Ed Sheeran tour loses support acts

LEVEL B2


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I. WARM-UP

1. When should musicians speak about politics at concerts?
2. What would make you stop supporting a show or tour?
3. Have you ever signed a petition? Why or why not?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

promoter
a company or person who organises and finances a concert or tour

line-up
the list of performers scheduled for a show or tour

venue
the place where a concert or event happens

petition
a formal request that many people sign to ask for a change

setlist
the songs a performer plans to play at a concert

sanctuary
a safe place where people feel protected

advocate
a person who publicly supports a cause or change

condemn
to say that something is wrong or unacceptable

III. READING

Every remaining support act quit Ed Sheeran's US tour once Macklemore was dropped from the line-up over pro-Palestinian remarks. Finneas, Irish singer-songwriter Aaron Rowe, Danish band Lukas Graham, and Irish folk group Beoga all pulled out.

Sheeran said on Instagram that the decision was made by the promoter, Messina Touring Group, not by him. He added that he would not enter a public debate on Gaza, though he is appalled by the conflict and wants peace.

He said his shows should be a sanctuary for fans of all backgrounds, and that there are different ways to be an advocate for change. He also noted that Macklemore, like all support acts, could choose his own setlist.

The dispute began on 4 September at MetLife Stadium, New Jersey, where Macklemore said "Free Palestine" and performed Hind's Hall, a song that condemns Israel's military action in Gaza. Jewish groups criticised the performance, some venues pressed promoters to act, and the Israeli American Council launched a petition.

In response, Sheeran said he had tried to "build a bridge" with venues, but the promoters ultimately removed Macklemore.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: "All support acts on Ed Sheeran's US tour quit...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did the support acts quit Ed Sheeran's US tour?
2. Who did Sheeran say decided to drop Macklemore?
3. What role does Sheeran say his concerts should play for fans?
4. Where and when did the dispute begin?
5. What actions did groups take after Macklemore's performance?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should artists use concerts to speak about political issues? Why?
2. Was the promoter right to remove Macklemore from the line-up?
3. What do fans expect from arena shows: escape, debate, or both?
4. When is quitting a tour an effective form of protest?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Relative clauses (non-defining)

Non-defining relative clauses add extra information about a person or thing and are separated by commas. Use who/which/whose (not that) for these clauses.

*"A support act, **who had expressed support for a cause**, left the stage."*

*"The promoter, **who made the final decision**, removed Macklemore."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Macklemore, (who / whose) remarks caused the row, was dropped. _____
2. Macklemore, (who / that) performed at MetLife Stadium, faced backlash. _____
3. Aaron Rowe, (that / who) is an Irish singer, also pulled out. _____
4. Sheeran, (who / that) wants peace, avoided a public debate. _____
5. MetLife Stadium, (that / which) is in New Jersey, held the show. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or concept-check key terms (promoter, line-up, petition, sanctuary) and names (Macklemore, Finneas, Lukas Graham) to reduce cognitive load.
- Run the reading quickly for gist, then scan for who quit and why. Sensitivity: the story involves the Israel–Palestine conflict; start discussion in pairs, allow students to comment on the news rather than on personal beliefs, and be ready to move on.
- Differentiation: stronger students summarise Sheeran's position in three sentences; others underline sentences that support it and paraphrase in pairs.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Start with a quick show of hands, then pair students with opposing views to exchange reasons.
2. Set up two sides and ask each to list practical consequences of the decision before sharing.
3. Elicit quick one-word answers first (escape/debate/both), then ask for one reason and one example.
4. Have students rank recent artist protests by impact, then compare methods and contexts.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In teams, prepare and deliver a 2-minute case for or against political statements at concerts.

Writing: Individually, write a 120-word statement a promoter could issue to explain the decision.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Relative clauses (non-defining)

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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These answers are for teachers only. Please do not share this page with students.


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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did the support acts quit Ed Sheeran's US tour?
   Because Macklemore was dropped over pro-Palestinian remarks.
2. Who did Sheeran say decided to drop Macklemore?
   The promoter, Messina Touring Group.
3. What role does Sheeran say his concerts should play for fans?
   A sanctuary for fans of all backgrounds.
4. Where and when did the dispute begin?
   On 4 September at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.
5. What actions did groups take after Macklemore's performance?
   Jewish groups criticised the performance, some venues pressed promoters to act, and a petition was launched.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Non-defining relative clauses add extra information about a person or thing and are separated by commas. Use who/which/whose (not that) for these clauses. (Examples constructed.)

"A support act, **who had expressed support for a cause**, *left the stage."*

"The promoter, **who made the final decision**, *removed Macklemore."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. Macklemore, (who / whose) remarks caused the row, was dropped. **whose**
2. Macklemore, (who / that) performed at MetLife Stadium, faced backlash. **who**
3. Aaron Rowe, (that / who) is an Irish singer, also pulled out. **who**
4. Sheeran, (who / that) wants peace, avoided a public debate. **who**
5. MetLife Stadium, (that / which) is in New Jersey, held the show. **which**