

3

“Twelve points go to ...” – the Eurovision Song Contest



Source: Adobe Stock/Ievgen Skrypko

3 a

Speaking

Warm-up: the ESC and me

This year’s Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) takes place from May 7 – 11 in Malmö, Sweden. First, note all the words that you associate with the ESC. Then get into small groups and talk about the following:

- » What is the ESC? How interested are you in the ESC?
- » Do you follow it on social media? Why / why not?
- » Which ESC winners have you heard of?



Source: Adobe Stock/theseamuss

3 b

Lead-in

The European Song Contest quiz

Do the following quiz to find out how much you know about the ESC. In one case, several answers are possible.



1. What is the title of Abba’s winning song in 1974?
 Dancing Queen *Waterloo* *Mamma Mia*
2. The Austrian singer Conchita Wurst won the ESC with the song *Rise Like a ...*
 Condor *Thunderbird* *Phoenix*
3. In which year was the European Song Contest first staged?
 1949 1956 1972
4. Which non-European country joined the ESC in 2015?
 Israel Canada Australia
5. What is not allowed on stage at ESC shows?
 live animals acrobatic performances special effects
6. What is the motto of this year’s ESC?
 “Open Up” “Dare to Dream” “United by Music”
7. How often have Austrian singers won the ESC?
 once twice four times
8. In 2016, the Ukrainian singer Jamala won the ESC with a song about the deportation of the Crimean Tartars. What was the title of the song?
 1918 1944 1968
9. Which of these countries are excluded from this year’s ESC?
 Belarus Israel Russia

Source: Wikimedia Commons/Albin Olsson

3 c
Reading

Getting familiar with the song contest basics

Read the text about the Eurovision Song Contest. Choose the correct question from the list (A–H) for each paragraph (1–5). There are two extra questions that you should not use. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.



Source: Adobe Stock/
Good Studio

The Eurovision Song Contest

0 ___
Every year on a certain Saturday night in May, something quite unique happens in Europe. Millions of people turn on their TVs and prepare to watch their nation compete. But this is no ordinary international competition. It has no footballs, athletes or fast cars. This is a contest based on something much more important: finding the perfect song. 35

5
1 ___
In short, the Eurovision is an enormous, televised concert which is full of fireworks, wonderful dancing, lots of colours and shiny clothes. Each participating country sends a singer or group to perform a song live at the Eurovision semi-final. From these performances, 26 are chosen for the Saturday-night Grand Final. 40

10
2 ___
After the performances at the Grand Final, each country votes for the best song. TV viewers can vote using their mobile phones, but each country also has an official jury who decide 50 percent of the votes. Obviously, it is not permitted to vote for your own country. In the end, the song with the most votes wins. The winning country will then host the Eurovision the following year. 45

15
3 ___
Although it might seem like a normal TV talent show like The X-Factor or The Voice, the ESC has quite historical origins. The Second World War ended in 1945, leaving Europe very divided. In the 1950s, the European Broadcasting Union started to think of an event which would both entertain and unite Europeans. This led to the first European song contest in 1956. It happened in Switzerland and included just seven countries. Decades later, it has grown into an enormous international event with hundreds of millions of viewers. 50

20
4 ___
The competition's central rule is that each song needs to be a maximum of three minutes. This is shorter than most commercial pop songs, but the organisers decided that this limit was necessary so that the entire Grand Final (including voting) can happen within three hours. While performing the song, there is another rule that the maximum number of people on the stage is six. This includes the singer(s), musicians and dancers. Songs can be in any language, even though most countries choose to sing in English. 55

25
5 ___
The popularity of the Eurovision has grown more and more each year. Outside of Europe and Australia, the Grand Final is now also watched by viewers in the USA and many other countries. Organisations in certain countries like China and Qatar have even expressed an interest in participating in the competition. So, who knows? Perhaps international unity will finally be achieved not through governments but through three-minute pop songs. 60

30

A	What are the regulations?	E	Who stages the contest each year?
B	How is the winner chosen?	F	What is the ESC?
C	Preparation	G	What role does politics play?
D	How did it start?	H	What next?

