



HISTORY OF THE BBC

You are going to listen to a radio programme called “Company History”. In this edition, the subject is the BBC. Complete the exercises below. Try not to read the text until you have completed the exercises. Remember, you can listen as many times as you need to, so don’t worry if it seems difficult to understand when you listen for the first time.

I. BEFORE YOU LISTEN.

Match the words in A with the definitions in B. Use a dictionary to check your answers.

A	B
wireless	to send out programmes on television or radio
coronation	electrical equipment for watching television
radio set	electrical equipment for listening to the radio
television set	old-fashioned word for radio
pioneer	computer file containing sound, such as music
to broadcast	official ceremony for a new king or queen
mp3	first person to develop a new idea



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2. LISTEN TO THE RECORDING.

Decide if the statements below are true (T) or false (F)

	T	F
The BBC was formed by a group of radio manufacturers.	—	—
The BBC broadcast for the first time in October 1922.	—	—
The World Service was originally called the Empire Service.	—	—
BBC television was used to inform the public of developments during the Second World War.	—	—
BBC radio became less popular during the 1960s.	—	—
Advances in modern technology have influenced the way people receive news and entertainment.	—	—



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3. LISTEN AGAIN.

Complete the BBC data file with the correct months, years and numbers. Sometimes you need the month and the year. Sometimes only the year is given.

Month / Year		Event
October	:	British Broadcasting Company formed. It started broadcasting from a London studio in of this year.
.....	:	BBC renamed the British Broadcasting Corporation.
May	: people watched the coronation of King George VI.
1953	: million people watched the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.
.....	:	Start of regular colour television broadcasts.



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4. LISTEN AGAIN.

Match the decade in A with the events in B.

A	B
1950s	Popularity of BBC radio increased with the introduction of FM radio.
1960s	Digital television and the Internet arrived in people's homes.
1980s	The television age arrived.
1990s	Satellite television and video recorders became popular.

5. LISTEN AND READ.

Listen again to the interview and read the text to check your answers to the questions above.

A History of the BBC

- A.** In this week's edition of "Company History", Freddy Cambell tells us the history of the BBC.
- B.** The BBC is known all over the world as a broadcaster which informs, educates and entertains. An institution as British as cricket and afternoon tea. But how much do we know about its origins?



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Well, the British Broadcasting Company, as it was first called, was formed in October 1922 by a group of wireless manufacturers, led by radio pioneer Marconi. Its primary objective was to sell radio sets and it first began broadcasting from Marconi's London studio in November 1922.

By 1925, it was possible to hear the BBC in most parts of the UK. However, the BBC which we know today was the vision of a man called John Reith. Reith wanted the BBC to broadcast to the nation without political or commercial pressure. In 1927 the BBC was renamed the British Broadcasting Corporation and from its new studios in Broadcasting House, London, the BBC started to broadcast to the world through its Empire Service. The Empire Service was later to become the World Service we all know today.

Between 1936 and 1939, the BBC provided regular television service and in May 1937 an estimated 10 thousand people watched the coronation of King George VI. During this time, British people could also watch major sporting events such as the Wimbledon tennis final and the F.A. cup football final on their television sets.

The BBC television service closed for the duration of the Second World War. The population was informed of developments in the war through regular radio broadcasts.

During the 1950s the age of television truly arrived. A large increase in the number of people owning TV sets meant that the coronation for Britain's next monarch, Queen Elizabeth 2, had a TV audience of 22 million people.

However, popularity of BBC radio also continued to grow, especially during the 1960s when audiences could listen to the Beatles, Rolling Stones and many other pop groups on a superior FM radio.



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Another significant event in the 1960s was the start of regular colour TV broadcasts in 1967.

In recent decades, rapid advances in technology have been a major influence on the BBC. Video recorders and the start of satellite television in the 1980s, digital television and the Internet in the 1990s and more recent advances such as mobile phone technology, and mp3 have all influenced the way people receive their news and entertainment. Despite all the changes, however, the BBC continues to be a name people respect and trust across the entire world.