
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Death Metal



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello, and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Neil.

Rob

And I'm Rob.

Neil

Rob, do you like metal?

Rob

Er, that's an odd question. I've never really thought about it. I mean, I use metal things every day – my toaster, my bike, the underground...

Neil

No, no - not that kind of metal, this kind of metal.

[Death metal music]

Rob

Oh, that kind of metal. The musical **genre**, the type of music...

Neil

Yes, and in particular, death metal.

Rob

That fast, loud, aggressive sounding, guitar-based music style?

Neil

Yep, that's the one.

Rob

Nope. Not my cup of tea at all. What kind of person do you think I am?

Neil

Well, that's the point. The type of person who likes death metal may not be the kind of

person you think they are. More on that shortly, but first, a quiz. The electric guitar is an essential element to death metal music. In which decade were the first electric guitars produced? Was it:

- a) the 1920s
- b) the 1930s, or
- c) the 1940s?

Rob

I think quite early, so I'm going to say the 1920s.

Neil

Well, we'll see if you're right later in the programme. Does violent music give people violent thoughts? Recent research claims to have found the answer. This is how the topic was introduced on BBC News. What was the conclusion?

BBC News Presenter

A psychological study of fans of death metal suggests that they are not **desensitised** to violence despite the **genre's** association with growling, often graphically violent **lyrics** including depictions of **cannibalism**. Researchers found that the main response of fans to the music they love was **joy**, not violence. Adding that most are very nice people who wouldn't dream of hurting anyone, let alone eating them.

Neil

So what conclusion did the researchers come to?

Rob

Well, they found that the response to the music was **joy**, not anger or violence. It made people happy.

Neil

There was a fear that listening to music with violent **lyrics**, which means violent words, would make people **desensitised** to violence.

Rob

If you are **desensitised** to something, you don't see it as unusual or unacceptable, it doesn't bother you.

Neil

The newsreader also said that the **lyrics** of death metal include topics such as **cannibalism**, which is the practice of eating human flesh. Listening to someone singing about eating people apparently didn't make them feel like snacking on their neighbours. Let's hear the introduction again.

BBC News Presenter

A psychological study of fans of death metal suggests that they are not **desensitised** to violence despite the **genre's** association with growling, often graphically violent lyrics including depictions of **cannibalism**. Researchers found that the main response of fans to

the music they love was **joy**, not violence. Adding that most are very nice people who wouldn't dream of hurting anyone, let alone eating them.

Neil

Professor Bill Thompson from Macquarie University in Sydney conducted this research. What does he say people don't feel when listening to this kind of music?

Professor Bill Thompson

Most fans are not angry. Most are actually musically trained people who really get a lot of empowerment and **aesthetic** interest out of the music. They feel **joyful**. They feel transcendent, they feel **empowered**. But what they don't feel is angry.

Neil

What don't people feel?

Rob

They don't feel angry! What they do feel is **joyful**, the adjective from **joy**. They feel happy. Something else they feel is **empowered**. This is a feeling of being in control of your life, that you can make and follow your own decisions.

Neil

Music is certainly a powerful art form. Professor Thompson also said that fans have an **aesthetic** interest in it. This means that they appreciate it as an art form. Let's hear Professor Thompson again.

Professor Bill Thompson

Most fans are not angry. Most are actually musically trained people who really get a lot of empowerment and **aesthetic** interest out of the music. They feel **joyful**. They feel transcendent they feel **empowered**. But what they don't feel is angry.

Neil

Time to review our vocabulary, but first, let's have the answer to the quiz question. In which decade were the first electric guitars produced? Was it:

- a) the 1920s
- b) the 1930s
- c) the 1940s

What did you think, Rob?

Rob

I took a guess at the 1920s.

Neil

Well electric guitars were early, but not quite that early, I'm afraid. The first ones were produced in the 1930s. So well done if, unlike Rob, you got that correct. Now, onto the vocabulary.

Rob

Yes, we had a few words connected with music. We had **genre** for a style of music and also **lyrics** for the words of a song.

Neil

Some of the **lyrics** of death metal songs are about eating people, which is called **cannibalism**.

Rob

Cannibalism is a form of extreme violence and there was some concern that people exposed to such violent **lyrics** in songs might become **desensitised** to actual violence.

Neil

This means that they would accept violence as normal and not be worried by it. However, the research showed that this doesn't happen and fans actually feel **joy**, which is another way of saying happiness.

Rob

The research also suggested that fans have an artistic appreciation of death metal, described as an **aesthetic** interest.

Neil

The final word was for a feeling that fans might get after listening to the music, **empowered**.

Rob

Someone who is **empowered** is in control of their own life and decisions.

Neil

And I feel **empowered** to bring this edition of 6 Minute English to a close. We look forward to your company next time. Until then, you can find us in all the usual places on social media – that's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. And there's our website, and of course, we have a free app which you can find in the app stores. You'll be able to listen to 6 Minute English on the move. You just walk and we talk. Just search for [bbclearninglish](https://www.bbc.com/learningenglish). Bye for now.

Rob

Goodbye!

VOCABULARY

genre

a style of something such as music or films

lyrics

the words of a song

desensitised (to something)

feeling that something extreme is normal

joy / joyful

happiness noun/adjective

cannibalism

the eating of human flesh by another human

aesthetic

an artistic appreciation of something, a feeling that something is beautiful from an artistic point of view