



The Beatles

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Some of the greatest **bands** of all time are British. Although there are hundreds to choose from, we've selected what we believe is the greatest British band of all time, *The Beatles*.

To learn about the story of The Beatles, we need to travel back to 1958 when a 16-year-old John Lennon, a 16-year-old Paul McCartney and a 15-year-old George Harrison were playing together in a band as friends under the name *Johnny and the Moondogs*. They played a few gigs whenever they could but finding a drummer was difficult. In 1959, they eventually teamed up with Stuart Sutcliffe and started playing as a four piece band using the name *Beatals*. They changed this to *Silver Beetles* then *Silver Beatles* and finally settled on *The Beatles*.

The Beatles got a residency in Hamburg in 1960 and hired a full-time drummer (Pete Best). They travelled from their home city of Liverpool to Hamburg and played in various clubs and bars there. For a couple of years the musicians travelled between the countries until they contracted Brian Epstein as their manager and got a recording contract at EMI. In 1962 they started recording at EMI's studios, the infamous Abbey Road **Studios**. It was decided that Best would be replaced with a new drummer, Ringo Starr. Together, they started recording *Love Me Do*, which reached number seventeen in the UK **charts**. They went on to record *Please Please Me* a few months later and this propelled them to the forefront of the music industry.



After this, the Beatles recorded **singles** and **albums** and were achieving number ones, left, right and centre. They started touring the UK, giving birth to what was called “Beatlemania” (i.e. screaming fans) and then they **toured** abroad.

Their music wasn’t played in the USA until 1963 due to American **record labels’** refusal. Their debut **song** in America was *I Want To Hold Your Hand* and it was soon passed between radio stations. It was so popular they even brought forward the release of the album.

In February 1964, The Beatles visited the US for the first time. The press coverage was mostly negative upon their landing being a British band trying to break America. They performed live on the Ed Sullivan **Show** and went on to perform live **concerts** in Washington D.C and New York and became mega-**hits** in the US.

In the mid-1960’s, The Beatles decided to stop touring and returned to recording singles in the studios. This resulted in the successful release of *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which was a new and experimental style of music and sound. By 1968, the band expanded into new areas, including peace activism and education, all whilst regularly releasing new albums. They created their own corporation, *Apple Corps*, but this started to pull the band apart. It is said that Lennon and McCartney were spending millions on these projects, leaving Starr so angry that he quit the band for two weeks. Tensions started to rise between Lennon and McCartney. They were unhappy with each others’ girlfriends and were frustrated at the other’s songwriting. This was the start of the band’s **break-up**. In 1970, the **stars** went their separate ways, each recording as **soloists**.

After working as soloists for many years, Lennon was sadly shot and killed in New York in 1980 and the remaining **members** of The Beatles came together to re-record a single.

The band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1980 and their music has been played and sung around the world ever since. In 2001 George Harrison died of lung cancer, but Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr still live to this day.

It’s fair to say The Beatles were successful **musicians**, but in the UK they represented so much more. They were the faces of the younger generation who were rebellious and looking for a change. Their haircuts and their clothes were rebellious for their time. They took to using marijuana and LSD to “open their minds”. They drove forward social initiatives, such as refusing to play at white-only

locations during the time of racial segregation. And they were some of the few non-military/civil worker citizens to receive an MBE from Queen Elizabeth II.

Their music is loved not only in the UK but around the world and Starr and McCartney continue to contribute significantly to the music industry.

