



A Cappella Music

Anita's mom overheard her singing on her own. "Wow, great A Cappella singing, Anita!" said Mom.

Anita pouted, "I don't know that A Cappella word, Mom."

"A Cappella means just singing with no piano or other instruments helping," said Mom. "Some people, like you, do it well."

Anita's pout changed to a smile, "Mmm I'd like to know more about A Cappella music," she said.

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A Cappella music is any music sung without instruments playing along. It can be performed solo, by a small group or a large choir. Many times the singers use their voices to sound like instruments!

One of the best examples of a cappella from a long time ago, 1,500 years, is the Gregorian chant. Later in Italy and England a cappella madrigals began; these are songs about everyday life. More recently, in the 1930s Barbershop music became popular. It is typically sung by 4 people, either all men or all women with different voice types. A Cappella music is very popular again, today, and can be heard on radio, television and in movies (film).

Listen to one of today's famous a cappella groups. Its five members use only their voices to show how music has changed over time. **Use full screen.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IExW80sXsHs>



1. How do you think music has changed from almost 1000 years ago to today?
2. What did you like most about the a cappella music?

Sometimes the lyrics (words) the a cappella group sings have a message for the listeners.

Listen for the message that the a cappella group Pentatonix offers in this song, "Imagine". **Use full screen.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLiWFUDJ95I>

After listening

1. What did Pentatonix's lyrics say to you?
2. What does "We are different but we can still be friends" mean? **How did Pentatonix try to show this?** 
3. Listen to the song again. Pay attention to how the 5 singers listened to each other. Did you notice how the person joining made sure his or her voice was heard but wasn't so loud that the other voices were silenced.  **The singers listened with respect for the other singers. They cooperated to make a beautiful sound.**