

Keep your English  
up to date

## Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets  
with answers

Lesson 4  
GM



**BBC WORLD SERVICE**  
LEARNING ENGLISH



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# BBC Learning English – Keep your English Up to Date

## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 4: GM

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1. Level, topic, language, aims, materials
2. Lesson stages
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5. Student worksheets 1, 2, 3

**Level:** Intermediate and above

**Topic:** Abbreviations: especially from science and technology

**Language:** Abbreviations: GM

**Aims:** Listening skills – A short talk

**Materials:** Worksheet 1 – Introductory speaking and vocabulary exercises, listening section 1  
Worksheet 2 – Listening section 2  
Worksheet 3 – Extra work: Vocabulary and language  
Tapescript – Available in teacher's notes  
Recording of the talk – Available online at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com)

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# BBC Learning English – Keep your English Up to Date

## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 4: GM

#### LESSON STAGES

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##### A

Explain to the students that they are going to listen to a talk by Professor David Crystal about the way the English language changes. This particular talk is about abbreviations, science and technology.

##### B

Hand out **Student Worksheet 1**. Students do **Speaking Exercise 1** in small groups or pairs. There is some information about the genetic engineering examples in the answers.

##### C

Students do the **Vocabulary Exercise 2**, without dictionaries at first. Practise the pronunciation of the vocabulary, as they will hear it in the talk.

##### D

Students read **Listening Exercise 3** and then listen to Section 1 of the talk. They answer the questions.

Students listen again and answer **Listening Exercise 4**

##### E

Hand out **Student Worksheet 2**

Students answer **Listening Exercise 5**

Students listen to section 2 of the talk and check their answer for **Listening exercise 5**

##### F

Students try to answer **Listening Exercises 6**. They listen again to **Listening Section 2** to check/complete their answers.

##### G

If you wish to do some extra work with the class, hand out **Student Worksheet 3**

For the vocabulary exercise, give the students copies of the tapescript and play the complete talk as they read.

For the language, make sure the grammatical functions of GM are clear to the students.

**Lesson 4: GM**

**TAPESCRIPTS**

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**Listening Section 1**

In the mid-1990s there was a new big, controversy that came in, wasn't there, about genetically modified foods: foodstuffs containing genetically altered plant or animal material. And it wasn't long before an abbreviation came along to summarise all these: genetically modified – G.M. or "genetic modification". Now that's a pretty technical abbreviation; you might not expect to encounter it very often, but actually, you do. Because it was controversial at the time and people didn't know whether to put this stuff into their foods or not (and it still is controversial), you began to see it on signs –

**Listening Section 2**

Because it was controversial at the time and people didn't know whether to put this stuff into their foods or not (and it still is controversial), you began to see it on signs – especially after 1996, when the food labelling regulations came in, and they applied in Britain in, 1999 I think it was – and from that point on, people had to say, if you were a restaurant owner or a café owner, you had to say whether your foods had G.M. in them or not – and so you walk into a restaurant these days, and you might well see a sign on the wall saying "no G.M. foods here" or "the following foodstuffs have G.M. products inside".

And people I've often asked them often asked you know, what do you think G.M. means? And they guess all sorts of things. Some people have told me it means "good morning food". Somebody else told me it was a "gold medal" food. Well – it doesn't mean any of those things. It means "genetically modified", that's all!

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## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 4: GM

#### ANSWER KEY

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#### SPEAKING

- 1.
- b. Biology, biochemistry, genetics, genetic engineering, biotechnology
- c. Dolly the sheep was a clone produced in the UK in  
The strawmato is a cross between a strawberry and a tomato  
The liger is a cross between a lion and a tiger  
Clones are genetically identical copies of living beings, produced artificially

#### VOCABULARY

2.
  - a. **controversial** likely to cause disagreement
  - b. **to modify something** to change or alter something
  - c. **technical** connected to science
  - d. **a label** a note which tells you what something is
  - e. **regulations** laws or rules
  - f. **A gold medal** the top prize in a competition

#### LISTENING SECTION 1

3.
  - a. GM
  - b. i. Genetically modified (adjective) and ii. Genetic modification (noun)
4.
  - a. True – mid 1990s
  - b. False – it was a big controversy
  - c. False – It is still controversial

#### LISTENING SECTION 2

5.
  - b. State clearly when they used GM foods
6.
  - a. False – he does not mention bar owners
  - b. True – a sign on the wall
  - c. False

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## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 4: GM

#### EXTRA WORK VOCABULARY

1.

- a. altered
- b. to encounter something
- c. from that point on

#### LANGUAGE

2.

