

The four judges must agree on who will win the four awards in the important Global Music Awards. But there is a problem. They must all agree on each winner. If they can't all agree, nobody will win.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercise.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. to fix
2. an award
3. a critic
4. to pretend
5. to applaud
6. tension
7. to cheer
8. global

Definition

- a. somebody who writes about music, films, art, books, etc.
- b. to give loud shouts to encourage someone
- c. to arrange a competition, race, election, etc. dishonestly to make sure a particular person wins
- d. money or a prize given to someone to officially recognise something they have done
- e. relating to the whole world
- f. to behave as if something is true when you know it is not
- g. to clap to show enjoyment of something you have seen or heard
- h. a feeling of fear or anger between people

The fix

The four judges have been sitting in a small room in the Milton Hotel in London for three hours now. The judges must agree on who will win the four awards in the important Global Music Awards: Best Album, Best Song, Best New Band and Lifetime Achievement Award. Outside the small room where the judges are, five hundred people are sitting waiting. They are all very excited and they are all very nervous. They want to know who is going to win the important awards. The television show goes live in 30 minutes. Excitement is growing; tension is rising. But there is a problem. A big problem. The judges have not yet agreed on one single thing. The judges must all agree on each winner. If they can't all agree, then the award will not be given – nobody will win.

The four judges are David Froth, the music critic for an important newspaper, Betty Weill, the head of a big record company, Jake Dangerous, a singer who won the award for best song

last year and Dan Snaith. Dan Snaith isn't an important person. Dan Snaith is a reader of *New Music Weekly*, a music magazine. He won a competition in the magazine to be one of the judges of the Global Music Awards.

'OK, guys, come on ... we have to decide now,' says David Froth. 'We can't wait any more. Best Album – I vote for the Polar Gorillas' first album. Their punk-influenced sound and intelligent lyrics make them the best band around.'

'I agree,' says Betty Weill. 'But they're all very young – we can give them the Best New Band award, then we can give the Best Album award to Janie Waller. Her album, *Smooth As Chocolate*, is a great jazz–pop crossover.'

'It's already sold a million copies,' says Jake Dangerous.

'Exactly!' says Betty.

'No!' says Jake. 'It's already sold a million copies, so she doesn't need an award! The Best Album should go to Missy Queen. Her album *Girlz* is the best hip hop record in years.'

'Hmm ... it's certainly an impressive record,' says David Froth, 'but I think there's only one really great track on it – the song "Hey! You! Listen Up!"'

'We can give her Best Song then!' says Jake.

'OK, now we're getting somewhere. We're finally making progress,' says David Froth. 'What about Lifetime Achievement? Remember, this is a really important award. It's recognition for a singer who has changed the course of popular music!'

'I think Jake Dangerous should win,' says Jake Dangerous. Nobody listens to him.

'Dan – what do you think?' asks David Froth.

Dan says nothing. He was very excited about being a judge for the Global Music Awards, but now he is disappointed. Dan knows that David Froth wants the Polar Gorillas to win because he was the first person to write about them – he 'discovered' them, and so when they become very famous, Froth will take the credit. Betty Weill wants Janie Waller to win because Janie Waller releases records for her record company. If Janie Waller wins, her record will sell even more copies and Betty Weill will become even richer. Jake Dangerous wants Missy Queen to win because Missy Queen is his girlfriend. Dan is disappointed because now he knows that the Global Music Awards are, in fact, a fix.

'Look, our time is up!' says Froth. 'Can we agree on this: Best Album, Janie Waller; Best Song, Missy Queen; Best New Band, Polar Gorillas? Lifetime Achievement ... OK, Dan, we'll leave this up to you. But remember – Dylan Roberts is in the audience tonight, so is Jack Michaelson, and Nobbo from X5. I don't have to tell you that Dylan Roberts is the voice of a generation, Jack Michaelson is very, very rich, and Nobbo from X5 is bringing peace to the world. He's also a friend of the Secretary General of the United Nations. The choice is yours!'

The judges walk out onto the stage in the Milton Hotel. Five hundred excited, nervous people are watching them. Five hundred cameras flash when they go on stage. Dan feels very scared. He also knows that millions of people around the world are watching on TV.

The judges all stand up on the stage and pretend to open envelopes.

'And the winner is ...,' they all say. There is a moment of silence then lots and lots of really loud applause as the judges read out the names of their friends.

Then it is Dan's turn.

'OK, everyone,' says David Froth. 'Are we having a good time?!' Everyone shouts and claps. 'Finally, we arrive at perhaps the most important award this evening: the Lifetime Achievement Award. Who will win this year? Will it be Dylan Roberts, voice of a generation? Or Jack Michaelson? Erm ... dancer of a generation. Or Nobbo, bringer of world peace? To present the award, here is Dan Snaith, winner of the *New Music Weekly* competition.' Five hundred people applaud and shout. Five hundred cameras flash again in Dan's face. Millions of people are watching him on TV.

Dan gets up nervously and stands in front of the microphone.

'Good evening!' he says. He opens an envelope which has a piece of paper in it. Nothing is written on the piece of paper. He says the words, '... and the winner is ...' He stops and pauses. There is total silence in the room.

'The winner is ... you!'

There is more total silence in the room. A few people say, 'What???'

'That's right!' continues Dan, feeling more confident now. 'You!' He looks directly into the TV cameras. 'All the people around the world who listen to music and play music and love music! You are the most important people!'

There is the sound of surprise in the big room. Dan sees Dylan Roberts, Jack Michaelson and Nobbo leave the room.

'These awards,' Dan continues, 'are a fix! The music business is a fix! If nobody listened to or bought the music, there would be no winners here tonight. That is why YOU are the winners!'

Some people cheer and applaud, some people say, 'Boooo!'

But tonight, Dan Snaith knows that he has won too.

Chris Rose

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
1. The judges can't agree on who should win.	True	False
2. The judges are all important people in the music business.	True	False
3. Jake Dangerous wants his girlfriend to win an award.	True	False
4. Dan is disappointed because the Global Music Awards are a fix.	True	False
5. Dan can decide the Best Album winner.	True	False
6. Dan gives the award to himself.	True	False
7. The important people are happy with Dan's decision.	True	False
8. Dan thinks he has done the right thing.	True	False

Discussion

What did you think of this story? Do you think award ceremonies like this are often fixed?

Answers

Preparation task

1. c
2. d
3. a
4. f
5. g
6. h
7. b
8. e

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. False
6. False
7. False
8. True