

Britannica Podcast Series

BOTANIZE!

Study Guide

From parasitic plants to kelp forests, Botanize! – the popular podcast series from Britannica – aims to showcase some of Earth’s finest nonanimal life-forms and their brilliant ecologies.

Our editors talk to experts about some of the world’s most remarkable plants, fungi and algae. These overlooked organisms have fascinating evolutionary stories to tell about survival, exploitation, adaptation and general scrappiness.

Now you can use this fantastic podcast for learning at home! The following activities will help kids and teens better understand and engage with the contents of the podcast.

▶ Why use Podcasts for Learning?

A podcast, according to Robert Rozema, is “a blog in audio form.” It is a form of oral storytelling and is a great educational tool for a bunch of reasons:

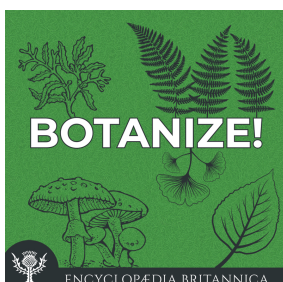
Authentic Voice: Podcasts provide examples of how people really talk, with real conversations, interviews and speech.

Diversity: Podcasts demonstrate a variety of languages, accents and cultures.

Convenient: You can listen anywhere and anytime as long as you have access to the Internet.

Interesting: Podcasts are engaging, their format is designed to be interesting and entertaining for the curious minded learner.

Improve Speaking: Listening activities like a podcast improve student listening skills.



🔊 Tune into Botanize! on Britannica Library

The full Botanize! series is available for free on Britannica Library. Search "Botanize" from the Adults Level or use the link below.

library.eonline.com/levels/adults/article/Botanize/632107

Introduction

Play an episode of the podcast “Botanize!”. These tasks can be repeated for any episode. Using listening skills discuss the following:

- What is the episode about? What is the main idea?
- Who is speaking/being interviewed?
- What is the subject or topic being talked about?
- What parts of the podcast were interesting? Boring? Why?
- How is it structured? What do the podcasters do at the beginning, at the end and between transitions?
- How does the podcaster build the story or argument?
- Are there any sound effects, music, and other tools used? If so, for what effect?
- What questions do you have as a result of listening?

Task 1

Listen to the episode again and take notes.

- What aspects of the podcast did you enjoy?
- What aspects would you avoid?

On large pieces of paper, using coloured markers, draw, write keywords, link ideas, make connections about key themes and techniques used during the podcast. etc.

Task 2

Discuss “How would you respond to the podcaster?” Use ideas gathered from discussions to write a letter to the podcaster.

Task 3

Have you ever created your own podcast? Now is your chance to give it a go. Think about the techniques you identified in Task 1. Some themes for a podcast include;

- An audio tour of a local tourist attraction
- Talking about a tradition or culture
- A news broadcast about a current event
- Hosting a debate
- Interview with a guest about an interesting topic
- An audio review for a book, movie or performance etc.

Some things to consider before recording:

- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the purpose of the podcast? Is it to entertain, inform or persuade?
- What name can you give to the podcast? Think of something catchy and witty to grab your listeners' attention
- How long will it run for? Keep in mind your audience and purpose
- It is worth drafting a script, practicing and reading it aloud, several times. Then make appropriate edits before you begin recording. This will make the world of difference to your familiarity with the topic and your voice animation and expression
- Try recording shorter portions of audio and then editing snippets together
- Would the addition of music and sound effects improve the podcast?