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## “Vienna calling ...” – the Eurovision Song Contest 2026



Source: Adobe Stock/Ievgen Skrypko

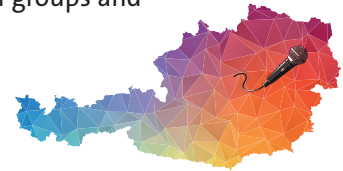
3 a

Speaking

### Warm-up: the ESC and me

This year’s Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) takes place from May 11 – 16 in Vienna. 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/Whatever, Maziaa

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     Spain     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

**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

**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

**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

**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

**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

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

<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>C</b>					

**Test format**  
**Multiple matching**

3 d

Listening



## Experiencing the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest

Go to the following [link](#) 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 <sup>th</sup> 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. Bzikebi's *On Replay* – Georgia).
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.

## 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?
4. Check this year's ESC entries to find out how many are in English.



## 3 g

### Listening



## Listening and analysing a 2026 ESC entry

1. Watch Daniel Žižka's ESC entry [Crossroads](#) (Czech Republic).
2. Use the info-box in task 3 f and analyse the language used.
3. Talk about the performance and the meaning / message of the song. Decide if it uses the typical words from the word cloud.



jar hollow:  
leeres Einmach-  
glas

tangled: wirr,  
verknäuelte

vivacious: boshafft,  
grausam

## Crossroads

[Verse 1]	[Chorus]	15
Follow a voice unknown	Mother, I'll get lost without a map	
Learn how to swim in open waters on your own	There's too many ways	
A jar hollow won't reach the ocean floor	Inside this vicious spider web	
5 Where foreign fields and tangled strings unfold	Crossroads, patterns and exceptions interwoven	
[Chorus]	[Bridge]	20
Mother, I'll get lost without a map	We are creatures wired well for this space	
There's too many ways	We're the human race	
Inside this vicious spider web	Oh, we try our best to operate on pure love and	
10 Crossroads, patterns and exceptions interwoven	rage	
	Ungrateful child in a golden cage	25
	For Mother Earth, man cannot change	
[Verse 2]	[Breakdown]	
I'm amazed on how well we get unwell	Oh, crossroads	
Then trade our pain for metal frame		
Oh, I gotta find what's out there		
	[Outro]	
	Yeah, yeah	30

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

~~B~~ Eurovision

C few points

D high scores

E how weird

F in their homes

G less

H much more

I on purpose

J serious event

K terrible acts

L to show

M video clips

N vote for

O what matters

P with similar cultures

Test format  
Banked gap-fill

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

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

## Snap Shot ✨ [O]

3 i

### Writing

**Hint:** Go to a streaming platform and listen to JJ's stunning performance at Eurovision.

### Reconstructing an interview with JJ

Read the interview with JJ taken in June 2025. The questions have been removed. Find suitable questions for the answers JJ has given and write them in the spaces provided.

Q: Has winning Eurovision changed you in any way?<sup>0</sup>

JJ: No, it hasn't changed me, but I haven't fully processed it yet. I wake up in the morning, see the trophy, and think, "Oh, right, something happened" [laughs]. It takes time to realize you're the Eurovision winner. I'm proud that my art was accepted as it is.



Source: Wikimedia Commons/Quejaytee (licensing: Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International)

Q: .....<sup>1?</sup>

JJ: This is the music I've always wanted to make; I was sure this was the path to follow. I'm happy my mix of pop and opera worked so well and was received so positively across Europe and the world. I'll continue down this path.

Q: .....<sup>2?</sup>

JJ: Yes, Eurovision tastes have changed a lot. Many factors come into play: staging, the artist's charisma... I'm glad people have broadened their musical tastes; that's important.

Q: .....<sup>3?</sup>

JJ: It's very important for visibility of queer people. It shows Europe is open, though we must keep fighting for our rights and greater acceptance. In the end, we're all human beings and should love and respect each other as equals. Eurovision is open to everyone, and everyone finds their community there. It's wonderful that such a broad and diverse audience comes together for the festival.

Q: .....<sup>4?</sup>

JJ: I grew up in Dubai and had a very happy childhood and loved Dubai. My mother is Filipino, my father Austrian, so I grew up in a multicultural home and went to an international school. I never felt I had to hide.

Q: .....<sup>5?</sup>

JJ: I never officially came out. My family always accepted me as I am, so it was never something that needed to be discussed. I feel very lucky to have such an understanding family.

