

Understanding Music

HIGHER

REVISION

Booklet



Helpful Websites

Type the following into Google and click the first result:

NQMUSIC

Also try: www.musictheoryrevision.com

[Learn Listening Online](#) and [Music Listening Revision](#)

Nat 3-5 Concept Revision

Homophonic – **Texture** - all parts move at same time or melody with accompaniment – same rhythms at the same time.

Polyphonic – **Texture** 2 or more parts with different rhythms - weave independently of each other. Like **Contrapuntal**

Legato – Notes played long and smooth

Staccato – Notes played short and detached

Ostinato/Riff - Repeated pattern of notes

Sequence – Pattern of notes repeated higher or lower

Repetition – Musical idea heard more than once - repeated.

Imitation – The melody is immediately copied in another part.

Unison – Same notes at the same time.

Harmony – Different notes at the same time.

Anacrusis – Tune starts before the first beat of the bar. Think “happy” in happy birthday.

Syncopation – Strongly accented notes playing off or against the beat. Will sound more jumpy.

Symphony – Piece for **whole orchestra**, no main solo instrument.

Concerto – Piece for **soloist** and orchestra

Cadenza – passage for soloist to show off, sounds made up – improvised.

A capella – Unaccompanied – no accompanying instruments.

Melismatic – **More than one** note per syllable. eg. Hee-eee-loooo

Syllabic – **One** note per syllable.

Scat Singing - Made up nonsense words, Jazz or popular music.

Major – Happy, positive sounding.

Minor – Sad, scary, tense sounding.

Atonal – Not major or minor – uses dissonance – doesn't sound nice.

Forms - **Binary** – 2 sections – A & B **Ternary** – 3 sections A B A

Rondo – Lots of sections with A repeated eg. A – B – A – C – A – D

Theme & Variations – Main theme is played and then changed in a different way for each variation.

Broken chord – Notes of the chord played separately.

Vamp – Boom cha accompaniment. Bass note then chord.

Simple time – Each beat splits into 2 equal parts – TAN-GO

Compound time – Each beat splits into 3 equal parts – JIGG-I-TY.

Pedal – **Low** note held on or repeated while other parts change.

Inverted Pedal - **High** note held on/repeated while other parts change.

Modulation – Change of key.

Distortion - electronic effect used in rock music to give an electric guitar a fuzzy sound rather than a clean sound.

Pitch Bend - changing the pitch of a note, for example by pushing a guitar string upwards.

Types of Bass

Alberti bass - Broken chords played by the left hand on the piano. Low - high – middle – high.

Walking Bass – Notes move on every beat. (jazz)

Ground Bass - A theme in the bass which is repeated many times while the higher parts change.

Voices – Highest to lowest

Soprano

Mezzo Soprano } FEMALE

Alto



Tenor

Baritone } MALE

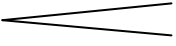
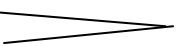
Bass

SATB = A term for a choir consisting of Soprano, Alto, Tenor & Bass

N3-5 Musical Groups / STYLES

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| <u>Orchestra</u> | - | Strings, Brass, Woodwind, Percussion |
| <u>Brass Band</u> | - | Brass & Percussion |
| <u>Wind Band</u> | - | Brass, Woodwind, Percussion |
| <u>Folk Group</u> | - | Fiddle, Guitar, Vocals, Accordion, Whistle, Bass, Flute, Drum kit, Bodhran |
| <u>Scottish dance band</u> | - | fiddle, accordion, piano, drums. |
| <u>Celtic Rock</u> | - | Mixes folk music with rock music. |
| <u>Reggae</u> | - | Off beat guitar, vocals, drums, organ, bass. |
| <u>Impressionist</u> | - | Sounds dreamy or blurry. Whole tone scale. |
| <u>Minimalist</u> | - | Simple and repetitive ostinatos. |
| <u>Ragtime</u> | - | Piano. Syncopated melody & vamp accomp. |
| <u>Blues</u> | - | Jazz style, developed from black American folk songs. Tells a story. Flattened notes. |
| <u>Swing</u> | - | A jazz style performed by a big band. |
| <u>African Music</u> | - | Music featuring voices and/or African drums. |
| <u>Latin American</u> | - | Dance music from South America, very rhythmical and lively with lots of percussion. |

