

LEARN ENGLISH WITH MUSIC

Radioactive

Imagine Dragons

COMPLETE LEARNING WORKBOOK

Go beyond the song

Dystopian imagery, transformation and compact phrasal verbs.

16 verified learning cards / Level B1 / guided practice

SECTION 00

Your learning journey

Watch first, explore second, practise from memory and finish with the complete card library.

1 WATCH	Follow the official lyric video and synced cards.
2 EXPLORE	Study language, extended vocabulary, culture and sound.
3 PRACTISE	Complete the guided challenges without looking back.
4 REVIEW	Use the final 16-card library by category.

Three sources of value

Song language gives you patterns to reuse. **Extended vocabulary** helps you discuss the themes and music. **Context** helps you understand cultural references and form your own interpretation.

Lyrics on video

[Open the lyric video used for this lesson](#)

Listen, read and return to the workbook whenever you want to explore a language point in greater depth.

SECTION 01

Map the song

Decode a fictional disaster landscape as language for internal change.

STAGE	LEARNING LENS
Opening	Identify the speaker, situation and first useful pattern.
Development	Track the main contrast, image or relationship problem.
Hook	Notice how repetition changes emphasis and memory.
Late return	Retrieve earlier language under new vocal or narrative pressure.

Listening challenge

For each stage, write one word for the sound and one for the speaker's emotional position. Then explain which language choice helped create that impression.

SECTION 02

Language Lab

Move beyond the quick cards: compare structures, notice register and learn how to avoid common mistakes.

LANGUAGE POINT	GO DEEPER	USE IT WELL
wake up, wake up to and awaken	Wake up is everyday; wake up to means become aware; awaken is more formal or literary.	I woke up at seven. We must wake up to the risk.
break in, break into and break out	Break in is intransitive; break into takes a place; break out means escape or begin suddenly.	Someone broke in. They broke into the lab. A fire broke out.
adjective as identity	Be + adjective describes state or classification. Repetition can make a temporary state sound like a defining identity.	Compare I am tired with I am a tired person.
apocalypse, disaster and aftermath	Disaster is the event; apocalypse suggests world-changing destruction; aftermath is what follows.	Use aftermath for consequences, not for the destructive event itself.

SECTION 03

Extended vocabulary: go beyond the lyrics

This bonus language expands what you can say about the narrative, emotion, performance and production.

radioactive	adjective	Emitting dangerous radiation - in the song, a metaphor for waking up transformed and powerful. <i>The lab handles radioactive material under strict controls.</i>
apocalypse	noun	The end of the world; total destruction. <i>The film imagines life ten years after the apocalypse.</i>
ashes	noun	What is left after fire - the classic image of starting again. <i>The city was rebuilt from the ashes after the war.</i>
dust	noun	Dry fine powder; 'to shake the dust off' means to restart. <i>He shook the dust off his old guitar and started playing again.</i>
revolution	noun	A complete, often sudden change - political or personal. <i>The smartphone caused a revolution in how we learn languages.</i>
to wake (up)	verb	To stop sleeping - figuratively, to become aware. <i>The scandal woke the country up to the problem.</i>
bones	noun	The skeleton; 'to feel it in your bones' = to sense something deeply. <i>I feel it in my bones - this project is going to work.</i>
system	noun	An organised set of things; 'the system' often means the established order. <i>You can't change the system from the outside, she said.</i>
checkout	noun / verb	'To check out' can mean to leave - or to stop participating mentally. <i>By the last meeting of the day, half the team had checked out.</i>
prison bus	noun	A vehicle transporting prisoners - in the video's imagery, captivity before liberation. <i>The documentary opens with a prison bus crossing the desert.</i>
to breathe in	phrasal verb	To inhale - often used for absorbing an atmosphere. <i>She stood on the cliff and breathed in the sea air.</i>
anthem	noun	A song a generation adopts as its own battle cry. <i>That chorus became the anthem of every stadium that summer.</i>

SECTION 04

Idioms and expressive English

Use these additional expressions to discuss the song's situations and themes in natural English.

to wake up to something	extension	To finally realise or accept a reality. <i>Companies are waking up to the cost of ignoring climate risk.</i>
welcome to the new age	extension	A greeting into a changed world - use 'welcome to X' ironically or dramatically. <i>No cash, no keys, no paper - welcome to the new age.</i>
all systems go	extension	Everything is ready to start (borrowed from rocket launches). <i>Visas approved, bags packed - all systems go for the move.</i>
straight from the inside	extension	Coming directly from one's core, unfiltered. <i>Her speech wasn't polished, but it came straight from the inside.</i>
enough to make my systems blow	extension	Hyperbole pattern 'enough to make X + verb': so intense that something breaks. <i>The plot twist was enough to make your head spin.</i>
to rise from the ashes	extension	To come back stronger after destruction (the phoenix image behind the song). <i>The club rose from the ashes of bankruptcy to win the league.</i>

Make the language yours

Complete the exercises later in the workbook to check meaning, structure and register.

SECTION 05

Pronunciation as performance

A sung voice is not a neutral accent sample. Listen for concrete features, then compare theatrical delivery with everyday speech.

RA-di-o-AC-tive - five syllables, two peaks	The title word carries two stresses: RA-dio-AC-tive. Long English words usually keep one main and one secondary stress - find them and the word stops being scary.
The American flap T under distortion	Even through heavy production you can hear American Ts soften between vowels. Training your ear on processed vocals like these prepares you for phone calls and podcasts with imperfect audio.
Dropped G in -ing	'Waking', 'breathing' - in rock delivery the final g-sound disappears: 'wakin', 'breathin'. Standard in casual American speech too.
Whoa - the sung vowel	The long 'whoa' sections are pure vowel training: American O glides from 'w' into 'oh-uh'. Singing along is legitimate pronunciation practice.