Q: .....<sup>6?</sup>

JJ: Returning to Austria was not a culture shock because I visited every summer. The weirdest thing was not seeing skyscrapers everywhere and using public transport again. I'm happy to be back in Vienna with my family.

Q: .....<sup>7?</sup>

JJ: My voice is a gift from God that makes me feel very fortunate. There are very few countertenors, each in different parts of the world, so it's not easy to connect. From the start, I focused on exploring my voice's flexibility and limits, and I've built my career on it.


countertenor: type of classical male singing voice that has a range like a female soprano voice and is a lot higher than a typical male voice

Source: ket.brussels/2025/06/24/interview-with-jj-eurovision-2025-winner-live-each-day-with-pride-because-we-are-unstoppable — Agustín Gómez Cascales

## 3 j

### 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 team.



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

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). The 2025 winner, JJ (Johannes Pietsch) from Austria, has identified as queer. The same applies to Swiss contestant Nemo, who won in 2024. Even though there has been some strong homophobic criticism of Conchita's performance before the final, ESC organisers work hard 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

Some people from the LGBTQIA+ community

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 k

### 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

1. How interested are you in Eurovision?
2. What are your music listening habits?
3. What do you think about using English lyrics?
4. How do you like learning about topics like Eurovision in English?
5. Would you like to see a live performance of Bzikebi? Why / why not?
6. Which singers / bands are on your playlist?

#### Student B

1. Will you watch the ESC show(s)? Why / why not?
2. What is your favourite music style?
3. Which pop stars from the 1970s and 1980s do you know?
4. What other topics would you like to learn about? Why?
5. Which live act would you really like to see no matter what the tickets costs?

3 |

## Language in use

### Meeting Auri – the official mascot

Read the text about Auri, the official mascot of ESC 2026. Some words are missing. Use the words in brackets to form the missing word for each gap (1–12). Write your answers in the spaces provided. The first one (0) has been done for you.



Source: www.mein.orf.at

#### All you need to know about Austria's Auri!

A trip to Vienna in May now offers more than just the opportunity to marvel at the city's elegant architecture, immerse yourself in Vienna's world-famous coffee-house culture, or enjoy a deep dive into a (0) ... **(music)** heritage that has inspired (1) ... **(compose)** for generations ...

Now, you've also got the very (2) ... **(excite)** chance to catch a glimpse of Auri! Auri (he / him) has been unveiled by broadcaster ORF as the official mascot of Austria hosting the 70<sup>th</sup> Eurovision Song Contest. This fluffy fellow is far more than just a (3) ... **(friend)** face, however. Our new bestie Auri is a symbol of unity, (4) ... **(create)** and the power of shared experiences. As a vibrant Vienna 2026 ambassador, Auri will be welcoming (5) ... **(delegate)** and fans from around the world to the Austrian capital, conveying and instilling (6) ... **(open)**, respect and the joy of togetherness – "United by Music"!

Our (7) ... **(fashion)** friend wears a Eurovision-themed ensemble in the form of an Austrian-heart belt bag! It instantly elicits two questions ... What does he keep in it and where can we get one?!

After his grand unveiling, Auri and his (8) ... **(beauty)** belt bag are now set to go on a reading tour across Austria. Together with author Yvonne Lacina-Blaha, he will visit children and families across the country, inviting them to enjoy (9) ... **(inspire)** storytelling moments. Auri will also appear at the Vienna City Marathon, feature in ORF children's programmes and, of course, be (10) ... **(see)** on the scene during Eurovision Song Contest week. His aim is to enable (11) ... **(culture)** participation for children and to introduce them to the (12) ... **(create)** world of the Eurovision Song Contest.

Source: www.eurovision.com/stories/meet-auri-the-official-mascot-of-vienna-2026/

to marvel at: to admire

to immerse oneself: to dive into

vibrant: lively

to elicit: hervorrufen, entlocken

to unveil: to introduce

## Test format Word formation

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

3 m

## Writing

### Writing the praises of Austria's beauty

Look at the first paragraph of the text and underline the words / phrases used to express suggestions / advice and things you must see / do. Find and note down additional expressions for giving suggestions / advice from other sources.

Then write a similar paragraph for a place in your region / city / town.

3 n

## Add-on



### Word search puzzle

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