DYNAMICS (volume)

| Dynamic | Italian | English meaning |
|----------------|--|--------------------------|
| <i>pp</i> | <i>Pianissimo</i> | very quiet |
| <i>p</i> | <i>Piano</i> | quiet |
| <i>mp</i> | <i>Mezzo-piano</i> | moderately quiet |
| <i>mf</i> | <i>Mezzo-forte</i> | moderately loud |
| <i>f</i> | <i>Forte</i> | loudly |
| <i>ff</i> | <i>Fortissimo</i> | very loudly |
| <i>cresc.</i> | <i>Crescendo</i>  | Gradually getting louder |
| <i>dim.</i> | <i>Diminuendo</i>  | Gradually getting softer |

TEMPOS/SPEEDS

| Tempo | Meaning |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <u><i>Allegro</i></u> | <u>Fast</u> |
| <u><i>Moderato</i></u> | <u>Moderate tempo</u> |
| <u><i>Andante</i></u> | <u>Walking Pace</u> |
| <u><i>Adagio</i></u> | <u>Slow</u> |
| <i>Accelerando</i> | getting faster |
| <i>Rallentando</i> | getting slower |
| <i>Rubato</i> | robbed time – speeding up or slowing down to suit the mood of the piece. |

Instruments & Related Concepts

Strings

Violin
Viola
Cello
Double Bass
Harp / Clarsach

Concepts/Playing Technique

Arco - Bowed
Pizzicato - Plucked

Woodwind

Piccolo
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet
Bassoon

Saxophone
(not in orchestra)

Blown - Air is blown through
instrument to produce sound

Flutter Tonguing - Rolling your Rs while
blowing a note.

Brass

Trumpet
French Horn
Trombone
Tuba

Con Sordino - Muted - creating a different
sound than normally.
expected.

Percussion

Tuned Percussion

Xylophone(wooden)
Glockenspiel(metal)
Vibraphone
Timpani (kettle drum)
Tubular Bells

Untuned Percussion

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| Snare Drum | Bodhran |
| Drum-kit | Bongo Drums |
| Cow Bell | Guiro |
| Bass Drum | Castanets |
| Cymbals | Tambourine |
| Triangle | |

HIGHER CONCEPTS

Medieval Period (500–1400)

Music mainly for the church (sacred), mainly vocal music as not a lot of instruments invented yet.

Plainchant – Monks singing Latin text - unaccompanied – unison - no regular metre (set beats in a bar) the chant follows the natural rhythm of the text.

Mode/Modal – Not major or minor – also used in Jazz and pop music.

Renaissance (1400 – 1600) & Baroque Periods (1600 – 1760)

Non-religious (secular) music began to flourish, in particular instrumental music. Harpsichord (Basso Continuo) and Organ are now prominent. Polyphonic texture & lots of string instruments. Complex, flowing melody lines weaving independently.

Basso Continuo - Harpsichord and Cello playing bass line and harmonies/chords

Concerto - Music for **soloist** accompanied by an **ORCHESTRA**

Concerto Grosso – Piece for Small Group Of Soloists (Concertino) and Orchestra (Ripieno)

Concertino – Small group of soloists in Concerto Grosso

Ripieno – Accompanying Orchestra in Concerto Grosso

Ritornello – Section of music which returns again and again.

Passacaglia – Variations over a ground bass.

Obbligato – A prominent solo instrument part in a piece of vocal music.

Da Capo Aria - Aria (solo song) in ternary form (ABA) – repeats first section with added embellishments.

