

DVD PREVIEW

1A Work in groups. Check you understand the words/phrases in bold.

- 1 Do you think musicians like Beethoven or artists like Picasso are born with an **innate talent**, or would you **put their success down to** a **lifelong passion** or intensive training?
- 2 Do you agree that any parent can train their child to become world-class at something or does the child need to be born **academically/artistically gifted**?
- 3 If you can **inherit** eye and hair colour from a parent, do you think it is possible to also inherit personality **traits**?
- 4 How much do you think a parent is able to **shape** their child's future and success?

B Discuss the questions in Exercise 1A.

2 Read the programme information and answer the questions.

- 1 What is Vanessa's special talent?
- 2 Who was influential in helping Vanessa to become a professional musician?
- 3 What does Vanessa hope to learn from taking part in the programme?

BBC The Making of Me: Vanessa-Mae

Vanessa-Mae first hit the international music scene at the age of ten and was the youngest violinist ever to record Beethoven and Tchaikovsky violin concertos. Over eight million record sales have propelled her onto the Rich List and into celebrity status. But her success has been accompanied by a turbulent relationship with her mother, who was the prime force behind her career as a young musician. In the BBC documentary *The Making of Me*, Vanessa investigates how much of her ability was inherited, how much was shaped by her mother and how much was down to her own work. Was it nature or nurture that played the bigger part?



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3 Watch the DVD and answer the questions.

- 1 In what way was Vanessa's relationship with her mother unusual?
- 2 Does Vanessa feel that she was born with her musical gift, or that she developed her talent purely through the amount of practice she did? What does she say about this?
- 3 Is Vanessa happy about her childhood? Why/Why not?

4A Complete the extracts.

- 1 With a fortune in excess of _____, Vanessa-Mae is one of Britain's most successful young musicians.
- 2 This beautiful instrument has given me so much _____ and _____ and _____ in my life. It has basically _____ my life.
- 3 I was always made to appreciate that the love my mother had for me was _____.
- 4 To help Vanessa find the answer, science will test her body and her _____. She'll be observed by _____ ... and be pushed to the limit.
- 5 Emotionally, I may have become the person I became because of the _____ in my life.
- 6 It was my blood, my sweat and my _____ that brought me here today.

B Watch the DVD again to check.

5 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 Do you think Vanessa's mother made the right decisions about how to bring up her daughter? Why/Why not?
- 2 Are your own successes a result of your natural ability (inherited from your parents), your own hard work, or just pure luck?
- 3 Do you think your parents' interests and achievements have shaped your own? Have you inherited personality traits from members of your family?

spekout a panel discussion

6A ▶ 2.6 Listen to someone debating the role of nature versus nurture. Which side of the argument does she present? What examples does she give to justify her ideas?

B Listen again and tick the key phrases you hear.

keyphrases

I'd like to begin by stating that ...

As I see it ... / What I think is ...

I would say it depends on ...

What you need to consider is ...

I think it's ridiculous to suggest ...

I absolutely reject the idea that ...

So, to conclude I would have to argue that ...

Does anyone have a question ... ? / Are there any other questions?

That's a good question because ...

C Which key phrases are used to:

- introduce the argument?
- justify an opinion?
- conclude?
- invite questions?
- respond to questions?

7A Work in groups. Think of points 'for' and 'against' the following statement.

Children should start school younger than they do now.

B Prepare to argue either 'for' or 'against' the statement. Follow the instructions.

- Choose a speaker for your group.
- Help them to prepare their argument.
- Make notes on how to introduce the argument, justify the opinion and conclude. Use the key phrases.

C The speakers take turns to present their arguments. Listen and ask questions at the end. Which case was argued the most clearly?

writeback a summary

8A Read the summary. What are the key points? Do you agree with the writer's opinion?

Should your child learn a musical instrument?

Anna: Music in a child's life has many benefits. Some even claim that early exposure to classical music for very young children (even before they are born) helps them to become more intelligent, the so-called 'Mozart Effect'. The claims are unsubstantiated, but there is no question that classical music is soothing to the soul. They may not become musical prodigies, but exposing your children to songs and nursery rhymes from a young age will give them a feel for rhythm and language, and encourage them to appreciate the beauty of music as they grow.

At school, children who learn musical instruments are generally more successful and perform better in tests. It may be that learning music also helps children to develop their reasoning skills, learn about problem-solving and decision-making. It can also be great for confidence-building and is a valuable experience which helps to broaden their understanding and appreciation of the world around them.

Obviously, there are costs and commitments involved with teaching a child a musical instrument. But, if you ask me, it's one of the most precious gifts you can offer a child and one which he or she will appreciate for a lifetime.

B Write a summary (200–220 words) of your opinion about one of the issues in Exercises 6A or 7A.