

# The Eurovision Song Contest!

*A Reading A-Z Level Q Leveled Book  
Word Count: 752*

## Connections

### Writing

Write an acrostic poem that describes important elements of the Eurovision Song Contest. Use the name "Eurovision" for the acrostic. Each letter in the name will begin a line of your poem.

### Social Studies

Listen to a recap of songs from one year's participants in the Eurovision Song Contest. Choose a favorite song. Research to learn more about the artist or artists. Create a poster using the information from your research.

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LEVELED BOOK • Q

# The Eurovision Song Contest!

**Multi  
level  
Q•T•W**

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## Focus Question

What is the Eurovision Song Contest, and according to the author, what impact has it had on Europe?

## Words to Know

audiences	experts
broadcasters	international
competition	lyrics
contestants	trophy
cultures	

Cover: All participants took the stage during the Grand Final of the 2015 Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna, Austria.

Title page: Ovi from Romania performs during the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest in Denmark.

Page 3: English group Bucks Fizz won the 1981 Eurovision Song Contest with the song "Making Your Mind Up."

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## Correlation

LEVEL Q	
Fountas & Pinnell	N
Reading Recovery	30
DRA	30



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Dana won the 1970 Eurovision Song Contest with the song "All Kinds of Everything." This sweet ballad topped the charts in Europe.

## In the Beginning

The first time I saw the Eurovision Song Contest on television was in 1970. I was with my family, who are Irish. Judges from other countries voted for their favorite songs. We wanted Ireland's song to win the contest.

My first memory of this yearly show has stayed with me. It taught me that I lived in a country that was part of a continent called Europe. I remember it because that year Ireland won the Eurovision Song Contest.





Fans pose at the 2010 Eurovision Song Contest in Norway.

### What Is Eurovision?

The Eurovision Song Contest is Europe's largest and most exciting song **competition**. People are proud of their country's performances. **Contestants** show off their talent to their **international** neighbors. **Audiences** have fun voting.



The contestants of the 1963 Eurovision Song Contest pose in front of the song entry board. Prior to 2013, the order of performances was decided at random. Today, producers choose the order.



The Swedish pop group ABBA performs "Waterloo" during the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest in England.

### When Did Eurovision Start?

The Eurovision Song Contest started in 1956. It was a way to help European countries do something fun together after the Second World War. The first Eurovision Song Contest took place in Switzerland, and only seven European countries took part. The show lasted over an hour and a half. Popular singers from each country sang live.



## How Does Eurovision Work?

Each country chooses its song entry in a national competition. All songs must be sung live and must be three minutes or less.



### Zany Song Titles

At first, there was a rule that songs had to be sung in the language of the country they represented. Sometimes songs had lyrics that everyone could understand, such as "Boom, Bang-a-Bang" (Lulu winning for England in 1969) and "La, La, La" (Massiel winning for Spain in 1968). In 1973, the rule was changed. In 1974, the famous Swedish pop group ABBA sang their winning song "Waterloo" in English.

Titles of songs that have won include "A-Ba-Ni-Bi" (Israel, 1978) and "Diggi-Loo Diggi-Ley" (Sweden, 1984). In 2014, the prize for the oddest title (and song) could have gone to France, whose song "Moustache" by Twin Twin was about a man who wants a moustache.



Wearing Michael Jackson tribute jackets, the stylish identical twins Jedward came in eighth in 2011 with their song "Lipstick."

All the performers travel to the country where Eurovision is taking place. They compete against each other to reach the semifinals. This event takes place over two days. The twenty-six winning acts go to the Grand Final.

The audience and the judges vote. Five music industry **experts** also vote. People at home vote by telephone or text message or through an app. To keep it fair, people can't vote for their own country.

The finalists sing once more in the Grand Final. The juries and audiences from all the participating countries vote again. When the voting is finished, the presenters call upon spokespeople from every country. They read the points live on air.

Next, the presenters read the total number of points for every country. From the lowest to the highest score, fans wait with excitement for the winner to be announced. The song is sung again, and the winner is awarded a **trophy**. The winning country will host the next Eurovision Song Contest.

### Facts and Figures

1. Ireland, which has won seven times, is the most successful country in the history of the contest. In 1996, the contest cost \$3.5 million to put on, but it was thought to have made over \$9 million for Ireland's economy!
2. Although Norway has lost the most, it has also won three times.
3. In 1969, four countries with an equal number of points had to be declared winners. Tie-breaker rules were introduced to stop this from happening again.
4. The year 2015 was the sixtieth anniversary of the Eurovision Song Contest—the longest-running yearly TV music competition in history.

### Eurofever

Audiences love how over-the-top the Eurovision Song Contest can be. Fans can download their own scorecard so they can join in the voting in the comfort of home.



Swiss singer Lys Assia won the first Eurovision Song Contest in 1956 with her song "Refrain."

In the early days of the contest, women wore gowns, and all the performances were very serious. Lys Assia, a Swiss act, was the first winner of Eurovision, in 1956. She was also the first

to sing again at the end of the show. Assia was so surprised that she forgot her **lyrics**. She made up some lyrics by singing "La, la, la"—nonsense lyrics that are now always popular in Eurovision songs.



