

## UPPER INTERMEDIATE UNIT 2

1 Work in pairs and discuss. Use a dictionary or look online to help you if necessary.

- 1 What is music streaming?
- 2 What are the benefits of streaming?
- 3 Why do you think buying records is back in fashion again?
- 4 What objections to streaming could there be?

2 Read the article about different music listening habits and answer questions 2–4 in Exercise 1.

3 Read the article again. Underline the correct alternative.

- 1 The number of people using streaming services is growing *steadily/really fast*.
- 2 It's *possible/not possible* to download music and keep it forever from streaming services.
- 3 The author thinks it's *logical/surprising* that big companies have created their own services to compete.
- 4 With regards value for money, most consumers are *happier than/not as happy as* the artists.
- 5 Artists complain that the system is *not fair to them/benefits the music labels*.
- 6 The popularity of records can be explained by the desire *for better quality/to own something*.
- 7 In the final paragraph, the author is *positive/neutral* about streaming services.

4 Read the article again. Match the words in bold in the text with their meanings 1–8.

- 1 taking a long time to do \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 collections of music you create and often broadcast \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 when you become successful or popular again \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 keep something carefully because it is of particular value \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 the amount earned by artists every time their work is sold or performed \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 true or impossible to argue with \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 songs or pieces of music \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 not get a benefit that somebody else is getting \_\_\_\_\_



You are on the bus and the person in front of you is wearing headphones and shaking their head to a rhythm. It would be hard to guess their musical taste but it's likely they are listening via a music streaming service. In the UK last year, more than 20 billion **tracks** were streamed, and the figure is rising rapidly with 500 million songs being streamed online in the UK in a single week.

It's easy to see the advantages of streaming over downloads – you can search millions of tracks, customise – creating and sharing **playlists** socially – and find out about new groups and singers. You can also listen anywhere you like if you have an internet connection. If you don't, many streaming services now offer a temporary downloading service. It's no surprise that people call it 'The New Radio' or 'The Universal Jukebox' and that Facebook, Google and Apple have all launched their own versions.

Consumers are generally content (a subscription costs about €10 a month) but artists **lose out** on **royalties**. Apparently, an artist can expect to get only €0.0010 from a single play on a streaming service after the music label takes its share. That means for a solo music artist to earn a U.S. monthly minimum wage of €1,060 they would need to get around 1.2 million plays.

As a result, well-known musicians such as Taylor Swift, Radiohead and Coldplay have either banned their music from being streamed or have released it physically before allowing it to be streamed. They complain that the system is unethical because music should not be free.

The convenience of streaming is **undeniable**, but vinyl records (in some ways, the opposite to streaming) have been making a huge **comeback** in the UK. Even supermarkets have started to sell them! Young people now feel nostalgia for an era that they never knew and love to dig out their parents' old vinyl. They are not content with just listening to music in a 'cloud', they want to have it physically and **treasure** it. Records, unlike CDs or cassettes, are real objects of desire.

Whatever your opinion, there has been one positive consequence of music streaming: the number of illegal downloads has dropped as people realise they can listen to what they want, when they want, without the **time-consuming** and dangerous business of stealing entire libraries of music. So, however we listen, at least more of us are doing it legally!

**5** Work in pairs or small groups and discuss.

- 1 What is your opinion about music streaming? Do you listen to music this way?
- 2 Do you think music streaming is fair for artists? Why/Why not?
- 3 Would you be interested in 'owning' music physically, e.g. vinyl records?
- 4 Do the same arguments apply to other media, e.g. books or videos?

**6**  **2.1** Listen to two people talking about consuming music and other media. What is the best summary of their different points of view? Choose one option from 1–3 and one option from 4–6.

- 1 Rachel believes that times have changed and we have to accept that.
- 2 Rachel feels that on-demand media is the best form of entertainment.
- 3 Rachel thinks that all media is too expensive these days.
- 4 George is angry with the record companies for taking all the artists' royalties.
- 5 George feels that the streaming system is unfair for artists.
- 6 George feels that content is more important than convenience these days.

**7A** Underline the correct alternative.

- 1 George is anti-streaming because he *plays music/collects music*.
- 2 Rachel thinks that artists should negotiate with the *streaming music companies/their music labels*.
- 3 George says the situation is more difficult for *famous musicians/musicians who are starting to make their name*.
- 4 He says the only way musicians can make more money is by *playing live/negotiating hard*.
- 5 Rachel says that streaming is about *price, choice and convenience/quality, popularity and value*.
- 6 George is positive about the fact that *big names/unknowns* in the music industry protest about streaming.
- 7 Records are popular again but the problem is *that there are very few available/they are too expensive*.

**B** Listen and check.**8A** Match the verbs in box A with the nouns in box B to form collocations from the recording.

**A** face be make get protest about pay for

**B** reality on demand the situation the privilege a profit access

**B** Complete the sentences with the collocations above.

- 1 These days, people want all their entertainment to \_\_\_\_\_, it's what you want when you want it.
- 2 Records are very expensive, you really have to \_\_\_\_\_ of owning music!
- 3 I like Netflix because you can \_\_\_\_\_ to their whole library of films and TV shows.
- 4 Sometimes you need to simply 'say no' and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Some people don't want to \_\_\_\_\_. They pretend changes are not happening.
- 6 There are complaints about streaming services because the artists don't \_\_\_\_\_ from them.

**9** Work in pairs or small groups and discuss.

- 1 Who do you agree with, Rachel or George? Why?
- 2 George says that the only way musicians can earn a living now is by playing live. Do you go to many concerts? If so, who/what do you see? What is the difference between watching a live show and watching it online?
- 3 Is the same true of watching a movie at home or going to the cinema?

