

Module 2 Learn to Read

In this part you are going to read two passages about musical artists and their impact. After reading you are going to do some follow-up exercises to improve your reading skills and enlarge your vocabulary.

Passage A

Before You Read

- 1 Discuss the following questions with your partners.
 - (1) What does commercial success in music mean?
 - (2) Do you think musicians should pursue their Grammy Award dream? Why or why not?
 - (3) What should musicians focus on, popular entertainment or cultural impact?
- 2 Watch a video clip of the 54th Grammy Awards Concert. After watching and listening, discuss with your classmates the questions below.
 - (1) How much do you know about Grammy Awards?
 - (2) What's your opinion of the Grammy Awards' criteria?
 - (3) What is the most important quality of a successful musical work?

While You Read

Read the following passage quickly and answer the questions beside the paragraphs.

Commercial or Critical Success: the Grammy Awards



1. The famous Chinese-American musician Mr. Tan Dun once said that the Grammy Award was the life dream of all artists in the music world. Grammy Awards (originally called Gramophone Award) or Grammy is an **accolade** by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences of the United States to recognize outstanding achievement in the music industry. The annual presentation

What is the Grammy Award?

ceremony **features** performances by **prominent** artists, and some of the awards of more popular interest are presented in a widely viewed televised ceremony.

2. Normally, there are four awards which are not restricted by genre: Album of the Year is awarded to the performer and the production team of a full album; Record of the Year is awarded to the performer and the production team of a single song; Song of the Year is awarded to the writer(s)/composer(s) of a single song; Best New Artist is awarded to a promising breakthrough performer who releases, during the **Eligibility** Year, the first recording that establishes the public identity of that artist (which is not necessarily their first proper release). Other awards are given for performance and production in specific genres, as well as for other contributions such as artwork and video. Special awards are given for longer-lasting contributions to the music industry.

How many kinds of awards are given? What are they?

3. The awards are voted on and decided by the Academy members. In the voting rounds, Academy members are required to vote based upon quality alone, and not to be influenced by sales, **chart** performance, personal friendships, regional preferences or company **loyalty**. The acceptance of gifts is prohibited. Members are urged to vote in a manner that **preserves** the **integrity** of the Academy. The Grammy Award is widely considered as the highest achievement in music industry. Generally, most artists who received the award feel greatly honored and proud.

eligibility 适任, 合格;
被选举资格

On what bases are the Academy members required to vote?

chart 排行榜

4. However, the Grammy Awards has received criticism from various recording artists and music journalists in recent years. Glen Hansard, leader of the Irish rock group *The Frames*, stated in 2008 that the Grammys represent something outside of the real world of music “that’s fully industry based”. He said he

wasn't that interested in attending that year's ceremony, even though he had been **nominated** for two different awards. It has also been criticized for generally awarding or nominating more commercially successful albums rather than critically successful albums. In a 2011 article, *Los Angeles Times* writer Randall Roberts was **critical** of the nominations for the 54th Grammy Awards. "The focus is still on the old music industry model of **cash-cow** hits, major label investments and commercial radio. Falling behind the times is nothing new for the Grammys, but once they've lost sight of the artistry that makes music **soar**, they'll not just be **irrelevant**, they'll be out of business".

5. After winning the award, Vernon said in his acceptance speech, "It's really hard to accept this award. There's so much talent out here and there's a lot of talent that's not here tonight. It's also hard to accept because you know, when I started to make songs I did it for the **inherent** reward of making songs, so I'm a little bit uncomfortable up here."
6. In an article for *The Huffington Post*, music executive and author Steve Stoute criticized the Recording Academy and the Grammy Awards for having "lost touch with contemporary popular culture" and noted "two key sources" for it: "**over-zealousness** to produce a popular show that is at odds with its own system of voting and fundamental disrespect of cultural shifts as being **viable** and artistic." Stoute accused them of **snubbing** artists with more cultural impact, citing respective losses by the critical and commercial successes in Eminem's *The Marshall Mathers LP* (2000) and Kanye West's *Graduation* (2007) in the Album of the Year category, and stated:
7. "As an institution that celebrates artistic works of musicians, singers, songwriters, producers and technical specialists, we have come to expect that the Grammys upholds all of the values that reflect the very best in music that is born from our culture. Unfortunately, the awards show has become a series of **hypocrisies** and contradictions, leaving me to question why any contemporary popular artist would even participate. We must acknowledge the massive cultural impact of Eminem and Kanye West and how their music is shaping, influencing and defining the voice of a generation. It is this same cultural impact that acknowledged the commercial and critical success of Michael Jackson's *Thriller* in 1984".