0	1	2	3	4	5
C					

Test format
Multiple matching

3 d

Listening



Experiencing the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest

Go to the following [link](#), scroll down and listen to the recording about the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest. While listening, answer the questions (1–8) using a maximum of four words. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.

Eurovision 2023

0	When did the song contest 2023 start?	9 th of May
1	Why could Ukraine not hold the contest?	
2	What was a central component of the Liverpool ESC?	
3	How much were tickets for the village on May 13?	
4	Which group opened the Grand Final?	
5	Who were special guests at the Grand Final? (Give <u>one</u> answer.)	
6	How many songs were presented?	
7	What is the title of the 2023 winning song?	
8	What is so special about the 2023 winner, Lauren?	

Test format
Note form

3 e

Vocabulary

Popular song contest genres

Fill in the suitable genre in each of the following descriptions. Use a dictionary if required.

ballad • EDM • rock music • Europop • anthem • fast-food music

1. An _____ is normally the musical representation of a country. In Eurovision, it is a powerful song to inspire the crowds; dramatic, usually without much of a choreography.
2. A _____ is a slow piece of music; the melody gets stuck in your brain; often with a serious message; very popular choice at the ESC (e.g. the winning entry by Conchita Wurst).
3. _____ is typical dancefloor and club music. Fast, electronic and full of synth. It produces catchy songs and often comes with a spectacular choreo (e.g. Kaleen's *We Will Rave*).
4. _____ is popular music from Europe with simple melodies and lyrics in English. Abba songs represent the genre.
5. _____ is pop music – often without any content. The term was coined by 2017 ESC winner Salvador Sobral.
6. _____ is not that popular at the ESC; bands often perform in provocative costumes and play very loud music. Måneskin from Italy won in 2021.

Snap Shot ✨ [O]

3 f

Lead-in

Simple English? – the role of lyrics in the ESC

Throughout the history of the song contest there were periods with language restrictions: each country had to enter a song in their official language. As non-English speaking countries questioned this rule, participants were allowed a free choice of language in 1999. Since then, most of the winning songs have been in English. The words used in the lyrics are often basic and simple, songwriters use rhymes and everyday phrases (e.g. tell the truth); a kind of lyrical speaker helps to connect with the listeners. And – to no surprise – the word love is probably used most often. Another important feature in the 3-minute songs are the repeated choruses that invite the audiences to sing along and to memorize the song lines. Some songs come with a very limited number of words.

chorus: Refrain

Worldofanalytics has analysed recent ESC entries to find out which words are frequently used. This is the result in a word cloud.

1. Look at the word cloud.
2. Try to find rhyming words and use these words to create two rhyming song lines.
3. Together with a partner, talk about the following:
Why do you think these words are so popular?



3 g

Listening



Listening and analysing a 2024 ESC entry

Watch [Austria's ESC entry](#). Use the info-box in task 3 f and analyse the language used. Talk about the performance and the meaning / message of the song (if there is any).



We Will Rave

	Ice running through my veins	I see only silhouettes	
	You just did it again	I just wanna forget	
	Go cause I can't be your friend	About everything we said	
	I'm cold but this is not the end	And the demons in my head	
5	So I go go go	So I go go go	20
	Where the broken hearted go	Where the broken hearted go	
	No one knows a thing about my haunted soul	No one knows a thing about my haunted soul	
	I go oh oh	I go oh oh	
	Wanna dance it off alone	Wanna dance it off alone	
10	I won't let it show	I won't let it show	25
	They will never know	They will never know	
	When the darkness hits and we can't be saved	When the darkness hits and we can't be saved	
	We rum de dum dum da – We Will Rave	We rum de dum dum da – We Will Rave	
	When our hearts are burning we feel no pain	When our hearts are burning we feel no pain	
15	We rum de dum dum da – We Will Rave	We rum de dum dum da – We Will Rave	30

Source: www.eurovision.de/news/Songtext-Kaleen-We-Will-Rave-lyrics744.html

3 h

Language in use

Making fun of Eurovision?

Read the text about Eurovision. Some parts are missing. Choose the correct part (A–P) for each gap (1–13). There are two extra parts that you should not use. Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.



Source: Adobe Stock/Михайло Мещ

Why is Eurovision so silly?