Mass – sacred choral work, Latin text, polyphonic texture (further developed in the classical period)

Oratorio - a story from the Bible set to music for soloists, chorus and orchestra. Religious version of opera - includes recitatives, arias and chorus.

Classical Period (1730 – 1800)

Music is simple, melodic, mainly homophonic (melody & accompaniment), very structured, orchestra still small but now includes the horn, trumpet, clarinet, flute and oboe. Piano main keyboard instrument (no harpsichord).

Symphony – Large piece of Music for the whole orchestra.

Sonata – Music for **soloist** accompanied by a **PIANO** (or for solo piano)

Coloratura – florid vocal singing involving scales, runs and ornaments where there are a number of notes sung to the one syllable (melismatic)

Sonata Form - structure of the first movement of many sonatas – 3 sections: Exposition, Development, Recapitulation.

Exposition - This describes the first hearing of the 'theme' and is normally associated with compositions structured in sonata form

Subject - The main theme in a composition. This then could be the main theme in Sonata form.

Chamber Music - classical music that is composed for a small group of instruments.

String Quartet - A chamber music ensemble made up from two violins, one viola and one cello.

Romantic Period (1800 – 1910)

Dramatic contrasts, chromaticism (sharps and flats), use of discords, much larger orchestra, increase in emotion of music, wide breadth of dynamics.

Lied – works for solo voice and piano. German text - voice and piano are equally important.

MODERN PERIOD (1910 – PRESENT)

Very varied, experimental, innovative, individual, explorative & imaginative.

Impressionism – Music creates blurry impression, uses whole tone and chromatic scales.

Jazz Funk – Cross between Jazz, Rock and Funk.

Musique Concrete – Recorded natural sounds which are transformed using simple editing techniques.

Soul Music – Combination of R&B and Gospel which began in late 1950s. Features vocals, piano, drums, guitar, bass, trumpet & saxophone.

Time Changes - changing time signatures frequently in a piece of music.

Other Higher Concepts

Augmentation – Notes of a melody are doubled in length.

Diminution – Notes of a melody are halved in length.

Through Composed - A vocal/choral composition in which there is little or no repetition in the musical structure i.e. where the composition is not structured as verse / chorus.eg. Bohemian Rhapsody – (opposite of Strophic)

Harmonics – very lightly touching a string when you play it. On bowed instrument this will sound high pitched and eerie. On Guitar or Harp it sounds bell like.

Tremolando – rapid movement of the bow on same note for strings or between 2 notes a distance apart for other instruments (not the same as a trill).

3 against 2 - One line of music may be playing quavers in groups of two whilst at the same time another line of music will be playing triplets.
TANGO Vs STRAWBERRY at the same time.

Irregular Time Signatures - the music does not naturally fall into equal groupings eg. 7/4 or 5/4 instead of 3/4 or 4/4.

Interval – Distance between 2 notes eg C- G = 5th, F-A = 3rd

| <u>Cadence</u> | <u>Sounds</u> |
|--------------------------|---|
| <u>Perfect</u> | Finished – chord 5 - 1 |
| <u>Imperfect</u> | Unfinished - ? – chord 5 |
| <u>Interrupted</u> | Major piece interrupted by minor chord. |
| <u>Tierce De Picardi</u> | Minor piece interrupted by major chord. |
| <u>Plagal</u> | Finished – Chord 4 – 1 (Amen) |

Parts of an OPERA

- Aria** - A song for one voice which allows a character to express their innermost thoughts and feelings. Allows the performer to show off their ability, has full accompaniment and a prominent melody.
- Recitative** - An operatic device that allows the singer to explain the plot between the arias and choruses. Melodic (sung) speech, very lightly accompanied by the orchestra (often only a harpsichord or similar).
- Chorus** - Part of opera where the group (large choir) of singers join in.

CHORDS/SCALES

You must practice these to be able to identify them!

Added 6th - 6th note added to major chord – used in jazz and popular music. (Eg. C E G A)

Dominant 7th - 7th note added to major chord – happy sounding. (Eg C E G Bb) 7th note can sound like it should fall down a note and resolve itself.

