

Music is the universal language that everyone speaks. Even if one can't understand the lyrics, one could feel the rhythm and hear the melody to understand the message the artist is trying to convey. French songs are very useful when one is learning the French language. Music is a necessary way for a culture to prosper and leave an impact. French culture and music have spread worldwide because of musicians who share their talents. Music connects the world and all the people who listen to it.

When I was younger, I remember listening to music in French. My friends and I pretended to travel to Paris together. I heard French music before I traveled to France. I always listened to *La Vie en Rose* by Edith Piaf in my bedroom when I felt that I would never have enough money to travel to France. Two years later, the same song that I listened to in the United States played when I arrived in France for the first time. I felt it connected me to the francophone world. I knew since the first time I heard a French song on the radio that I wanted to study French and become an international lawyer that specializes in the French-speaking world. French music inspired me to look for occasions to travel the world and listen to music to really improve my French comprehension.

Songs helped me learn about French theater, icons, and French way of life. Through music, I discovered Josephine Baker. She was a revolutionary woman for French cinema but also the worldwide film industry. She was the first black woman who starred in a movie. Josephine inspired a lot of girls in France and the United States, particularly black girls. I think that it is very important that young girls see accomplished women who resemble themselves. I heard Vanessa Paradis and Angèle at my house. They exposed me to not only French culture but Belgian culture as well. Music is powerful and it exposed me to new ways of understanding French and not just the French-speaking world, but the world beyond the United States. At school, I watched music videos. The songs in the videos came from French-speaking countries. They were about life in Switzerland, Paris, and French Polynesia. My classmates and I learned about new countries each Friday in March. Music helped me learn the pronunciations of French words. The songs helped me develop my vocabulary. Our teacher showed us French films about singing and dancing. She taught us that music is an important characteristic of a lot of Francophone cultures. She explained that if we listened to French music, it could help us learn French.

Music is dynamic and constantly changing. It reflects different eras. Music is necessary to bring together people of a certain place. Music provides rare opportunities to see the distinct characteristics of each country and its people. For me, music provided a way to appreciate French. The radio provided me with an easy and authentic way to connect with French-speaking cultures. I listen to radio hosts speak French and hear French spoken authentically as if I were in France.

Music tells the stories of a nation, culture, and people. I sang French songs in my school choir. Last year, a song was in French, and the teacher asked if a girl in our class would teach us how to pronounce the French words. The girl said that she would teach us because her mother speaks French. The song allowed us to explore a new culture. The class was shocked and impressed that our classmate spoke French fluently. We were happy to sing the song and pretend

that we could also speak French with our classmate. We loved learning about the francophone culture of the girl in our class.

I can find comfort in the fact that someone a world away has listened to the same lyrics that I am listening to now. We are connected through music. Feelings, stories, and a lot of people have found themselves a home among music. Everyone deserves to find themselves through songs, especially French songs. For me, music and the French-speaking world have inspired me to study international relations with a concentration in French. Music really helped me when I realized that I wanted to learn French at a university and maybe study in France. One day, I hope that I will work in France and it's thanks to music. With music, we can see into the past and shape our futures.