1980s Music Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which Michael Jackson album earned the 1984 Grammy for Album of the Year?

A. Thriller
B. Off the Wall
C. Bad
D. Dangerous

Correct answer: A. Thriller
The Recording Academy lists Thriller as Album of the Year at the 1984 Grammys. The album had been released in 1982.

2. Which 1984 Prince and the Revolution album accompanied a film of the same name?

A. Sign o’ the Times
B. 1999
C. Purple Rain
D. Around the World in a Day

Correct answer: C. Purple Rain
Purple Rain was the album released alongside the 1984 film. It carried the Prince and the Revolution credit.

3. Which album was Cyndi Lauper’s 1983 solo debut?

A. True Colors
B. She’s So Unusual
C. A Night to Remember
D. Hat Full of Stars

Correct answer: B. She’s So Unusual
She’s So Unusual was Lauper’s first solo album. It included ‘Girls Just Want to Have Fun’ and ‘Time After Time.’

4. Which 1986 Bon Jovi album included ‘Livin’ on a Prayer’?

A. Keep the Faith
B. New Jersey
C. 7800° Fahrenheit
D. Slippery When Wet

Correct answer: D. Slippery When Wet
‘Livin’ on a Prayer’ was on Slippery When Wet, Bon Jovi’s third studio album.

5. Who wrote ‘9 to 5,’ the song awarded Best Country Song at the 1982 Grammys?

A. Loretta Lynn
B. Dolly Parton
C. Rosanne Cash
D. Reba McEntire

Correct answer: B. Dolly Parton
The Recording Academy credits Dolly Parton as the songwriter for ‘9 to 5.’ The award recognized her songwriting.

6. Where did a-ha’s ‘Take On Me’ peak on the Official UK Singles Chart during its 1985 run?

A. Number 2
B. Number 1
C. Number 4
D. Number 10

Correct answer: A. Number 2
Official Charts shows the single reaching Number 2 on the chart dated October 26, 1985. It held that peak for three weeks.

7. Which Tina Turner single appears on the original 1984 album Private Dancer?

A. I Don’t Wanna Fight
B. The Best
C. Typical Male
D. What’s Love Got to Do with It

Correct answer: D. What’s Love Got to Do with It
The original Private Dancer track list includes ‘What’s Love Got to Do with It.’ That single appeared in 1984.

8. Run-D.M.C.’s 1986 recording of ‘Walk This Way’ featured Steven Tyler and Joe Perry. Which band were they from?

A. Van Halen
B. Def Leppard
C. Aerosmith
D. Mötley Crüe

Correct answer: C. Aerosmith
Tyler and Perry came from Aerosmith, the band that originally recorded the song. They contributed to Run-D.M.C.’s version on Raising Hell.

9. U2’s 1987 album The Joshua Tree lists which pair under its main production credit?

A. Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno
B. Steve Lillywhite and Flood
C. Trevor Horn and Hugh Padgham
D. Bob Clearmountain and Tony Visconti

Correct answer: A. Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno
U2’s album credits name Daniel Lanois and Brian Eno as producers. The Recording Academy also lists both as the album’s producers.

10. The 1989 Grammy archive lists both Tracy Chapman and her recording ‘Fast Car.’ Which pair matches her artist award and the award for that recording?

A. Album of the Year and Song of the Year
B. Best New Artist and Record of the Year
C. Album of the Year and Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female
D. Best New Artist and Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female

Correct answer: D. Best New Artist and Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female
Chapman won Best New Artist. The Academy lists ‘Fast Car’ as her winning recording in Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female.

11. A fictional discography puts Whitney Houston’s 1987 album Whitney in the debut slot because its title is her first name. Which correction fits the release history?

A. Whitney and Whitney Houston were two titles for the same 1987 release.
B. Whitney was her debut, and Whitney Houston was her second album.
C. Whitney Houston was her debut, and Whitney was her second album.
D. Whitney was her first live album, and Whitney Houston was her second.

Correct answer: C. Whitney Houston was her debut, and Whitney was her second album.
The artist’s discography identifies Whitney as her second studio album. Whitney Houston was the title of her debut.

12. An archive essay traces De La Soul’s demo recordings into sessions for 3 Feet High and Rising. Which DJ and producer worked with the group on the debut album?

A. Jam Master Jay
B. Prince Paul
C. Marley Marl
D. Rick Rubin

Correct answer: B. Prince Paul
Prince Paul worked with De La Soul from its demo sessions through production of 3 Feet High and Rising, released in 1989.

13. A fictional catalog entry puts Michael Wagener in the producer field for Metallica’s Master of Puppets. Which correction matches the band’s credits?

A. Michael Wagener and Flemming Rasmussen are both credited with mixing, and Metallica alone with production.
B. Michael Wagener and Metallica are credited with production, and Flemming Rasmussen with mixing.
C. Flemming Rasmussen is credited with mixing, and Michael Wagener with mastering.
D. Metallica and Flemming Rasmussen are credited with production, and Michael Wagener with mixing.

Correct answer: D. Metallica and Flemming Rasmussen are credited with production, and Michael Wagener with mixing.
Metallica’s credits name the band and Flemming Rasmussen as producers. Michael Wagener is listed as the mixer.

14. A fictional exhibit label says Bruce Springsteen’s home recordings for Nebraska stayed on a private demo tape. Which correction best reflects how the 1982 album was made?

A. The home recordings originally made as demos became the basis of the released album.
B. The album came entirely from a live concert, and the demo tape was made afterward.
C. The demos appeared only on a later live album under another title.
D. The original release used only new full-band studio recordings of the songs.

Correct answer: A. The home recordings originally made as demos became the basis of the released album.
Springsteen recorded the songs at home on a four-track cassette recorder and originally intended them as demos. Those home recordings became the basis of Nebraska.

15. A fictional label says Kate Bush first topped the Official UK Singles Chart with ‘Running Up That Hill’ in its original 1985 release. Which revision fits the archive?

A. It reached Number 1 in both 1985 and 2022.
B. It reached Number 1 in 1985 and peaked at Number 3 in 2022.
C. It peaked at Number 3 in 1985 and reached Number 1 in 2022.
D. It peaked at Number 3 in both 1985 and 2022.

Correct answer: C. It peaked at Number 3 in 1985 and reached Number 1 in 2022.
Official Charts gives a 1985 peak of Number 3. The song returned to the UK chart in 2022 and reached Number 1.