Diminished 7th – Made up of minor 3rd intervals - Sounds scary/tense/horror. (Eg. C Eb Gb A)

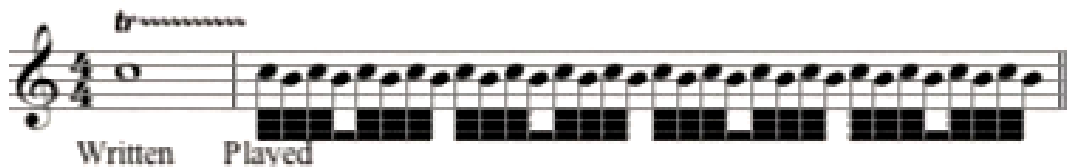
Relative Major/minor – Modulation from major to minor or minor to major. eg. A minor to C major.

Harmonic Minor Scale - A minor scale with sharpened 7th when ascending/descending. Can sound Arabian (Aladdin)

Melodic Minor Scale - A minor scale with different notes when ascending/descending.

ORNAMENTS & Literacy

TRILL - Rapid and repeated movement between two adjacent notes.



TURN - Four notes which turn round the main note with the note above, the main note, the note below, and the main note again. An inverted turn starts with the note below reversing the process.



MORDENT – main note, the note above and then the main note again. An inverted mordent sounds the main note, the note below and then the main note again.



ACCIACCATURA – A very fast note played before a full length note. Also known as a grace note.



It will ask you to re-write the phrase one octave lower in the bass clef.

Count up 5 lines and spaces not including
The 1st note.






Make sure all the notes are neat, on the
correct line or space and joined properly.






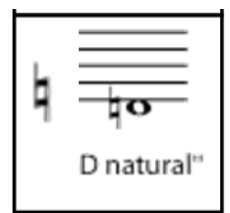
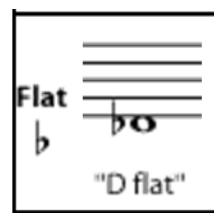
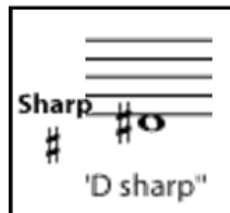
Intervals

An interval is the distance in pitch between any 2 notes.
To work it out, count up the lines and spaces including the 1st note.



| | Name | Length (beats) |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
|  | Semibreve | 4 |
|  | Dotted Minim | 3 |
|  | Minim | 2 |
|  | Dotted Crotchet | 1 + 1/2 |
|  | Crotchet | 1 |

| | Name | Length (beats) |
|---|---------------|----------------|
|  | Dotted Quaver | 3/4 |
|  | Quaver | 1/2 |
|  | Semiquaver | 1/4 |



Key Signatures



C Major = 0 sharps or flats

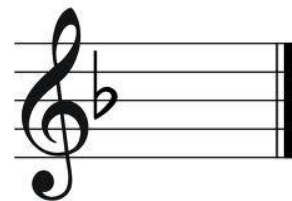
A Minor = 0 sharps or flats

But G#s in music.