Three-pass shadowing

1. Tap only the stressed beats.
2. Reproduce the phrase slowly and clearly.
3. Contrast a natural spoken version with the musical performance.

SECTION 06

Context and creative choices

Discover the cultural and creative decisions that shaped the song, then listen again with this context in mind.

Radioactive introduced most of the world to Imagine Dragons: a Las Vegas band whose debut album *Night Visions* (September 2012, Interscope) opened at number two on the US Billboard 200. The song mixes rock, electronic production and a dubstep-flavoured drop - a combination radio had simply not heard in 2012.

Its chart life became legend. Radioactive never reached number one - it peaked at number three on the Hot 100 - but it refused to leave: 87 weeks on the chart, the longest run in the Hot 100's history at the time (a record later beaten by The Weeknd's *Blinding Lights*). It won the 2014 Grammy for Best Rock Performance and was also nominated for Record of the Year.

It also became one of the best-selling digital songs ever, certified Diamond in the United States - more than ten million units, a club very few rock songs have entered.

Frontman Dan Reynolds has described the song as a personal battle cry about depression and waking up stronger - the apocalypse imagery is internal, not literal. That reading is exactly what the learning cards explore: ashes, dust and revolution as the vocabulary of personal change.

For learners it offers powerful, repetitive, clearly-stressed American English - and a masterclass in how English builds drama with just a handful of words.

SECTION 07

Practice zone

Complete every activity without looking back, then use the answer key to correct your work independently.

A. Extended vocabulary in context

1. Choose the best term for this meaning: *Emitting dangerous radiation - in the song, a metaphor for waking up transformed and powerful.*

radioactive / apocalypse

2. Choose the best term for this meaning: *The end of the world; total destruction.*

apocalypse / ashes

3. Choose the best term for this meaning: *What is left after fire - the classic image of starting again.*

ashes / dust

4. Choose the best term for this meaning: *Dry fine powder; 'to shake the dust off' means to restart.*

dust / revolution

5. Choose the best term for this meaning: *A complete, often sudden change - political or personal.*

revolution / to wake (up)

6. Choose the best term for this meaning: *To stop sleeping - figuratively, to become aware.*

to wake (up) / radioactive

B. Retrieve the expression

7. Which expression matches this meaning: *To finally realise or accept a reality.?*

8. Which expression matches this meaning: *A greeting into a changed world - use 'welcome to X' ironically or dramatically.?*

9. Which expression matches this meaning: *Everything is ready to start (borrowed from rocket launches).?*

10. Which expression matches this meaning: *Coming directly from one's core, unfiltered.?*

C. Accuracy check

11. Correct the form: **I listened the song carefully.**

12. Choose the careful form: **The contrast lead to a new meaning / leads to a new meaning.**

SECTION 08

Answer key

Check each answer and return to the Language Lab when a form or distinction is still unclear.

1. radioactive
2. apocalypse
3. ashes
4. dust
5. revolution
6. to wake (up)
7. to wake up to something
8. welcome to the new age
9. all systems go
10. straight from the inside
11. I listened to the song carefully
12. The contrast leads to a new meaning

Review again

Cover the answers and repeat the activities after a few days. A delayed second attempt is a better test of learning than immediate rereading.

SECTION 09

Complete 16-card library

Use this compact summary for quick revision or return to the video cue when you want to hear a point again.

Vocabulary / 4 cards

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 0:36

sweat my rust

Rust is corrosion on metal. Sweating rust is deliberately impossible bodily imagery suggesting contamination or decay.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 1:12

my system blows

System can mean the body as an interconnected whole. Blow suggests overload or explosive failure in the song's transformation metaphor.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 1:48

raise my flags

Raise means lift upward. Flags conventionally signal identity, allegiance or victory, so the image can imply declaration.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 2:51

deep in my bones

Deep intensifies the internal location. The late return confirms that the transformation is now felt as permanent.

Grammar / 4 cards

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:42

I am breathing in

The present continuous presents an action unfolding now. Breathe in is a separable movement phrasal verb without an object here.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:33

I am radioactive

Radioactive is an adjective after be. The present simple frames the condition as identity, not a temporary action.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:57

I suppose

Suppose can soften a claim, similar to I think, or introduce a hypothetical. Here it marks reflective uncertainty.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 2:42

has not died: present perfect

The present perfect connects survival in the past to the present: it has not died and remains alive now.

Idioms / 5 cards

IDIOM / VIDEO 0:30

wake up to ash and dust

Wake up means stop sleeping; wake up to can also mean become aware of a reality. Ash and dust establish a ruined world.

IDIOM / VIDEO 0:51

breaking in and checking out

Break in can mean enter by force; check out can mean leave or examine. The paired particles create motion through a hostile setting.

IDIOM / VIDEO 1:06

in my bones

Feel or know something in your bones means sense it deeply and instinctively.

IDIOM / VIDEO 2:06

fit right in

Fit in means belong socially or suit a context. Right intensifies the idea of fitting completely.

IDIOM / VIDEO 2:33

all systems go

All systems go means everything is ready to operate. It comes from launch-control language and reinforces the technological imagery.

Culture / 2 cards

CULTURE / VIDEO 1:00

the apocalypse

An apocalypse is catastrophic destruction or revelation. Pop culture often uses it to dramatise radical personal or social change.

CULTURE / VIDEO 1:21

the new age

A new age is a new historical or personal era. The chant makes transformation sound collective and unavoidable.

Pronunciation / 1 cards

PHONETICS / VIDEO 2:21

radioactive: stress pattern

Radioactive has primary stress on AC: ra-di-o-AC-tive. The chorus stretches syllables but preserves that prominence.

Keep learning

[Return to the synced learning experience.](#)