

Michael Jackson

In this lesson, you will learn about and discuss Michael Jackson, a.k.a. the King of Pop. You'll also get to be a reporter and a poet. First, let's find out what you know about this American music legend.



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What words come to mind when you hear the name Michael Jackson?
2. What is life like for a child star?
3. Do you like Michael Jackson's music? Why or why not?
4. What made Michael Jackson a controversial figure?
5. How did the world react when Michael Jackson died?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. talent | a) to offset a loss or bad experience |
| _____ 2. solo | b) killing someone without intention |
| _____ 3. take off | c) to suddenly become popular |
| _____ 4. debut | d) identifying characteristics of a person |
| _____ 5. signature | e) the first show or performance in public |
| _____ 6. tabloid | f) a special ability that you are born with |
| _____ 7. custody | g) by oneself rather than in a group |
| _____ 8. biological | h) a newspaper or magazine that features sensational headlines |
| _____ 9. make up for | i) to practice for a show |
| _____ 10. exotic | j) related by blood |
| _____ 11. rehearse | k) having children in one's protection |
| _____ 12. involuntary manslaughter | l) foreign, unusual |

Quick Facts

Name: _____

Nickname: The Gloved One / The King of Pop

Nationality: _____

Born: August 29, 1958

Died: June 25, 2009

Best Known For: _____

Reading

1. Michael Jackson sold millions of records during his career. He earned the title “King of Pop,” but his fans and friends called him “MJ.”
2. A teacher recognized Michael Jackson’s singing and dancing **talents** in kindergarten. By age 8, Michael was the lead singer in his brothers’ Motown band. The Jackson 5 had numerous hits, including “ABC,” “I Want You Back,” and “I’ll Be There.” Michael later referred to his own child voice as “Minnie-Mouse-like.”
3. Michael Jackson’s **solo** career **took off** in the 1980s. His second album, *Thriller*, remains the largest-selling album of all time. “Billie Jean” was the first video of a black artist to air on MTV. In 1983, Michael Jackson **debuted** his **signature** dance move, the “Moonwalk.”
4. In the 1990s, **tabloid** newspapers put Michael Jackson under the spotlight. Journalists accused him of lying about a skin disease. They also wrote about his cosmetic surgery. During this time, he married and divorced Elvis Presley’s daughter, Lisa Marie. He also married and had two children with his nurse, Debbie Rowe. When his second marriage failed, Michael Jackson took **custody** of the children. A surrogate mother later gave Michael his third child. Michael claimed to be the **biological** father of Prince, Paris, and Blanket.
5. Michael Jackson complained that he missed his childhood. He tried to **make up for** this loss as an adult. He invited children to enjoy *Neverland*, his private ranch and theme park. Jackson kept several **exotic** pets, including snakes, llamas, and Bubbles the chimpanzee. He was accused of having inappropriate relationships with children.
6. Michael Jackson died from a painkiller overdose in 2009. His doctor was charged with **involuntary manslaughter**. Prior to his death, 50-year-old Jackson was **rehearsing** for *This Is It*, a sold-out concert series in London. Before he died, Michael Jackson left a voice recording on his doctor’s phone: “When people leave my show, I want them to say, ‘I’ve never seen anything like this in my life...He’s the greatest entertainer in the world.’”

*“I’m never pleased
with anything.
I’m a perfectionist.
It’s part of who I am.”*

—Michael Jackson

Comprehension

A. Quiz Your Partner

Student A asks questions 1–3.

Student B asks questions 4–6.

Don't look at the reading as you answer.

1. Name one of Michael Jackson's hit songs.
2. What is the "Moonwalk" referred to as in this reading?
3. What problems did Michael Jackson have in the '90s?
4. Why did Michael Jackson enjoy Neverland?
5. What types of exotic pets did Michael Jackson keep?
6. Who was partly to blame for Michael Jackson's death?

B. Timeline

Place the following in chronological order (1–8).

- _____ The Jackson 5 became a popular Motown group.
- _____ The "Moonwalk" became a popular dance move.
- _____ Michael began rehearsing for the *This Is It* tour.
- _____ Michael Jackson married Lisa Marie Presley.
- _____ Blanket, Michael's third child, was born.
- _____ Michael Jackson died of a drug overdose.
- _____ Michael Jackson's kindergarten teacher noticed Michael's talent.
- _____ Michael Jackson started his solo career.

Vocabulary Review

Choose the word that doesn't belong in each group.

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1. a) solo b) alone c) custody d) oneself | 3. a) biological b) manslaughter c) murder d) kill | 5. a) odd b) foreign c) exotic d) signature | 7. a) debut b) make up for c) fix d) compensate |
| 2. a) tabloid b) gossip c) news d) childhood | 4. a) blood b) related c) tabloid d) biological | 6. a) gift b) specialty c) talent d) take off | |

Research

THE GLOVE



What do you know about Michael Jackson's "glitter glove"? What do you want to know? Use your phone, the Internet, or an

MJ fan to find out three interesting facts about "the glove." Share your research with the class.

Fact or Fiction?

Guess whether the following statements are fact or fiction.

1. All of the profits from the "Man in the Mirror" single went to charity.
2. Lisa Marie Presley is Paris Jackson's mother.
3. Michael Jackson played the Tin Man in an African-American version of *The Wizard of Oz*.
4. Michael Jackson playfully hung one of his children off a balcony.
5. Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson wrote "We are the World."
6. Michael Jackson was raised as a Catholic.
7. Michael Jackson was a vegetarian.
8. An autopsy confirmed that MJ suffered from vitiligo.

Discussion

Michael Jackson had a *signature* glove and a *signature* dance move. Which famous people have the following?

| # | Signature... | Name | Describe It |
|---|--------------|------|-------------|
| 1 | smile | | |
| 2 | hairdo | | |
| 3 | mustache | | |
| 4 | phrase | | |
| 5 | eyes | | |

Pair Activity

TABLOID REPORTER

Imagine you are a journalist for a tabloid newspaper. Write some questions for one of Michael Jackson's family members. Try to use at least one word from the vocabulary list (on page 1) in each question. Find a partner and take turns pretending to be the reporter and the family member. Michael's family members include sisters, brothers, parents, and children. What is the name of your tabloid paper?

Hello, _____. I'm _____,
reporting from the _____ News.
Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Class Activity

Work together to write an acrostic poem about Michael Jackson.

Example:

M J
I 'll Be There
C hild at heart
H and in a glove
A lways dancing
E arned a lot of money
L oved the "Moonwalk"

J anet is his sister
A lways breaking records
C himpanzee lover
K ids have interesting names
S old millions of albums
O ne of a kind
N everland no more

Class Poem:

M _____
I _____
C _____
H _____
A _____
E _____
L _____

J _____
A _____
C _____
K _____
S _____
O _____
N _____