

■ OFF CAMPUS ■

Listening to music while studying: Is it a good idea?

Back in school, I kept three hours aside every Thursday and Friday to listen to an 80s CD of English songs. This acted as my weekly respite which helped me focus on a busy week ahead. My perception entirely shifted during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. I increasingly found myself being able to focus better on my lessons while listening to music. Like me, many other students share a similar sentiment.

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"I have been listening to music while doing maths for a long time," says Saraf Tarisha, a class 10 student at European Standard School. "But two years back, I started listening to music while studying all other subjects as well. I was unable to focus on my studies, so when I did some research on the internet, I came across the idea of listening to music alongside my studies to see if it works. So I tried it out."

Tarisha, in particular, prefers listening to lo-fi remixes of pop songs and instrumentals. According to her, this type of music makes for a peaceful environment to study in while blocking background noises and helping her concentrate better.

The comforting influence of music in studies has also been echoed by Sameer Zia Chowdhury, a second-year student at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. But his approach to studying while listening to music comes with a little tweak.

"I tend to listen to songs that I find appealing for the time being," says Sameer. "However, my music taste fluctuates between alt or soft rock like Coldplay or Ed Sheeran, 2010s EDM, indie folk, pop, Hindi songs by mostly Arjit Singh and Pritam, and so on."

Soothing a stressed-out mind is only a small part of the massive benefits of listening to music while studying. It can also help alleviate boredom and relieve stress. If you listen to upbeat music, dopamine levels in your brain increase massively. This helps improve your mood and re-energises you as you look to navigate through your homework and assignments.

Research by Stanford University reveals how music engages the areas of the brain involved with paying attention. It implies how music acts as a cognitive exercise for our brain, increasing our memory, and reducing the risk of diseases such as Alzheimer's and dementia. This ultimately causes both hemispheres of our brain to open up, absorb, and store information.

Combining this cognitive exercise with studying, we can store vital information over an extended area of our brain. Over time, it can transform the students' academic fortunes as well. Not only does music help them etch the difficult academic concepts in their brains, but also helps them become confident learners.

In some cases, we might start to associate a particular song with a particular subject, or vice-versa. It's explained by the concept of "earworm". If the brain understands the patterns of the beats, it makes learning easier as we associate different topics with the beats of songs. The piece of music, essentially, becomes synonymous with a particular topic.

"When I study Biology and Physics, I only listen to instrumentals. I am not exactly a big fan of these subjects and I find lyrics to be intrusive while doing them," says Tarisha. She also added that the leisurely nature of lo-fi pop songs coaxes out her creative instincts, helping her study subjects like Mathematics and English.

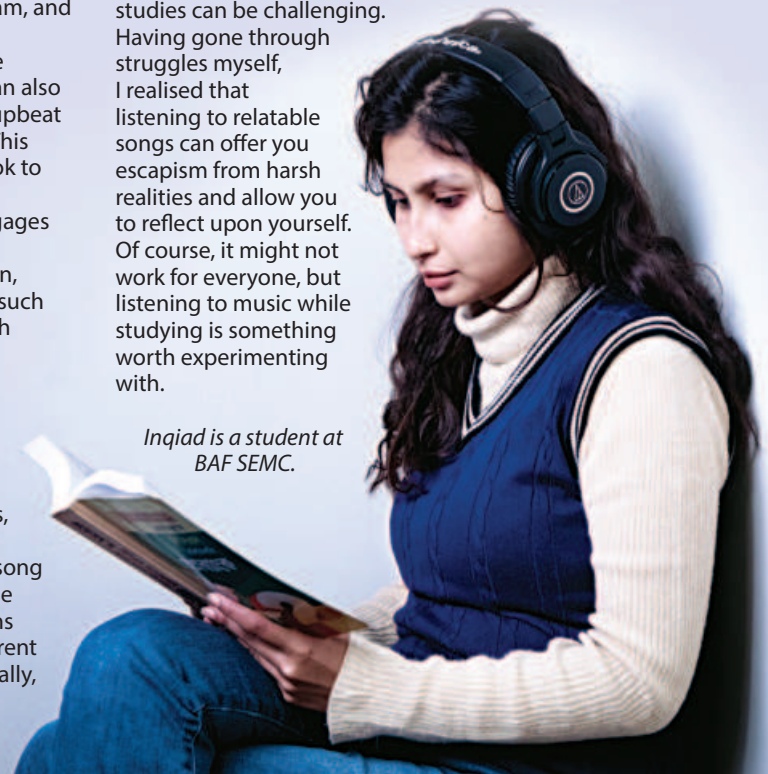
Despite the obvious positives of listening to music when studying, one must be cautious to ensure that the music doesn't hinder studying. According to Sameer, concentrating on studies comes down more to how much the mind wants to focus. He quips that listening to the softer melodies of Coldplay calms him down. "They tickle my brain in just the right way which allows me to focus better," he says.

Sameer also added that there were occasions when music actually psyched him up for studying. He says, "Listening to high-energy pop and EDM, especially songs with strong beats, helps me get pumped up not only for studies but also when I try to work out or find motivation for navigating different situations in life."

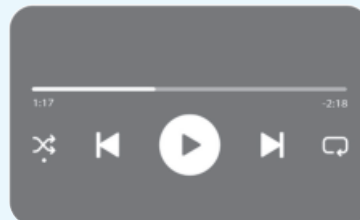
Relating music with life and studies can be challenging.

Having gone through struggles myself, I realised that listening to relatable songs can offer you escapism from harsh realities and allow you to reflect upon yourself. Of course, it might not work for everyone, but listening to music while studying is something worth experimenting with.

Inqiad is a student at BAF SEMC.



SONGS TO LISTEN TO WHILE STUDYING



- Strawberry Guy** – Mrs Magic
- Ichiko Aoba** – Dawn in the Adan
- Bôa** – Duvet
- Linkin Park** – Castle of Glass
- Clean Bandit** – Baby feat. Marina (Acoustic Version)
- Arnob** – Ekdin
- Paul** – Big Thief
- Hila** – Face Me