

Bohemian Rhapsody

Production	UK/USA, 2018	(Best picture <i>Oscar</i> ® nomination)
Written by	Anthony McCarten	
Based on	The story by Anthony McCarten & Peter Morgan	
Directed by	Bryan Singer	
Genre	Biopic (of the singer/songwriter Freddie Mercury)	
Characters	Freddie Mercury/Farrokh Bulsara (Rami Malek)	(<i>Oscar</i> ®)
	Brian May (Gwilym Lee)	
	John Deacon (Joe Mazzello)	
	Roger Taylor (Ben Hardy)	
	Mary Austin (Lucy Boynton)	
	Ray Foster (Mike Myers)	
	Jim <i>Miami</i> Beach (Tom Hollander)	
	John Reid (Aidan Gillen)	
	Jer Bulsara (Meneka Das)	
	Bomi Bulsara (Ace Bhatti)	
	Kashmira Bulsara (Priya Blackburn)	

SCENE 1 **Becoming Queen**

1970. London. Design student FARROKH BULSARA works as a baggage handler at Heathrow Airport. Born in Zanzibar (now part of Tanzania), he is a member of the Parsee community, Muslims who were driven out of Persia and then India. This gives him a different perspective. He's sometimes insulted as a *Paki* to which he calmly responds that he is not from Pakistan. *Smile* is a struggling band he occasionally watches at a local pub. They are on the point of breaking up after losing their lead singer. The guitarist and astrophysics student BRIAN MAY and

the drummer and dental student ROGER TAYLOR need something or someone to pull them out of the doldrums. FARROKH, or as he now calls himself, FREDDIE can do that.

DVD timings | **Chapter:** 03 | **Start:** 0.07:25 | **Finish:** 0.13:12 | **Length:** 05:47 |
| **Chapter:** 03 | **Start:** 0.07:25 | **Finish:** 0.09:11 | **Length:** 01:46 |

Themes

- Being a member of a minority
- Being in a rock band
- Being stylish
- Job interviews
- Meeting someone for the first time
- Music
- Performing in front of an audience
- Turning a weakness into a strength

Vocabulary

to make sense	to take risks
to be allowed	to be exotic
room for improvement	How can I help you?
May I?	What do you think?

Pre-activity Discuss: Which music do you like? Favourite groups/singers?

Gist

Questions	1.	Freddie wants to be the band's new lead singer. But what's his weakness?
	2.	How does he turn this into a strength?
	3.	Why does he get the <i>job</i> ?
Answers	1.	He has too many teeth.
	2.	His four extra incisors mean more space in his mouth and therefore more range.
	3.	• He can sing and write music.

- He's got a good voice.
- He likes the band.
- He knows the band (researched them).
- He's confident in his abilities.
- He's *exotic*!
- He turns a weakness into a strength.
- He has style and stage presence.
- He proves he can do the job.

Follow-up (1) Task Prepare for a job interview by making a list of your strengths and 2-3 weaknesses. Can you (like Freddie) turn these weaknesses into strengths? Exchange with neighbour.

Follow-up (2) Task A task connected to the topic: **JOB INTERVIEWS.**

SCENE 2 **Becoming Freddie Mercury**

For his birthday FREDDIE invites the band and his new girlfriend MARY and her family to his home. There is tension in the air: his father is not happy with the direction he has taken.

DVD timings | **Chapter:** 05 | **Start:** 0.16:57 | **Finish:** 0.20:10 | **Length:** 03:13 |
 | **Chapter:** 05 | **Start:** 0.16:57 | **Finish:** 0.21:11 | **Length:** 04:14 |

Themes

- Being a member of a minority
- Disagreements
- Families
- Father-Son
- Getting good news
- Intercultural communication
- Music

Sign language and lip reading

Traditions

Vocabulary	to read lips	to make an impression
	to make conversation	to belong (=be part of)
	to be unruly	to be subtle
	a misfit	an outcast
	a stage name	a boarding school
	an announcement	persecution
	an A&R man (artists and repertoire/=talent scout)	

Pre-activity Discuss: What do you do that your parents don't like?

Gist	Question	What do you find out about Freddie Mercury?
	Answer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• His real name is Farrokh.• He was born in Zanzibar.• His family are Indian Parsee, Muslims who had to flee Persia then India.• His family were forced to leave Zanzibar.• He was a good boxer.• It's his birthday.• He's changed his name to Freddie Mercury.• He was sent to boarding school.• He was wild and unruly.• He's a misfit.

Follow-up (1) Speaking Freddie Mercury had a colourful background and family history. Below are five milestones in his early life.

1946 Born in Zanzibar, an island lying off Africa in the Indian Ocean.

- 1952** Sister Karishma born in Zanzibar.
- 1954** Sent to boarding school in India.
- 1963** Returned to Zanzibar after it gained independence from Britain.
- 1964** A revolution in which 17,000 are killed overthrows the island's Arab elite. His family are forced to leave their home. They move to London.