LASER	<b>L</b> ight <b>A</b> mplification by <b>S</b> timulated <b>E</b> mission of <b>R</b> adiation – a powerful light beam
CD	<b>C</b> ompact <b>D</b> isc – a disc for storing digital information, often music
DVD	<b>D</b> igital <b>V</b> ersatile <b>D</b> isc – a disc for storing digital information, often movies
VHS	<b>V</b> ideo <b>H</b> ome <b>S</b> ystem – a system for recording information on magnetic tape
RADAR	<b>R</b> adio <b>D</b> etection and <b>R</b> anging – a system used to find planes in the air
SCUBA	<b>S</b> elf-contained <b>U</b> nderwater <b>B</b> reathing <b>A</b> pparatus – a system for diving
EMAIL	<b>E</b> lectronic <b>M</b> ail – a means of communication of digital information
WWW	<b>W</b> orld <b>W</b> ide <b>W</b> eb – and address or space on the internet

3.

GM is a noun (for the concept or idea) and an adjective

4.

- a. genetic modification
- b. genetically modified
- c. genetically modified
- d. genetic modification
- e. genetically modified

# BBC Learning English – Keep your English Up to Date GM

## WORKSHEET 1

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You are going to listen to a short talk given by Professor David Crystal about language change and new developments in English.

### SPEAKING

#### 1. Discuss these questions with other students

- a. Can you name four important scientific inventions or discoveries?  
Why do you think they are so important?
- b. Which science do you connect with DNA?
- c. Do you know of any results from genetic experimentation?  
Have you heard of these things?

Dolly the sheep      The strawmato      The liger      clones

### VOCABULARY

#### 2. Match these words and phrases to their definitions

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| a. <b>controversial</b>       | the top prize in a competition           |
| b. <b>to modify something</b> | a note which tells you what something is |
| c. <b>technical</b>           | likely to cause disagreement             |
| d. <b>a label</b>             | connected to science                     |
| e. <b>regulations</b>         | to change or alter something             |
| f. <b>a gold medal</b>        | laws or rules                            |

# **BBC Learning English – Keep your English Up to Date GM**

## **LISTENING SECTION 1**

- 3. Now, listen to Professor Crystal talking about an abbreviation that has come from the modern science of genetic engineering.**
- a. What is the abbreviation? \_\_\_
  
  - b. Which two things can the abbreviation stand for?
    - i. genetically modified
    - ii. genetic modified
    - iii. genetically modification
    - iv. genetic modification
  
  - c. Which one is a noun and which is an adjective?
- 4. Listen again and decide if the following statements are true or false, according to Professor Crystal.**
- a. GM food first appeared around 1995
  - b. People were happy to accept GM food
  - c. GM food is not controversial now

**WORKSHEET 2**

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**LISTENING SECTION 2**

5. GM foods are controversial. Special regulations were introduced. **What do you think food producers and restaurant owners had to do?**
- a. Not sell or use GM foods
  - b. State clearly when they used GM foods
  - c. Have a license to use GM foods

Listen to Section 2 of the talk and check your ideas. Were you correct?

6. **Are the following sentences true or false? Listen and check.**
- a. Professor Crystal talks about restaurant, café and bar owners
  - b. You might read a notice about GM foods in a restaurant
  - c. Everyone knows what GM means

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## GM

### WORKSHEET 3 - EXTRA WORK

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#### VOCABULARY

1. Look at the tape script and find words or phrases that mean the following.
  - a. changed or modified
  - b. meet or come across
  - c. from that time

#### LANGUAGE

2. Science and technology provides many abbreviations that enter the general language. Do you recognise these abbreviations?

**LASER   CD   DVD   VHS   RADAR   SCUBA   EMAIL   WWW**

3. These abbreviations above are all nouns for things. Only **Email** is also a verb. What is unusual about **GM**?
4. Put the correct form of **GM** in the sentences below – genetic modification or genetically modified?
  - a. Our essay title is, ‘ Is \_\_\_\_\_ a good thing for human kind?’
  - b. I don’t want bread which is made from \_\_\_\_\_ flour
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_ rice could be grown more easily
  - d. I think \_\_\_\_\_ should be allowed, after more tests
  - e. If a farmer uses \_\_\_\_\_ seeds, he must tell the government officials

## **BBC Learning English – Keep your English Up to Date GM**

### **DISCUSSION**

5. Discuss the following with your partner or in a small group
  - a. What are the possible benefits of GM food – think about farmers, pesticide, consumers, private companies, nature, poorer nations, richer nations
  
  - b. What are the possible drawbacks of GM food – think about nature and the environment, trusting science, private companies, poorer and richer nations
  
  - c. What is the situation with regard to GM food in your country?
    - i. Is it a controversial topic? Was it before?
    - ii. Can farmers produce GM crops?
    - iii. Is your food labelled to tell you about the GM content?