

## Turn On Your Brain



photo courtesy NPR

### Mini Fact:

Mindy Thomas of "WOW in the World" talks with a listener at a live event in Washington, D.C., during the August eclipse.

What's your favorite pastime? You might be a gamer, or you may love to read. You may enjoy playing sports, or television shows might capture your attention.

When your grandparents were kids, they turned on the radio for entertainment. Radio stations played not only music or sports contests, but they featured funny and dramatic series that kids would listen to each week, much like a TV show today.

Kids today are finding a whole new world in podcasts. These audio, or recorded sound, programs can be listened to on a computer or a mobile device such as a smartphone. The Mini Page discovered more about podcasts for kids and why they're becoming so popular.

### Creative listening

Think about watching your favorite cartoon on TV. You're watching a story as it's told. Now, what if you could still hear the story, but imagine all the scenes in your head? You could dream up what the characters look like, where the action is taking place — and the "cartoon in your head" would be completely different from the one imagined by every other kid who's listening to the same story.

Guy Raz, the producer and co-host with Mindy Thomas of a science podcast for kids called "WOW in the World," calls this "audio animation." He says podcasts are an animated journey without animation.



image courtesy NPR

"There are so few ways for us to absorb information," Raz said. We use all our senses to learn things: seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling and tasting. "TV is so passive," Raz went on. (Passive means it requires no action.) "Audio is active. Your brain is making pictures."

Podcasts for kids are full of action, sound effects and music. "Screens are everywhere," Raz said. "We have to create something as interesting to kids as what they see on their screens."

### Lighting up your brain

Experts say that after kids listen to podcasts, they like to talk about what they've heard. Some kids will act out a scene from a podcast; others will talk about what they learned or try to find out more about the podcast's subject.



photo courtesy verlegorg

In fact, teachers are using podcasts in school, inviting kids to listen during their lunch break and then talk about what they've heard.

"It's like finding a secret door in your house and opening it to find glimmering treasure chests," Raz says about listening to podcasts.

### A brief history

The first regularly produced podcast was launched in 2004 — only 13 years ago. Today, more than 40 percent of Americans over age 12 have listened to at least one podcast.

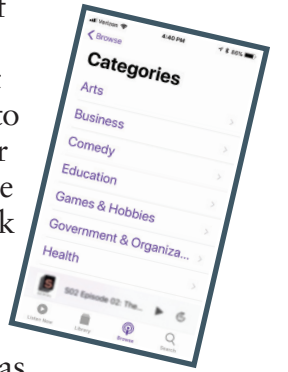
Among kids, those from 5 to 8 years old listen more than other ages, and many follow more than one podcast.

### Types of podcasts

Kids and families have many choices for listening. Some podcasts are fictional stories, with each episode being similar to a chapter in a book. Others are about science, history, art or other subjects. Humor is a big part of podcasts, too.

Parents report that children like to listen to the same episodes over and over — sort of like reading a favorite book again and again.

And your parents will probably enjoy the podcasts as much as you do! Many families listen together while dinner is being prepared or while riding in the car.



### Resources



#### On the Web:

- <https://app.kidslisten.org/search>
- [bit.ly/MPpodcasts](http://bit.ly/MPpodcasts)
- [bit.ly/MPlisten](http://bit.ly/MPlisten)

#### At the library:

- "On the Job: Podcast Producer — Multiplication" by Georgia Beth
- "12 Great Moments That Changed Radio History" by Angie Smibert

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of podcasts are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



ABSORB, ACTIVE,  
ANIMATION, AUDIO,  
BRAIN, CARTOON,  
DRAMATIC, EPISODE,  
FAMILY, FUNNY, LISTEN,  
INFORMATION, PASSIVE,  
PASTIME, PODCAST,  
PROGRAM, RADIO,  
SCIENCE, SERIES.

A N I M A T I O N N E T S I L  
R S E W R U I O P A S S I V E  
L E C F F D I E B R O S B A B  
T I N H A D P Q E D O S I P E  
S R E R U E P R O G R A M S A  
A E I A I N F O R M A T I O N  
C S C E V I T C A V Y N N U F  
D I S L D R A M A T I C C A A  
O B E M I T S A P F A M I L Y  
P B R A I N Q N O O T R A C I

## Cook's Corner

### Peanut Butter Pie

#### You'll need:

- 1 (1-ounce) package instant sugar-free, fat-free chocolate pudding mix
- 2 cups reduced-fat milk
- 2/3 cup chunky peanut butter
- 1 (9-inch) prepared graham cracker crust

- 1/2 container (4 ounces) light whipped topping
- 1/3 cup semisweet chocolate chips



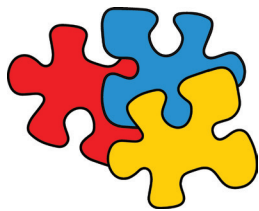
\* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

#### What to do:

1. Prepare pudding according to directions, using 2 cups reduced-fat milk. Chill in refrigerator for 5 minutes to set.
2. In a medium-size bowl, melt peanut butter in microwave on high for 30 seconds.
3. Pour melted peanut butter into graham cracker crust shell. Layer pudding over top of peanut butter and spread evenly. Place in refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours to set more firmly.
4. Spread whipped topping on top of pudding. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top. Serves 8.

## Puzzling

Unscramble the words below that remind us of learning.



- intlse \_\_\_\_\_  
edar \_\_\_\_\_  
epatre \_\_\_\_\_  
cirtpaec \_\_\_\_\_

Answers: listen, read, repeat, practice.

## Mini Jokes



**Gilbert:** Where do pencils like to go on vacation?  
**Gus:** Pencil-vania!

## Eco Note



Moisture circulates between the air, oceans and land. The water cycle is driven by the sun's energy. Heat from the sun causes moisture to rise from oceans and lakes in the form of a gas, water vapor. Moist air rises, cools and condenses to form clouds, which later release rain or snow. Some rainwater is absorbed by plants and soil, and the rest drains into rivers and lakes that empty into the ocean, completing the cycle.

adapted with permission from "50 Things You Should Know About the Environment" by Jen Green

## Thank You



The Mini Page thanks Guy Raz and Mindy Thomas, co-hosts of "WOW in the World," for help with this issue.

**Teachers:** For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: [bit.ly/MPstandards](http://bit.ly/MPstandards). And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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