

## Chapter 1 : Pronunciation Books

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Before the Compact Cassette[ edit ] Wollensak portable reel-to-reel tape recorder Cassettes of varying tape quality and playing time. One of the first portable cassette recorders from Philips, the Typ EL In , decades before the introduction of the Compact Cassette, AEG released the first reel-to-reel tape recorder in German: It was based on the invention of the magnetic tape by Fritz Pfleumer , which used similar technology but with open reels for which the tape was manufactured by BASF. These instruments were very expensive and relatively difficult to use and were therefore used mostly by professionals in radio stations and recording studios. In , following four years of development, RCA Victor introduced the stereo, quarter-inch, reversible, reel-to-reel RCA tape cartridge. Despite the multiple versions, it failed. Consumer use of magnetic tape machines only took off in the early s, after playback machines reached a comfortable, user-friendly design. This was achieved primarily by the introduction of transistors which replaced the bulky, fragile, and costly vacuum tubes of earlier designs. Reel-to-reel tape then became more suitable to household use, but still remained an esoteric product. Introduction of the Compact Cassette[ edit ] In , Philips invented the Compact Cassette medium for audio storage , introducing it in Europe on 30 August at the Berlin Radio Show , [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16] [17] and in the United States under the Norelco brand in November , with the trademark name Compact Cassette. By over , recorders had been sold in the US alone and Japan soon became the major source of recorders. By , 85 manufacturers had sold over 2. The initial offering consisted of 49 titles. Some early models also had an unreliable mechanical design. In , the Advent Corporation introduced their Model tape deck that combined Dolby type B noise reduction and chromium IV oxide CrO2 tape, with a commercial-grade tape transport mechanism supplied by the Wollensak camera division of 3M Corporation. This resulted in the format being taken more seriously for musical use, and started the era of high fidelity cassettes and players. To prevent this, retailers would place cassettes inside oversized "spaghetti box" containers or locked display cases , either of which would significantly inhibit browsing, thus reducing cassette sales. Their durability and ease of copying helped bring underground rock and punk music behind the Iron Curtain , creating a foothold for Western culture among the younger generations. One of the most famous political uses of cassette tapes was the dissemination of sermons by the Ayatollah Khomeini throughout Iran before the Iranian Revolution , in which Khomeini urged the overthrow of the regime of the Shah , Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Cassette technology was a booming market for pop music in India , drawing criticism from conservatives while at the same time creating a huge market for legitimate recording companies, as well as pirated tapes. A designer during the era explained: Until , cassettes remained the dominant medium for purchasing and listening to music in some developing countries , but compact disc CD technology had superseded the Compact Cassette in the vast majority of music markets throughout the world by this time. This was particularly noticeable with pre-recorded cassettes, the sales of which were overtaken by those of CDs during the early s. Since then, further decline occurred, with very few retailers stocking them because they are no longer issued by the major music labels. However, as of [update] , blank cassettes were still being produced and are still sold at some retail stores, while facilities for cassette duplication remain available. Cassette recorders and players are gradually becoming more scarce, but are still available and featured in some hi-fi systems. Cassettes and their players were typically more rugged and resistant to dust, heat, and shocks than the main digital competitor, the CD. However, the advent of "shock proof" buffering technology in CD players, the general heightening of consumer expectations, and the introduction of CD auto-changers meant that, by the early s, the CD player rapidly replaced the cassette player as the default audio component in the majority of new vehicles in Europe and America. Audiobooks , church services, and other spoken word material are still frequently sold on cassette, as lower fidelity generally is not a drawback for such content[ citation needed ] , and some people prefer the convenience of the tape controls for rewinding to

