

# Bob Dylan

*In this lesson, you will read a short biography about a famous American singer-songwriter. You'll learn some new vocabulary and discuss some famous lyrics.*

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is your favourite kind of music?  
Who is your favourite singer?
2. What makes a singer popular?  
(List at least four different factors.)
3. Have you heard of Bob Dylan?  
Do you know any of his songs?
4. Why do you think many famous actors and performers change their names? How do you think they choose their new names?
5. When did the Vietnam War take place?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

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

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| ___ 1. famous     | a) to try something new   |
| ___ 2. switch     | b) to put in a position or place  |
| ___ 3. album      | c) to travel from one place to another                                    |
| ___ 4. protest    | d) a stage of development, a period of time                               |
| ___ 5. injustice  | e) to change from one to another  |
| ___ 6. gain       | f) a collection of songs  |
| ___ 7. fan        | g) to show, to demonstrate  |
| ___ 8. experiment | h) well-known   |
| ___ 9. upset      | i) religion   |
| ___ 10. classic   | j) showing disagreement, an event where people gather to oppose something |
| ___ 11. tour      | k) a supporter, an admirer  |
| ___ 12. reflect   | l) having a high quality or value   |
| ___ 13. faith     | m) to get, to win   |
| ___ 14. phase     | n) to bother, to make angry   |
| ___ 15. induct    | o) unfairness   |

## Reading

1. Bob Dylan is an American singer-songwriter who has written many **famous** folk and rock songs.
2. Dylan was born Robert Allen Zimmerman in Duluth, Minnesota, on May 24, 1941. In high school, he started his own rock bands. At university, he **switched** to folk music and took the name “Dylan” after the poet, Dylan Thomas.
3. In 1960, Dylan went to New York City. He wrote folk songs and sang in folk clubs and coffee houses. He recorded his first **album** in 1962. His next two albums, in 1963, made him the most popular singer-songwriter of the 1960s **protest** movement. People were protesting the Vietnam War and issues like racial **injustice**.
4. In 1963, he became involved with Joan Baez, a famous folksinger. For two years, he wrote many of the songs she sang. He also performed at her concerts and **gained** new **fans**.
5. In 1964, Dylan began **experimenting** with different kinds of music. His 1964 album was more personal and less about protest. In 1965, he started to use an electric guitar, which **upset** some of his fans. His 1965 album included the now-famous rock **classic** “Like a Rolling Stone.” A 1969 album was based on country music.
6. In 1973, he acted in a movie and wrote the music for it. The next year, he **toured** with his band and made his first number one album.
7. In 1977, Dylan and his wife divorced. In 1979, Dylan became a born-again Christian and his next album **reflected** his new **faith**. This musical **phase** lasted only a few years. In the 1980s, he began touring again and released several successful albums. In 1989, he was **inducted** into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
8. Dylan continues to write songs and perform. His 1997 rock album *Time Out of Mind* is one of his most popular albums. He has won several Grammy Awards and an Academy Award for Best Original Song for the 2000 movie *Wonder Boys*. In 2016, Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize in Literature.

*“I was born very far from where I’m supposed to be, and so I’m on my way home.”*

—Bob Dylan

## Comprehension

### A. True or False?

Read the statements below.

If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence.

If it is false, write F and correct the information.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Bob Dylan started his first rock band in New York City.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Dylan started playing folk music when he was in university.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Dylan supported the Vietnam War.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Dylan's religious music lasted many years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Dylan won an Academy Award for his acting.

### B. Ask and Answer

Practise asking and answering the following questions with your partner.

Then write your answers in complete sentences in your notebook.

1. What was Bob Dylan's name at birth? How did he choose his new name?
2. What kind of music did Dylan write in the 1960s?
3. How did Dylan's involvement with Joan Baez affect his career?
4. How did Dylan's fans react when he started to use an electric guitar?
5. What caused Dylan's music to change in the late 1970s and early 1980s?
6. List four different kinds of music Dylan has written and performed throughout his career.
7. In what way was Dylan recognized for his work in 1989?
8. In which movie did Dylan win an Academy Award for Best Original Song?

## Vocabulary Review

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.  
You may need to change the word forms.

1. Last year we went to Mexico. Next summer we plan to \_\_\_\_\_ Europe.
2. Many people attended the \_\_\_\_\_ at city hall about the government's increase in taxes.
3. He is going through a very difficult \_\_\_\_\_ right now, but that is quite normal for many teenagers.
4. Many famous hockey players have been \_\_\_\_\_ into the Sports Hall of Fame.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ in the stadium shouted loudly and happily when their soccer team won the final game.

## Discussion

1. Why do you think Bob Dylan became so popular in the 1960s?
2. Do you think popular songwriters always have good voices?
3. Listen to some of Bob Dylan's songs. Do you like his voice?
4. Bob Dylan has been a popular singer-songwriter for over 40 years. What other singers and bands have remained popular for so long?
5. Listen to Bob Dylan's famous song "Blowin' in the Wind" and discuss the lyrics with your classmates. (You can find the lyrics on the Internet.)