

HOT BRITANNIA

From music to movies and fashionistas, **Brit Style 2008** is setting the standard for cooler-than-cool ...

"There's such a buzz about Britain at the moment," says white-hot model Agyness Deyn in the London style weekly *Grazia*. "British music, British designers ... it's about people who are not just pretty, but are three-dimensional characters and have something to say." Agyness should know. Articles about her fill magazines from *Time* to *Tatler* – the British fashion glossy named her 2008's style queen. Deyn is only one of the outspoken, ambitious and street-smart Brit Pack, who are defining music, movies and lifestyle. Says jewellery designer Katie Hillier: "London seems to be exploding – there's something important happening here now."



THE FASHIONISTAS

Who: **Agyness Deyn**

Why hot: She's the year's most sought-after model and an overnight style icon.

Background check:

- ▶ Born: Laura Hollins, 1983, in rural Littleborough, England.
- ▶ Studied maths, business and theatre, and worked after school at a fish-and-chip shop.
- ▶ A scout from a top model agency spotted her after she won a local modelling contest.

Hot fact: She has her own band called *Lucky Knitwear*.

Quote: "Sometimes I wonder how I got here. I got lucky, I guess."

Who: **Henry Holland**

Why hot: Designer of rhyming wordplay T-shirts that poke fun at the fashion world.

Background check:

- ▶ Born in Manchester, Holland became best mates with Agyness Deyn as teenagers.
- ▶ Created cheeky T-shirts for fun, and fashionistas went wild.
- ▶ Launched the House of Holland label last year. His winning statement: vibrant tartans.

Hot fact: Holland worked as an editor for the top-selling Brit teen magazine *Bliss*.

Quote: "I call Agyness 'my muse' because she is the inspiration for the label itself."

THE ACTORS



← Who: **Emily Blunt**

Why hot: From the school play to the Golden Globe Awards in the blink of an eye, Emily Blunt is the comic star of *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006) and the upcoming regal queen in Martin Scorsese's *Young Victoria*.

Background check:

- ▶ Overcame a childhood speech defect through years of therapy – and finally learning a different accent for a school play.
- ▶ At a London performing arts college she caught the eye of a talent agent.
- ▶ Her breakout movie role: *My Summer of Love* in 2004.

Hot fact: Blunt sings background vocals on Canadian singer Michael Bublé's album *Call Me Irresponsible*. She lives with him in London and Vancouver.

Quote: "She's the best young actress I've worked with in some time, perhaps ever," says Oscar winner Meryl Streep.



Who: **Nic Hoult**

Why hot: Hoult is the 19-year-old star of the popular, edgy British TV series *Skins*, about the often-troubled lives of teenage friends growing up in Bristol.

Background check:

- ▶ Born in rural Berkshire, he's the son of a pilot and a piano teacher.
- ▶ At five, Hoult landed his first role in a film and went to stage school.
- ▶ Best-known role: *About a Boy* with Hugh Grant in 2002.

Hot fact: Hoult miraculously escaped with only a bruised head when a bus hit him during the filming of a TV stunt – the bus should have stopped inches from him.

Quote: "I don't like watching myself. I get embarrassed."



Who: **Christopher Kane**

Why hot: Hailed as one fashion's most important new stars, Kane has designed for Versace. His inspiration for his own 2007 label: early 90s' neon colours, and tailoring that reflects his Scottish roots.

Background check:

- ▶ Born in Glasgow, while at London's Central St Martins College of Art and Design his fashions made *Vogue* magazine – and grabbed the attention of Donatella Versace.
- ▶ At 25, Kane shares the spotlight with his sister and business partner Tammy.

Hot fact: Kane's collection for Britain's Topshop chain sold out within two hours of going on sale.

Quote: "People assume I've undergone this huge transformation, that my life is so glamorous. But at the end of the day it's Tammy and me, still living in our little flat in Hackney."



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THE MUSIC



Who: **Adele**

Why hot: She's the first winner of the Brit Awards Critics' Choice given to singers/songwriters before releasing an album. When Adele's debut album *19* was finally released this year, it rocketed to number one in UK charts.

Background check:

- ▶ Born in north London in 1988 to a single mum.
- ▶ Attended the Brit School – the UK's leading school for the performing arts, which has turned out stars like Amy Winehouse, Kate Nash and Leona Lewis.
- ▶ Uses her MySpace webpage to test audience reactions to new songs. Major influences: 50s and 60s' icons Ella Fitzgerald, Etta James and Dusty Springfield.

Hot fact: Full-bodied Adele claims she eats an entire chocolate cake every single day of the week!

Quote: "I'd rather 5 million people heard my music than earn £5 million."

Who: **Duffy**

Why hot: Her first single *Mercy* soared to the top of British charts – the first Welsh female singer to score a number one UK hit in 25 years. And last spring her debut album *Rockferry* won critical raves.

Background check:

- ▶ Born in 1984 in Gwynedd, Wales, Aimee Anne Duffy sang in local bands at 15.
- ▶ After school and while attending the University of Chester, she worked as a waitress.
- ▶ A music manager spotted her talent when Duffy performed in small clubs and she moved to London to begin recording.

Hot fact: She entered the Welsh version of *Pop Idol* called *Wawffactor* and finished second.

Quote: "You can't help but be amazed that such a powerful voice can come from such a little person," says London's Capital Radio.





THE PARTY PACK



Coco Sumner

The 17-year-old daughter of pop star Sting is seen everywhere on the London party circuit. But she has a budding music career with her band *I Blame Coco* and is the new face of Burberry, the trendy British fashion label.



Sam and Holly Branson

The son and daughter of billionaire Virgin founder Richard Branson may be party animals, but Holly is also a medical doctor and Sam a champion for climate change.



Pixie Geldof

The 18-year-old daughter of music entrepreneur Sir Bob Geldof is an aspiring model and always on the London scene with older sister Peaches.

Who: Mark Ronson

Why hot: In 2008, he's the first producer ever to win the Brit Awards' Best Male Artist – even though he doesn't sing on his album *Version*. He also took home three American Grammy music awards for producing Amy Winehouse's 2007 smash CD *Back to Black*.

Background check:

- ▶ Born in London in 1975, the son of a socialite writer and band manager, Ronson grew up both in the UK and New York.
- ▶ Played in rock bands since high school, and became the celebrity DJ on New York's club circuit.
- ▶ Produced songs and albums for many hip-hop stars, as well as Christina Aguilera, Lily Allen and Robbie Williams.

Hot fact: Ronson played DJ at Tom Cruise's 2006 wedding to Katie Holmes for a reported £40,000!

Quote: "Ronson has made a career out of a mash-up of Sixties soul music and contemporary rock," says London's *The Independent*.

Match It

The article contains some strongly emotive language. Match the underlined words in A with less emotive words in B.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 London seems to be <u>exploding</u> 2 fashionistas went <u>wild</u> 3 Hoults <u>miraculously</u> escaped 4 it <u>rocketed</u> to number one 5 Amy Winehouse's 2007 <u>smash</u> CD | <p>B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) went very quickly b) got excited c) very successful d) changing excitedly e) luckily |
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Answers → Page 27

* WORDWISE

- three-dimensional (adj):** complex, fully expressive
- glossy (n):** a usually stylish magazine, printed on shiny paper
- scout (n):** a person sent out to look for new things or information
- wordplay (n):** using words imaginatively
- defect (n):** flaw, imperfection
- edgy (adj):** strange or stylish in a new exciting way
- transformation (n):** complete change
- circuit (n):** places, like a club, regularly visited by people
- mash-up (n, informal):** mixture



Now go to page 26 for a language activity