repeat a missed passage. Although portable digital recorders are most common today, analog tape remains a desirable option for certain artists and consumers. Even among major label stars, the form has its devotees: Eminem has made his favor known, [41] and Thurston Moore claimed in , "I only listen to cassettes. In , retail chain Urban Outfitters , which had long carried Vinyl LPs , started carrying a line of new pre-recorded cassette tapes along with blank cassettes and players [56] featuring both new and vintage albums. Since , cassette tape sales have seen a modest resurgence, with , and all showing increased sales. Unlike the 4-track stereo open-reel format, the two stereo tracks of each side lie adjacent to each other, rather than being interleaved with the tracks of the other side. This permitted monaural cassette players to play stereo recordings "summed" as mono tracks and permitted stereo players to play mono recordings through both speakers. The tape is 0. In stereo, each track is further divided into a left and a right channel of 0. Cassette types[ edit ] Notches on the top surface of the Compact Cassette indicate its type. The rear-most cassette at the top of this picture, with only write-protect notches here covered by write-protect tabs , is Type I, its tape consisting of iron oxide. The next cassette down, with additional notches adjacent to the write-protect tabs, is Type II, its tape consisting of chrome and cobalt. The bottom two cassettes, featuring the Type II notches plus an additional pair in the middle of the cassette, are Type IV metal ; note the removal of the tabs on the second of these, meaning the tape is write-protected. Cassette tapes are made of a polyester type plastic film with a magnetic coating. The original magnetic material was based on gamma ferric oxide Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>. Circa , 3M Company developed a cobalt volume-doping process combined with a double-coating technique to enhance overall tape output levels. This product was marketed as "High Energy" under its Scotch brand of recording tapes. For this reason, some low-grade IEC Type I tapes have been marketed specifically as better suited for data storage than for sound recording. At about the same time,[ when? Cobalt -absorbed iron oxide Avilyn was introduced by TDK in and proved very successful. The tape coating on most cassettes sold today as either "normal" or "chrome" consists of ferric oxide and cobalt mixed in varying ratios and using various processes ; there are very few cassettes on the market that use a pure CrO<sub>2</sub> coating. Newer tape decks usually are built with switches and later detectors for the different bias and equalization requirements for higher grade tapes. The recording bias levels also were different. The quality normally is reflected in the price; Type I cassettes generally are the cheapest, and Type IV are usually the most expensive. BASF chrome tape used in commercially pre-recorded cassettes used type I equalization to allow greater high-frequency dynamic range for better sound quality, but the greater selling point for the music labels was that the Type I cassette shell could be used for both ferric and for chrome music cassettes. Notches on top of the cassette shell indicate the type of tape. Type I cassettes have only write-protect notches, Type II have an additional pair next to the write protection ones, and Type IV metal have a third set near the middle of the top of the cassette shell. These allow later cassette decks to detect the tape type automatically and select the proper bias and equalization. Virtually all recent hi-fi systems with cassette decks lack this feature; only a small niche of cassette decks hi-fi separates have the tape type selector. Playing Type II and IV tapes on a player without detection will produce exaggerated treble, but it may not be noticeable because such devices typically have amplifiers that lack extended high-frequency output. Recording on these units, however, results in very low sound reproduction, and sometimes distortion and noise is heard. Also, these cheaper units cannot erase high bias or metal bias tapes. Attempting to do so will result in an incomplete erasure. This is due to the fact that the bias levels for high and metal position require greater levels. An exception to this standard were mechanical storytelling dolls from the s e. Tape length[ edit ] Tape length usually is measured in minutes of total playing time. The most popular varieties are C46 23 minutes per side , C60 30 minutes per side , C90, and C The C46 and C60 lengths typically are 15 to 16 micrometers 0. BASF declared the C60 with 88 meters feet. Even C tapes were available at one time, but these were extremely thin and fragile and suffered from such effects as print-through , which made them unsuitable for general use. Although the TDK-D C was produced for a decade 82 , [65] it is very rare, because of several technical flaws. The tape had to be so thin that it was nearly transparent and therefore had fewer particles to magnetize, resulting in a poor sound quality and even worse durability. It required a strong motor to be driven, and had high wow-and-flutter. Finally, it took a relatively long time to rewind. Except for C74 and C, such non-standard lengths always have been hard to find, and tend to be more

expensive than the more popular lengths. Home taping enthusiasts may have found certain lengths useful for fitting an album neatly on one or both sides of a tape. For instance, the initial maximum playback time of Compact Discs was 74 minutes, explaining the relative popularity of C74 cassettes. Inside a cassette showing the leader at the beginning of side A. The tape "plays" from left to right though, of course, an auto-reverse deck can play in either direction. The tape is pressed into close contact with the read-head by the pressure pad; guide rollers help keep the tape in the correct position. Smooth running is assisted by a slippery liner slip sheet between the spools and the shell; here the liner is transparent. The magnetic shield reduces pickup of stray signals by the heads of the player. The tab at the top-left corner of the shell permits recording on the current side. Track width[ edit ] The full tape width is 3. For mono recording the track width is 1. In stereo mode each channel has width of 0. Without a gap the head would produce a "closed" magnetic field and so would not interact sufficiently with the magnetic domains on the tape. A narrower gap would give a higher frequency limit but also weaker magnetization. A narrower gap width makes it harder to magnetize the tape, but is less important to the frequency range during recording than during playback, so a two-head solution can be applied: Separate record and playback heads were already a standard feature of more expensive reel-to-reel tape machines when cassettes were introduced, but their application to cassette recorders had to wait until demand developed for higher quality reproduction, and for sufficiently small heads to be produced. Write-protection[ edit ] All cassettes include a write protection mechanism to prevent re-recording and accidental erasure of important material. Each side of the cassette has a plastic tab on the top that may be broken off, leaving a small indentation in the shell. This indentation allows the entry of a sensing lever that prevents the operation of the recording function when the cassette is inserted into a cassette deck. If the cassette is held with one of the labels facing the user and the tape opening at the bottom, the write-protect tab for the corresponding side is at the top-left. Occasionally, manufacturers provided a movable panel that could be used to enable or disable write-protect on tapes. If later required, a piece of adhesive tape can be placed over the indentation to bypass the protection, or on some decks , the lever can be manually depressed to record on a protected tape. Extra care is required to avoid covering the additional indents on high bias or metal bias tape cassettes adjacent to the write-protect tabs. Tape leaders[ edit ] In most cassettes, the magnetic tape is attached to each spool with a leader, usually made of strong plastic. This leader protected the weaker magnetic tape from the shock occurring when the tape reached the end. Leaders can be complex:

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