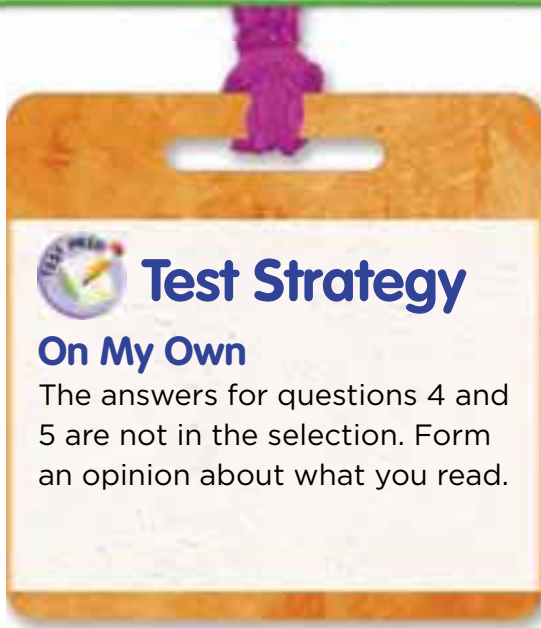


# Answer Questions



## Portable Music: Taking It with You

### Turn It Down

In July of 1979, life for the music lover was about to change. Family sing-alongs would be no more. Never again would people have to hum their favorite song while waiting at the doctor's office. And all the kids who had ever heard "Turn that music down!" were about to get what they always wanted. They were going to be able to turn it up loud, really loud.

The portable tape player arrived on the music scene and changed the world. Music, and how people listened to it, was never the same.

### The Music in Your Head

Before the birth of the portable tape player, people were stuck having to listen to whatever was playing. Everyone knows that feeling, the frustration of being trapped in a long line as the worst song you've ever heard blasts from a speaker in the ceiling. Most of us also know the feeling of being trapped when buckled into a friend's car but not allowed to touch the radio. Before it was portable, music was something that groups of people shared.

Whole rooms were forced to listen to the same music. The radio or tape player was too big to carry from room to room.

As early as 1954, the American public got its first taste of radio freedom. The first transistor radio went on sale and allowed the buyer to take his or her music anywhere. That is, if the radio signal went uninterrupted. It was a start. There was even an earpiece for private listening. People got their first taste of listening to music on their own terms and they liked it. Change was a good thing!

## An Amazing Accident

The event that changed portable music took place in 1979. The invention of the portable tape player became the foundation for the shift in how people listened.

There is a legend about how the first portable tape player was built. The story suggests that it was more the result of an accident than smart business sense. The president of a Japanese electronics company asked his designers to make him a small tape player to take with him on an airplane. He wanted to listen to a tape of classical music during the long flight overseas to America. It was a new, but simple, request. The designers at the company took one of their older devices, a tape player and recorder, and removed the record feature. They also took off the speaker. In its place they gave the player a plug for earphones. Sound simple? It was—so simple that it was strange no one had ever thought of it before.

However, things didn't quite work out as planned. Once the president of the company arrived in the United States, he called his designers. It turned out that the batteries in the tape player had died and the tape they had given him was blank. Not the best beginning for what would become one of the world's most popular inventions.

As soon as the rest of the company heard about this new product, they were already planning its release to the public. They perfected it and made sure the batteries were fresh and the tapes weren't blank. Within months of its release, the portable tape player became a cultural phenomenon. Music had been set free.



## Going Digital

The freedom of music depends on how it is played. If all music is put on analog tapes, then more tape players are needed. The same is true with vinyl records, eight-track tapes, and compact discs—they all depend on the machines that play them. Therefore, when the popularity of computers began to make the world a digital planet, portable music had to catch up.

In the 1980s and 1990s, compact discs proved that digital music was superior to old-fashioned tape recordings. Musicians and designers realized how good music sounded digitally and how easy it was to store. The clutter of old tapes could be eliminated because slimmer, better sounding CDs were taking over. What did you do with a box full of old tapes? Sell them at a garage sale or use them to prop up a couch with three legs? People didn't need them any more. Along with CDs themselves, portable CD players became the portable toys of choice.

MP3 computer files are the newest trend in music. They are individual songs or recordings that have been created for storage on a computer. These files can be played on special players called DAPs, or digital audio players. Now even the days of CDs seem numbered. In the old days, the size of a tape or CD actually mattered. Only a certain amount of information could fit onto a tape or CD, which limited how much music you could take along with you. MP3 files make it possible to have more music in less space because they exist only inside the memory of a computer chip. Computer chips are becoming smaller while the amount of memory is getting bigger. The choice of what to listen to has become almost endless.

What happens now? One small portable music player can hold thousands of MP3 songs in a machine the size of a credit card. Music freedom has exploded in a way that no one had ever dreamed possible. It's only a matter of time until a DAP is in the pocket of every music lover.



**Directions: Answer the questions.****1. Which BEST describes the theme of this selection?**

- A Change is a good thing in portable music.
- B Music never changes.
- C Portable tape players are outdated.
- D Everyone should have an MP3 player.

**2. The invention of the portable tape player**

- A was the well-thought-out idea of an engineer.
- B made television popular.
- C took over ten years.
- D became the foundation in the shift in how people listened to music.

**3. What is the advantage of digital music?**

- A It is louder.
- B The earphone is built in.
- C It has improved sound.
- D It uses tape players.

**4. Now that we can take our music with us, we can play it anywhere at any time. Is this always a good thing? Explain your answer.****5. “Music is the universal language.” What do you think this means? Explain your answer.****Tip**

Form an opinion.

**Writing Prompt**

Think about something you use to play or record music. Write directions explaining how to use the device. Write the steps in a clear order.