

Composition

Building

Blocks

Booklet

Name _____

Class _____

This booklet is all about helping you consolidate your musical understanding and expand your creativity as a composer.

The Listening and Composition elements of National 5 total 50% of the course so it is worth putting in some effort to develop your skills in these areas!

Try to do the activities to the best of your ability – there are links to help you if you get stuck.

Triple B

What do you think a piece of music should contain to make it successful?

Where can you find inspiration?

1 Most Important Tip!!!!

When writing your music PLEASE don't be afraid of experimenting with RHYTHM, MELODY and HARMONY. They are what make music great!

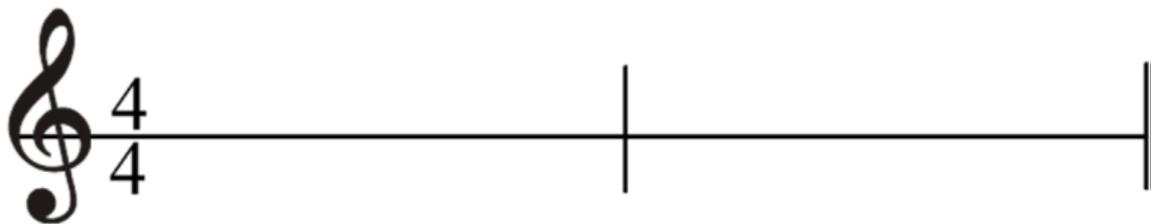
RHYTHM

- **Rhythm** is about the timing of notes that are played.
- **Rhythms** can be varied in many different ways and add interest and excitement to the music.
- Remember the **rhythm** in the music from Jaws. How did it portray what happens in the film? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BX3bN5YeiQs>

Try to clap these rhythms. You can make up some silly sentences to help clap them in time if you like. Write them underneath e.g.

I don't rea-lly like to drink tea

Make up your own silly rhythm sentence and see if you can notate it here:



Remember there are four beats in the bar so it must add up to four.

Reminder

Notes	Name		Value
	Semibreve	Whole note	4 beats
	Minim	Half note	2 beats
	Crotchet	Quarter note	1 beat
	Quaver	Eighth note	½ beat
	Semi-quaver	Sixteenth note	¼ beat
	2 Quavers	2 Eighth notes	1 beat
	4 Semi-quavers	4 Sixteenth notes	1 beat

Syncopated rhythms are rhythms that fall between the main beat. They are jazzy and quirky and add interest and excitement to a piece. They are really good when used in Jazz style pieces. Let's try to clap these rhythms in groups.

Group 1
I like me lons I like ba na nas

Group 2
Te-qui-la Te-qui-la Te-qui-la Te-qui-la Te-

Group 3
Get a cat get a dog get a fish and a frog Get a

Group 4
On the beat please On the beat please

What does the sign at the end mean? 

Now write down the meaning of these **tempo** words. Look them up [here](#) if you are unsure.

Allegro _____

Accelerando _____

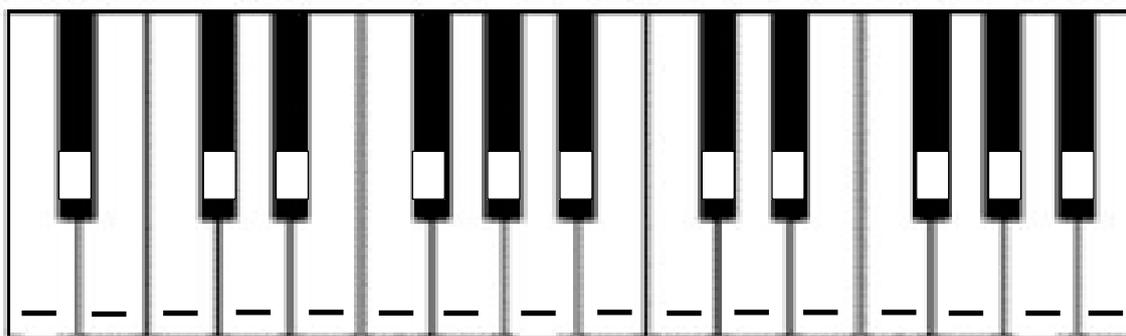
Moderato _____

Rallentando _____

Adagio _____

MELODY

Once we have established our rhythms, we need to think about adding pitch. Write all of the notes on the keyboard below including #s and bs.



Use this [link](#) if you are unsure. Change the tab to English notation and the notes will appear!

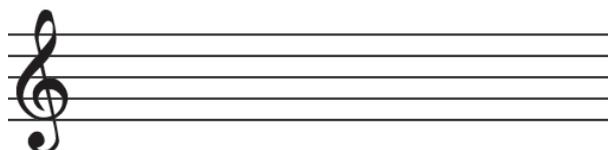
Now let's write out the notes of a C major scale, starting on **middle C**. Write the note names underneath.

Reminder



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vi25BFJy5x8>

This is a C major scale. Watch [this](#) wee clip if you need help with this.



Now play around with the notes of the scale till you find an order that sounds good. Write it down using the rhythm you created for your silly sentence. If you can, make two of your silly sentence melodies, and turn them into **Question and Answer**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCWsNo1QbJg>

Question



Answer



Remember you can also use **repetition** and sequence to develop a melody.

