

# Bohemian Rhapsody

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<b>Production</b>	UK/USA, 2018	(Best picture <i>Oscar</i> ® nomination)
<b>Written by</b>	Anthony McCarten	
<b>Based on</b>	The story by Anthony McCarten & Peter Morgan	
<b>Directed by</b>	Bryan Singer	
<b>Genre</b>	Biopic (of the singer/songwriter Freddie Mercury)	
<b>Characters</b>	Freddie Mercury/Farrokh Bulsara (Rami Malek) 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)	( <i>Oscar</i> ®)

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## 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.

- 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.

<b>Follow-up (1)</b>	<b>Task</b>	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.
<b>Follow-up (2)</b>	<b>Task</b>	A task connected to the topic: <b>JOB INTERVIEWS</b> .

## 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.

<b>DVD timings</b>	<b>Chapter: 05   Start: 0.16:57   Finish: 0.20:10   Length: 03:13  </b>
	<b>Chapter: 05   Start: 0.16:57   Finish: 0.21:11   Length: 04:14  </b>

<b>Themes</b>	Being a member of a minority  Disagreements  Families  Father-Son  Getting good news  Intercultural communication  Music
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Sign language and lip reading

Traditions

<b>Vocabulary</b>	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?

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

**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.

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## 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).**