card for the iTunes store. At first, he thought it was a **joke** and nearly shouted down the telephone. Alex said: "I was really **skeptical**. I didn't even know there was a competition. But the guy knew the **details** of my mum's credit card." Apple CEO Steve Jobs was also happy. He said the Internet would continue to play a **huge** role in music sales.