What is the criticism of Glen Hansard on the Grammy Award?

How do you understand the term "music industry"?

cash-cow 摇钱树

over-zealousness 过分热心

viable 切实可行的

hypocrisies 虚伪

After You Read

Based on the information you have read, discuss with each other the following questions.


- (1) What kind of music do you think should be recognized by the Grammy Awards?
- (2) Do you agree that the Grammy Awards represents the highest achievement in the music industry? Why or why not?

• Notes •

1. Tan Dun 谭盾 (1957.8.18—)。湖南长沙人,著名作曲家、指挥家,在国际上享有盛名。以其非常规音像手段、音乐剧场以及作品中的大量拼贴(音响以及自己的其他作品)闻名。

2. National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences(NARAS) 美国国家录音艺术科学院每年举行一次的大型音乐评奖活动——格莱美奖评选。格莱美奖被誉为“音乐界奥斯卡”。




3.  Glen Hansar 格伦·汉塞德 (1970.4.21—)。1970年出生于爱尔兰首都都柏林,著名音乐人、歌手、吉他手,“The Frames”乐队成员。2008年,凭借其在电影中的原创歌曲获得第80届奥斯卡“最佳原创歌曲奖”。

4. *Los Angeles Times* 《洛杉矶时报》。创办于1881年,总部设在加利福尼亚州的洛杉矶,在2008年是美国发行量第二大的都市日报,也是全美发行量第四大的报纸。

5. Eminem Marshall Bruce Mathers III 埃米纳姆 (1972.10.17—)。美国说唱歌手,其风格类型为 Hardcore Rap (硬核说唱)。埃米纳姆最大的突破就是证明白人也能介入到黑人一统天下的说唱(RAP)界中,而且获得巨大的成功。



6.  Kanye West 坎耶·欧马立·韦斯特 (1977.6.8—)。美国饶舌歌手、唱片制作人、作家和歌手,目前为止共发行了四张专辑。在2008年5月16日,坎耶·韦斯特获得MTV电视台选为该年度“最热门饶舌歌手”。他是首位登陆中国的说唱歌手。

7. *The Huffington Post* 《赫芬顿邮报》是美国当今最具影响力的新闻和观察类博客网站。该网站由美国当今政界名流及评论家阿里安娜·赫芬顿(Arianna Huffington)创办。网站兼具有博客自主性与媒体公共性,通过“分布式”的新闻发掘方式和以WEB2.0为基础的社会化新闻交流模式而独树一帜。

8. *Thriller* 《颤栗》。迈克尔·杰克逊的音乐专辑之一,是世界历史上销量最高的一张专辑,已有6 500万专辑销量认证。其正版销量截止2006年已达1.04亿,至今无人能破,被载入吉尼斯世界纪录大全。*Thriller*为Michael Jackson成年后正式发行的第2张个人专辑,此专辑影响巨大,奠定了Michael Jackson歌王的地位,将事业推到最高峰。



• New Words •

△accolade	/'ækələid/	n.	嘉奖, 表扬
feature	/'fi:tʃə/	v.	表演
prominent	/'prɒmɪnənt/	adj.	突出的, 著名的
loyalty	/'lɔɪəltɪ/	n.	忠诚
preserve	/'prɪzə:v/	v.	保持
integrity	/'ɪntɪgrɪti/	n.	真实, 诚实
soar	/'sɔ:, sɔə/	v.	猛增、剧增
△irrelevant	/'ɪrɪlɪvənt/	adj.	不相干的
inherent	/'ɪnhɪərənt/	adj.	固有的, 内在的
△snub	/'snʌb/	v.	冷落, 怠慢

• Phrases •

be nominated for	被提名为……
be critical of	爱挑毛病的, 批评的; 对……挑剔的, 对……苛求的
at odds	争执, 不一致

I. Reading Comprehension

1 Global understanding

- (1) The Grammy Awards is an accolade by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences to recognize outstanding achievement in _____.
- A. the moving picture industry B. modern dance
C. the music industry D. drama performances
- (2) How are the awards voted on and decided?
- A. By the Academy members.
B. By the musicians.
C. By the producers.
D. By the investors.