

Music: Cultural Influence

Madame Tussauds Sydney — Schools Resource

NSW Syllabus: Music 7–10 | **Stage:** Stage 5 (Years 9–10)

Note for teachers: Please cross-check exact outcome codes against your school's current syllabus documentation.

About this resource

This resource examines how musicians establish public identity and cultural influence, utilising Madame Tussauds Sydney's music icons as case studies in music, image, and industry.

Curriculum outcomes addressed

- **MU5-LIS-01** – uses listening skills to analyse music in relation to stylistic, cultural, historical and social contexts
- **MU5-LIS-02** – uses listening skills to evaluate how the elements of music are manipulated and combined

Key inquiry question

How do musicians use image, performance and media to build and sustain a career?

Exercise 1: Building a Music Brand (Classroom — Pre-Visit)

Format: Classroom-based | 25 minutes

1. Discuss: what makes a musician instantly recognisable, beyond just their music? (Visual identity, signature sound, persona.)
2. In small groups, analyse a current or historical artist's "brand" — sound, image, media presence.
3. Introduce the idea that longevity in the music industry often depends on more than talent alone.

Exercise 2: Case Study at the Gallery (Excursion — In-Venue)

Format: Excursion-based | Individual worksheet

Choose one music icon from the gallery.

1. Identify the genre and era this artist is associated with, and any signature visual or musical elements referenced in the display.
2. Consider how technology (radio, MTV, streaming, social media) shaped this artist's career, depending on their era.
3. Evaluate: how has this artist's image and sound stayed consistent or evolved over their career?

Exercise 3: Industry Case Study (Classroom — Post-Visit)

Format: Classroom-based | Extended task

Write a case study (400–500 words) on your chosen artist's career, addressing: their musical style and key concepts, how technology and media shaped their reach, and what has sustained their cultural relevance.

Teacher note: This task can be adapted into a comparative study of two artists from different eras, or paired with an audio analysis component.

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Exercise 1: Building a Music Brand (Classroom Activity — Pre-Visit)

Duration: 25 minutes

Introduction

Musicians are recognised not just by their music, but by their complete brand identity. This includes their visual style, signature sound, public persona, and media presence. In this activity, you'll explore what makes a music icon memorable and influential.

Part 1: Class Discussion

What makes a musician instantly recognisable, beyond just their music?

Consider:

- Visual identity and fashion
- Signature sound or musical style
- Public persona and behaviour
- Media presence and marketing

Your notes:

Part 2: Group Analysis

In small groups, choose a current or historical artist and analyse their 'brand'. Complete the table below:

Aspect	Your Analysis
Artist name	
Genre/Style	
Visual identity	
Signature sound	
Media presence	
Key to longevity	

Part 3: Reflection

Why do you think longevity in the music industry depends on more than just musical talent?

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Exercise 2: Case Study at the Gallery (Excursion Activity — In-Venue Worksheet)

Duration: Individual work during gallery visit

Instructions

Choose **one music icon** from the gallery. Use the display, your observations, and any provided information to record evidence about the artist's genre, era, use of technology, and how their image has been shaped over time.

Artist Selection

Name of artist chosen: _____

Question 1: Genre and Era

Identify the genre and era this artist is associated with. Look for clues in the display (costume, instruments, staging, album covers, or keywords).

Genre: _____

Era/Time period: _____

Signature visual elements:

Signature musical elements:

Question 2: Technology and Career

Consider how technology (radio, MTV, streaming, social media) shaped this artist's career, depending on their era. Record specific examples where possible.

Key technologies that helped this artist:

How these technologies shaped their reach and success:

Question 3: Image and Evolution

Evaluate how the artist's image and sound has stayed consistent or evolved over time. Use evidence from the display and what you know about their career.

Consistent elements:

Elements that evolved or changed:

Why do you think they made these choices?

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Exercise 3: Industry Case Study (Post-Visit Extended Task)

Format: Classroom-based extended writing task

Task Overview

Using the artist you studied at Madame Tussauds, write a detailed case study (400–500 words) that examines their career from a music industry perspective.

Your Case Study Must Address:

1. Musical style and key concepts (genre, instrumentation, signature techniques)
2. How technology and media shaped their reach and audience
3. What has sustained their cultural relevance over time

Planning Space

Artist name:

Key points about their musical style:

Technology/media influence:

Reasons for sustained relevance:

Draft Your Case Study

Write your 400-500-word case study below. Remember to use appropriate music terminology and support your points with specific examples.

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