Now, performers wear dazzling costumes. The set designs and performances are often amazing.

In popular TV talent shows, contestants with an unusual style may not make it to the final round. Eurovision, however, accepts everyone. Some Eurovision winners will have successful careers. ABBA won the 1974 contest, and Celine Dion competed for Switzerland in 1988.



Mariya Yaremchuk of Ukraine wowed audiences in 2014 with the song "Tick-Tock." It featured a man running behind her in a giant wheel.



In 2012, the Grannies from Buranovo proved that cute lyrics could get attention.

The winners are not always the most interesting acts. The Russian entry in 2012, Grannies from Buranovo, was the runner-up with the song "Party for Everybody." The Grannies amused audiences with cute lyrics about how everyone, including dogs and cats, is happy.

## National Pride and Unity

The contest shows audiences the many **cultures** across Europe. These days, more than forty countries may enter Eurovision. It has an audience of at least two hundred million people worldwide.

Europeans vote to support their favorites. A 2006 study by two London colleges found that countries close to one another like to vote for their neighbors. Scandinavians support each other, and Eastern Europeans usually vote for each other. The United Kingdom and Ireland always remember how many points they give each other.

### Do Voting Blocs Help?

Being part of a group of countries, or bloc, doesn't always mean a win. Norway is in the Scandinavian bloc. Yet it is still the unluckiest country in Eurovision history. Norway has come in last a record eleven times and earned "nul (no) points" four times.

Some voting patterns might result in bad feelings between countries. In 2014, Armenia was ranked last by its neighbor, Azerbaijan. The Armenian voters and jury also gave Azerbaijan the lowest scores. The reason behind this negative voting was thought to be because of a military conflict between them that ended in 1994. In 2015, both countries continued to rank each other last.



The Eurovision Song Contest has been won by twenty-seven countries since 1956. Some have won more than once.

Eurovision is run by a group of public **broadcasters**—the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Member countries of the EBU can enter the contest. Some countries not in Europe are also members of the EBU.

After the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union, new Eastern European countries joined. Some countries that are not in the EBU, such as Morocco and Australia, have also been invited.



## The Future Looks Bright

Can the Eurovision Song Contest bring countries together? The contest is all about the joyful celebration of different beliefs and customs. Every year its popularity and fans grow. Friends and families get together to watch this unusual event and cheer on their favorites. There is no end in sight to the Eurovision Song Contest.



A dancing gorilla joined Italy's Francesco Gabbani in 2017.

## Glossary

<b>audiences</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	groups of people gathered to see and hear performances or presentations (p. 5)
<b>broadcasters</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people or organizations that send out radio or television programs (p. 14)
<b>competition</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a rivalry between businesses, teams, or individuals for something desired (p. 5)
<b>contestants</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who are part of a competition (p. 5)
<b>cultures</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the ideas and customs of certain groups of people; particular societies with their own ideas and customs (p. 13)
<b>experts</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who have a lot of knowledge about a subject (p. 8)
<b>international</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	concerning two or more nations, or countries (p. 5)
<b>lyrics</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the words to a song (p. 10)
<b>trophy</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	an object that is given as a prize for winning a competition (p. 9)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.

1. When the author saw the Eurovision Song Contest for the first time, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) she wondered why so many people liked the show
  - (B) she learned that she lived in a country that was a part of a continent called Europe
  - (C) she decided that she wanted to be a singer in the Eurovision contest
  - (D) she knew that one day she would write a book about the Eurovision contest
2. The Eurovision Song Contest is an **international** event because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) it gives the winner a prize
  - (B) it is well-liked by many people
  - (C) it has many different kinds of singers
  - (D) it has competitors from more than one country
3. The Eurovision Song Contest was started to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) hold a singing competition in Switzerland
  - (B) give European countries a way to compete
  - (C) help European countries come together to do something fun after World War II
  - (D) to show the world that European singers are the best
4. \_\_\_\_\_ countries took part in the first Eurovision competition.
  - (A) Five
  - (B) Seven
  - (C) Fifteen
  - (D) Twenty-six
5. The first step leading up to the competition is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) performers travel to the hosting country
  - (B) the semifinals take place
  - (C) audiences and judges vote
  - (D) each country has a national competition

Quick Check continued on following page



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

6. The Grand Final is \_\_\_\_\_ the semifinals.  
Ⓐ after  
Ⓑ before  
Ⓒ during  
Ⓓ instead of
7. People in the audience \_\_\_\_\_ vote for their own country's performers.  
Ⓐ can  
Ⓑ cannot  
Ⓒ only  
Ⓓ sometimes
8. The country that wins the Eurovision contest \_\_\_\_\_.  
Ⓐ gets to perform first the next year  
Ⓑ cannot perform the following year  
Ⓒ gets to vote for their country the next year  
Ⓓ will host the competition next year
9. What is the main idea of the section "Eurofever"?  
Ⓐ Fans enjoy voting from the comfort of their home.  
Ⓑ Fans love how over-the-top the Eurovision Song Contest can be.  
Ⓒ The first winner of the Eurovision was a Swiss woman named Lys Assia.  
Ⓓ The winners of the Eurovision contest are not always the most interesting acts.