

# WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

## Can Anybody Learn To Be A DJ?

18/11/21 / Keyword: DJ

In his spare time, ECP coach Kez likes to walk around Álava, as well as play the guitar. When he's not doing that, he turns his hand to DJing. What is it, and how and why do you do it?



Kez and Dani in action as Dadaístas DJs

output sound from one **deck** to the other, as well as volume controls, and lots of other buttons which made me very confused at the beginning.

I practised **mixing** at home and discovered that it was lots of fun, but that it was also quite mathematical, which I found to be a refreshing challenge. I became brave and started to ask the owners of various bars if they would let me “**play**” in their establishments. Not so brave that I would do it on my own. My friend Dani and I played under the name of Dadaístas DJs, in the Iguana and also in the old Gora in Vitoria. We really enjoyed ourselves, and got paid for doing something that we loved. When Dani moved back to Bilbao, I found myself on my own, unable to take on the task alone. Eventually, I persuaded another friend to join me, because playing for 4 or 5 hours on your own non-stop is quite tiring.

People ask me what music I **play**. I suppose it depends on the **venue**, the crowd, my **mood** and various other things. I usually describe what I **play** as **alternative rock**, but I also **play** less conventional music such as **hip-hop**, **drum 'n' bass**, **techno**, **breakbeat**, **electronic** and sometimes, a bit of **soul**, **reggae**, **ska**, **glam rock** or **punk**. The most difficult music to incorporate into a DJ **set** would be **ballads**, **acoustic songs**, **folk**, **country** and anything else that might be lacking in drums or rhythm. And I've never played a vinyl record. **Turn to page 2** ☺ ☺

## Useful vocabulary

**newcomer:** a person who is a novice in an activity

**set (n):** a compilation of songs made by a DJ

**to play:** to reproduce music

**to play out:** to reproduce music in a club, bar or anywhere else; not at home

**mix(ing) (vb):** to produce sounds by joining separate recordings

**seamlessly:** smoothly and continuously, without any apparent gaps or spaces between two parts

**deck (n):** a component/unit for playing recorded music (CDs etc)

**venue:** a place where an event is happening

**mood:** a temporary state of mind or feeling

## Let's chat about that!

1. Have you ever heard a DJ play? Did you like it? Why/not?
2. Do you think you could ever be a DJ? Why/not?
3. Do you think DJs are musicians? Why/not?
4. Can you describe the different types of music written in purple?
5. What are the difficulties of being a DJ?
6. Do you think a DJ should be paid for playing other people's music? Why/not?

# LIVE! English Events



## A Short Glossary Of DJ Slang

Do you want to be a DJ? If so, you'll need to know the right way to speak! Here's a guide to some of the essential words and phrases.

**Break:** Part of a song where only the drums play, usually for 4-8 bars. Can be looped or sampled as a springboard for a new track or for an MC to rap over. Sampling the drum breaks from gospel and jazz records formed the basis of early hip-hop.

**Cans:** Headphones

**Coffin:** Massive flight case containing DJing equipment, typically two turntables and a mixer.

**Cut:** To lower the volume or EQ gain **OR** to transition instantly between two tracks without cross-fading.

**Hot:** Loud

**Scribbling:** Simple scratching technique where the record is moved back and forward around a chosen sound.

**"If you ain't redlining you ain't headlining":** Common yet controversial phrase describing how loudness - rather

Come and socialise in English!

## Coffee Saturdays

2021-22

11:00-12:30

Panadería Bertiz C/Francia 10

2nd October	5th March
6th November	2nd April
4th December	7th May
5th February	4th June



than selection or technical skill - is the most valuable weapon in a DJ's arsenal.

**Trainspotting:** Annoying practice by wannabe DJs who crowd the booth in an effort to see what track is playing. Trainspotters often interfere with the DJ.

**Trainwreck:** Failing to match beats, resulting in two kicks playing slightly out of sync. Sounds horrible, but happen to all DJs at some point.

Other people ask me if it's complicated to mix songs into each other without being able to hear that there are two songs playing at the same time. My answer is: It's always easier to notice a bad DJ than a good one.

So, can anybody become a DJ? Well, perhaps not everybody can. You need to have a good ear for music, a good sense of timing, be able to guess what the crowd want to hear, change things quickly when people start to leave and be able to ignore requests for Britney Spears when you are playing The Rolling Stones! But anyone can try and learn. It's rewarding, but it also takes lots of effort (and sometimes money and time as well).

**Written by ECP coach Darren "Kez" Kurien**



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[info@ecp.coop](mailto:info@ecp.coop)