Nowadays, dozens of countries compete every year. The winning country has to host (0) ___ the next year. This is very expensive, and sometimes countries cannot afford to win. When they can't afford to host, they send (1) ___ to the Eurovision competition and lose (2) ___.

The winner of this annual song competition is decided (3) ___. People in every country call in and (4) ___ their favourite song. Songs can earn between one and 12 points.

Many countries give their close allies lots of points (5) ___ solidarity and friendship. For example, Sweden, Norway, and Finland are neighbouring countries (6) ___ and shared history. They usually give each other lots of points every year, even when they are competing against each other. The UK and Ireland have historically given each other (7) ___.

Unlike many international competitions (such as the Olympics or the World Cup), the ESC is not a (8) ___. The whole point is to have fun and goof around a bit.

You may have seen (9) ___ of flaming pianos, singing grandmothers, nonsensical lyrics, and performers wearing super-ugly costumes. Many fans love (10) ___ and absurd Eurovision is. They like the bad performances (11) ___ than the good ones.

Many Brits like to hold Eurovision parties. They meet their friends at pubs or (12) ___ to drink, dance, and poke fun at how ridiculous everything is. A popular party game is to make your own scorecard. You can decide (13) ___ to you in a Eurovision performance – for example, campy costumes or lots of fire – and rate each act.

allies: Verbündete

unlike: anders als
to goof around:
herumblödeln

nonsensical: without
meaning, silly, absurd

to poke fun at: sich
lustig machen über
campy: exaggerated,
mannered;
self-parodying

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A by televoting | G less | L to show |
| B Eurovision | H much more | M video clips |
| C few points | I on purpose | N vote for |
| D high scores | J serious event | O what matters |
| E how weird | K terrible acts | P with similar cultures |
| F in their homes | | |

Source: greatbritish-
mag.co.uk/uk-culture/
what-is-eurovision/

Test format
Banked gap-fill

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
B													

3 i

ESC and the LGBTQIA+ community – practising word formation

Structures

Hint: Go to a streaming platform and listen to Conchita's stunning performance at Eurovision 2014. 🌐

Officially, the ESC is non-political entertainment. However, Eurovision is not just about music. It also promotes diversity and inclusivity, and tries to raise awareness of social issues such as human rights and equality. So, over the past decades, Eurovision has attracted thousands of fans from the LGBTQIA+ community. This visible symbol and openly gay performers and presenters have given the community a sense of being visible. For them, watching Eurovision is like celebrating one's favourite football



When Austria hosted the ESC in 2015, Vienna installed some gay, straight and lesbian traffic lights as a statement for diversity. They are still in use.

Source: Adobe Stock/AlexGrid

team.

Some people from the LGBTQIA+ community even won the ESC, namely Dana International for Israel (1998), the Dutch singer Duncan Laurence (2019) and last but not least the Austrian drag person Conchita Wurst (2014). Even though there has been some strong homophobic criticism of Conchita's performance before the final, ESC organisers work hard to make to make LGBTQIA+ members always feel welcome, included and safe.



The rainbow flag has become another symbol of the song contest.

Source: Wikimedia Commons/Sarang

In the text above, there are several nouns formed with suffixes, e.g. *entertainment*. Highlight the suffix. Then find the stem / verb. Write both words into the table.

1.	entertainment	to entertain	6.		
2.			7.		
3.			8.		
4.			9.		
5.			10.		

3 j

Paired discussion

Speaking

Look at the question cards and then get into pairs. Take turns in asking questions and answering them. Make sure to use words and info you have learned.

Student A

- How interested are you in Eurovision?
- What are your music listening habits?
- What do you think about using English lyrics?
- How do you like learning about topics like Eurovision in English?
- Would you like to see a live performance of Kaleen? Why / why not?
- Which singers / bands are on your playlist?

Student B

- Will you watch the ESC show on Saturday? Why / why not?
- What is your favourite music style?
- Which pop stars from the 1970s and 1980s do you know?
- What other topics would you like to learn about? Why?
- Which live act would you really like to see no matter what the tickets costs?

3 k

Add-on



Word search puzzle

Do the additional [interactive quiz](#) to revise some ESC-related vocabulary.