Repetition _____

Sequence _____

HARMONY

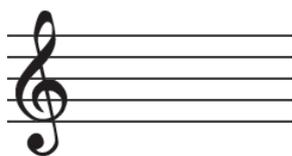
Once we have a melody, we can begin to layer up the harmony using chords. We can be as adventurous as possible here to create interesting and different sounds.

A basic chord has a **root**, **3rd** and **5th** and is known as a **triad**.

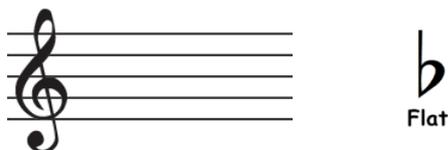


Let's draw the triad of C **major** below. Start on middle C.

<https://www.musictheoryacademy.com/understanding-music/triads/>



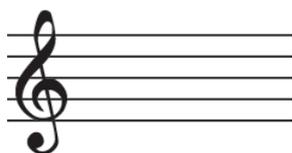
Now let's flatten the 3rd note to create the triad of C **minor**:



Chords also do not need to sound 'nice' together all the time. Sometimes the composer will deliberately use **clusters** or **dissonance** to make the music sound a certain way (unpleasant, needing to resolve to something nicer).

E.g. F, F# + G all played at the same time to sound scary.

Write your own **discord** below:



Now let's look at **cadences**. **Cadences** are like the punctuation for your **Question and Answer** phrases. They can sound finished, or unfinished.

A **perfect cadence** is formed by the progression:

Chord 5 (V) to chord 1 (I).

It always sounds **finished**.

E.g. G to C



An **imperfect cadence** is formed by the progression:

Any chord to chord 5 (V).

It always sounds **unfinished**.

E.g. C to G



Watch this for some examples. Can you hear the difference?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeRMOBj5Q5s>

There are many different ways to write **accompaniment** for the harmonies you choose. You could write a **broken chord**, **arpeggio**, **vamp**...or make your own!

Reminder



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EY-hJ9WZ6lk> (That's a good one you should def watch)

Write the note names under each of these example accompaniments and copy bar 1 into bar 2. In the fourth example, try to make your own using the notes of C major.

Broken Chord

Piano

4/4

Arpeggio

Piano

4/4

Vamp

Piano

4/4

MYO

Piano

4/4

Rhythm, Melody, and Harmony are three of the main elements of music. However, as composers we should also consider:

STRUCTURE

Imagine how disappointing it would be to read a book that has no clear plot line. Music is similar to writing in that the best compositions have a clear **structure/form**. Write out the meanings of these concepts. Use <https://mymusiconline.co.uk/a-z-concepts> if you get stuck.

Ostinato/Riff _____

Pedal _____

Binary _____

Ternary _____

Rondo _____

DYNAMICS

You should be familiar with **dynamics** from playing your instruments. Practise each of the different dynamics and then write their meanings below:

Pianissimo (pp) _____

Piano (p) _____

Mezzo piano (mp) _____

Mezzo forte (mf) _____

Forte (f) _____

Fortissimo (ff) _____

Crescendo (<) _____

Diminuendo (>) _____

TIMBRE

Timbre is about the choice of the instruments used eg. String quartet, brass band, glockenspiel to sound spooky, timpani rolls to sound like thunder.

It can also be used to describe different playing techniques.

Please complete the following:

The orchestra has four families of instruments. They are _____

Some instruments in each section are:

--	--	--	--

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0Jc4sP0BEE&t=10s>

Now write the meaning of the following **playing techniques**. Use

<https://mymusiconline.co.uk/a-z-concepts> if you get stuck.

Arco _____

Pizzicato _____

Legato _____

Staccato _____

Glissando _____

Con sordino _____

Flutter tonguing _____

A Cappella _____

Distortion _____

Varying the elements of music can really help tell a story in your music and provide purpose for your piece.



Listen to '[Harry Potter – Hedwig's Theme](#)' by John Williams and answer these questions:

- Describe the use of **timbre** in the piece

- How are the **instrument choices** effective? What do they convey?

- What **playing techniques/concepts** can you hear?

- Is this piece **major** or **minor**?



Listen to the music from '[Star Wars](#)' now:

- Is this piece **major** or **minor**?

- Why has the composer chosen that **tonality** do you think?

- What **instruments** can you hear?

- Describe any **concepts** you can hear in the piece. What do they convey?



Let's stay with the music of John Williams and listen to the theme from ['Indiana Jones'](#):

- How would you describe the **melody** of this piece?

- How is it effective in creating theme music for an Action/Adventure film?

- What **structure** concept can you hear being played by the **timpani**?

- What **playing techniques/concepts** can you hear?



Let's listen to a [TV theme tune](#) now:

- Could you have guessed what type of show this is just by listening to the music?

- Why?

- What **concepts** can you hear?

- Describe the use of **timbre** in the piece

Hopefully this booklet has been of some use showing you some more possibilities in composing your own music. Remember you always have it to refer back to for inspiration or guidance!

If you are stuck for ideas, start with one or two of the concepts covered in here as a starting point.



Be as adventurous as you can when you start to compose and get whatever ideas you have onto a page. They can always be adapted at a later point if they are not exactly right the first time.

Composition is all about **experimenting** with what you like!

Good luck!