Write down five milestones (important events) in your life up until now. Tell your neighbour your life story so far.

- Follow-up (2)** **Writing** Taking your milestones from **Follow-up (1)** write a **COMPOSITION** briefly summarising your life so far.
- Follow-up (3)** **Speaking** Do you come from a big family? How many siblings, cousins do you have? Have you met all your family? What do/did your parents and grandparents do? Where are they from? How many generations back do you know about? What's your family story?
- Follow-up (4)** **Task** Draw a family tree of what you know about your family. Explain it to your neighbour.
- Follow-up (5)** **Writing** Write a **COMPOSITION** about your family tree and what you know (and don't know) about it.
- Follow-up (6)** **Speaking** Freddie Mercury's family were in a dilemma. His father was against him becoming a musician but he wanted nothing else. Think of another example of a dilemma faced by a

family. What are the two opposing positions of this dilemma? Take one of the positions and try to convince your neighbour that you are right. You should not compromise.

SCENE 3 **Before Bohemian Rhapsody**

1975. QUEEN is about to write one of the great songs in pop music: *Bohemian Rhapsody*. But it's going to be different. Can they get the money people interested in taking a risk?

DVD timings | **Chapter:** 07 | **Start:** 0.28:37 | **Finish:** 0.32:06 | **Length:** 03:29 |

Themes

- Being inspired
- Business
- Creativity
- Meetings
- Music
- Taking risks

Vocabulary

to save (e.g. a seat)	to stick with
to regret	pathos
wit	a risk
an echo	a formula (=do in a set way)
What do you think?	

Pre-activity Brainstorm: *Music genres*.

Gist

Question	Which two music genres are mentioned?
Answer	Opera and rock and roll.

Follow-up (1) **Speaking** *Fortune favours the bold*. This was a saying mentioned in the scene. Do you agree? Why? Why not? Are

you a risk-taker? What risks have you taken?

Follow-up (2) **Writing** Write a **COMPOSITION** on **Follow-up (1)**.

Follow-up (3) **Writing** Choose two music genres. Write a **COMPARE/CONTRAST ESSAY**. It should have this structure.

COMPARE/CONTRAST ESSAY	
• Paragraph 1	Introduction. The two music genres
• Paragraph 2	Similarities
• Paragraph 3	Differences
• Paragraph 4	Conclusion

SCENE 4 **After Bohemian Rhapsody**

QUEEN has written *Bohemian Rhapsody*, one of the great songs in pop music. But it's very different. Can they keep the money people interested in taking a risk?

DVD timings | **Chapter: 09** | **Start: 0.37:32** | **Finish: 0.43:31** | **Length: 05:59** |
| **Chapter: 09** | **Start: 0.41:13** | **Finish: 0.43:31** | **Length: 02:18** |

Themes

- Business
- Creativity
- Disagreements
- Meetings
- Music
- Recording an album
- Taking risks

Vocabulary

to wear out (e.g. tape)	to release (e.g. a record)
to be overschedule	to be catchy

to be expensive to be epic
a masterpiece a poem
poetry sales
Period (=no more discussion)

Pre-activity Discuss: What's a favourite piece of music or song you like?
Who's it by? Why do you like it? Can you sing/hum it?

Gist Question What's the problem with *Bohemian Rhapsody*?
Answer At six minutes it's too long for radio.

Follow-up (1) **Listening** Find a song you like. Listen to it 3-5 times and
write as many of the lyrics down as you can. Check against the
actual lyrics on the internet.

Follow-up (2) **Task** Choose a song you like. Find the lyrics on the
internet. Pick out any interesting use of English you find. What
do the lyrics mean? Anything you don't understand? Present.
Introduce the song. Who's it by? Who wrote it? When? What do
you think it means? What don't you understand? Can anyone
clarify any questions you have about the lyrics?

Follow-up (3) **Task** Find the lyrics on the internet of a song you like.
Prepare a gap-fill task of your lyrics for the class. Present.

Follow-up (4) **Speaking** What genre of music do you like best? Do you
have a favourite band or singer? What about a favourite album
they have recorded? Their best song? Where are they from?
Biographical details. Why do you like them? Present.

Follow-up (5) Writing Write a newspaper **ARTICLE** on **Follow-up (4)**.
Include some of the elements below.

ARTICLE

- **Eye-catching title.** Get the reader's interest
- **Strong first paragraph.** Hold reader's interest
- **Address the reader directly** (*you*). Ask them questions
- Include unusual, **curious information**
- **Be specific.** Avoid general comments
- **Direct quotes** from people when necessary
- **Finish interestingly.** Your opinion?

SCENE 5 What's the lyric?

QUEEN writes a song for performing live.

DVD timings | **Chapter:** 13 | **Start:** 1.03:45 | **Finish:** 1.06:50 | **Length:** 03:05 |

Themes
Creativity
Music
Rock concerts
Songwriting

Vocabulary None

Pre-activity None

Gist None

Follow-up (1) Music **Bohemian Rhapsody (Scene 4/Follow-up 1-5).**