

# Speed Reading About Music—Poi

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## ***Poi E*, a 'One Hit Wonder'**

This is a song that talks about poi. Poi are balls with weights in them that Māori performers swing around them in different patterns. The Māori are the native people of New Zealand, and poi performances often include singing and dancing by a group of performers. If you hear the song “Poi E,” it will be hard to get it out of your head because the beat and tune act like a hook. The song is entirely in the Māori language, but everyone in New Zealand knows what poi are.



New Zealand was controlled by the British in the first part of the 1800s. As is often the case with colonization, the native people and their culture were not valued by the colonists. By 1860, the Māori language was a minority language, and by 1980 fewer than 20% of Māori people spoke it as a native language.

In an effort to provide Māori people with pride in their language and culture, a musician named Dalvanus Prime worked with a language specialist to make this song. The Māori club in Dalvanus' hometown practiced the song and recorded it in 1983. However, the radio stations didn't play it much. People only heard about *Poi E* when there was a news story on TV about it; then the song became popular. So popular, in fact, that the members of the Patea Māori Club were invited to perform at several places in London, including for the Queen of England.

There is a music video of *Poi E* which begins with performers in traditional Māori dress singing and dancing with poi in front of their marae, or meeting house. The video also includes images of popular culture from the 1980s, such as a dancer doing a Michael Jackson-like moon walk and break dance. The video includes sounds from video games that were popular at the time—all of this helped attract young people to the Māori culture. Having 'their song' be such a hit gave these people renewed pride in their language and culture.

*Poi E* is sometimes called a 'one hit wonder' because the singers weren't known before they recorded this song, and they didn't have any more well-known songs afterwards. However, this song has remained popular because it has been used in TV advertisements and popular movies. It even became the subject of a 2016 movie, “*Poi E: The Story of Our Song*.”

(400 words)

Time \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Questions

### 2. *Poi E*, a 'One Hit Wonder'

1. Poi are
  - a. balls
  - b. birds
  - c. food
2. The Māori are
  - a. natives of England
  - b. natives of New Zealand
  - c. natives of London
3. The song *Poi E* is sung in
  - a. English
  - b. Polynesian
  - c. Māori
4. The British colonists generally
  - a. respected the Māori
  - b. didn't respect the Māori
  - c. learned to speak the Māori language
5. By 1980, the Māori language was spoken as a native language
  - a. by all New Zealanders
  - b. by only half of Māori people
  - c. by fewer than 20% of Māori people
6. *Poi E* was written by
  - a. Dalvanus Prime
  - b. a Māori language specialist
  - c. Dalvanus Prime and a Māori language specialist
7. The song *Poi E* was instantly popular.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  - c. Not mentioned in the text
8. The Patea Māori Club performed their song
  - a. in New Zealand and England
  - b. in England only
  - c. in New Zealand only
9. The music video of *Poi E* shows
  - a. only traditional Māori images
  - b. only modern images
  - c. both modern and traditional images
10. *Poi E* is no longer a familiar song.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  - c. Not mentioned in the text

Speed Reading About Music—POI

Music Speed Readings—Answer Key

|        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Rdg 1  | 1. b | 2. a | 3. b | 4. b | 5. a | 6. c | 7. a | 8. c | 9. b | 10. c |
| Rdg 2  | 1. a | 2. b | 3. c | 4. b | 5. c | 6. c | 7. b | 8. a | 9. c | 10. b |
| Rdg 3  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 4  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 5  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 6  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 7  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 8  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 9  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 10 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 11 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 12 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 13 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 14 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 15 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 16 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 17 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 18 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 19 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |
| Rdg 20 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |       |