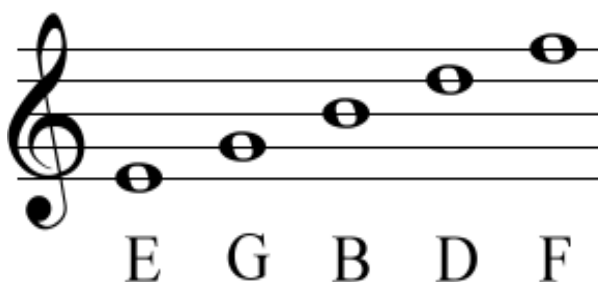
G Major = 1 Sharp #

F Major = 1 flat b



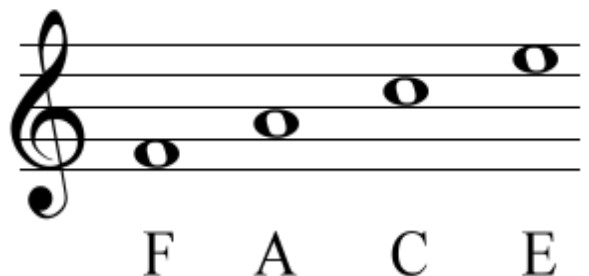
Treble Clef Lines

**Every Good Boy
Deserves Football**

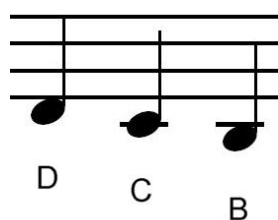


Treble Clef Spaces

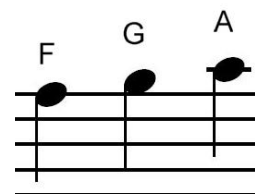
F A C E



Notes below the stave



Notes above the stave



Bass Clef

Bass Clef Notes

G A B C D E F G A

Line Notes:

G B D F A

Space Notes:

A C E G

Repeat Sign

Start →



← End

1st & 2nd time bars



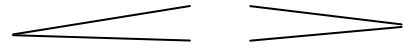
Time Signatures – go right at the beginning of the first line – **beside** the treble clef.

2 = 2 crotchet beats per bar
4 Simple time

3 = 3 crotchet beats per bar
4 Simple time

4 = 4 crotchet beats per bar
4 Simple time

6 = 6 quavers per bar (splits
8 into 2 beats. Compound time

| Melody Harmony | Rhythm Tempo | Instruments and how they are used | Dynamics |
|---|--|---|---|
| Repetition Sequence Imitation Modulation Chords/ Discords Broken Chords Suspensions <u>Scales:</u> Major/Minor, Chromatic, Pentatonic Question & Answer Glissando Homophonic/ Polyphonic Ornaments: trill, acciacatura, turn, mordent. Legato /Staccato Unison/Harmony Pedal Melismatic/ Syllabic | Syncopation Repetition Ostinato Anacrusis Beats in a bar / Time Signature: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, Simple Time 6/8 – Compound Time Speed: Allegro – Fast Adagio – Slow Andante – walking pace Moderato – moderate Speed Changes: Accelerando – faster Rallentando – slower Rubato – with freedom Dotted Rhythms Scotch Snap | <u>Brass</u> – Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Tuba <u>Woodwind</u> – Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Saxophone, Recorder <u>Strings</u> – Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Harp <u>Percussion</u> – Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Timpani, Triangle, Snare Drum, Drumkit, Bass Drum, Tambourine, Castanets <u>Keyboard</u> – Piano, Synthesizer, Harpsichord, Organ, Celeste <u>Voices</u> – Soprano, Mezzo Soprano, Alto, Counter Tenor, Tenor, Baritone, Bass <u>Guitars</u> – Electric, Acoustic, Bass, Banjo Solo, Melody, Countermelody Accompaniment, Chords, Broken Chords Glissando, Arpeggios Arco – bowed, Grace notes, ornaments Muted, Pizzicato - plucked Col Legno – wood of bow, Double Stopping <u>Female:</u> Soprano, Mezzo Soprano, Alto <u>Male:</u> Tenor, Baritone, Bass Countertenor – high like a woman. Solo; Accompaniment; Melody; Countermelody | <i>pp – pianissimo – very quiet</i> <i>p – piano – quiet.</i> <i>mp – mezzo piano –</i> <i>moderately quiet.</i> <i>mf – mezzo forte –</i> <i>moderately loud.</i> <i>f – forte – loud.</i> <i>ff – fortissimo – very loud</i> Changes of dynamic crescendo – getting louder diminuendo – getting quieter.  |

Categories

TONALITY

MAJOR

MINOR

ATONAL

STRUCTURE/FORM

BINARY FORM TERNARY FORM RONDO FORM
THEME & VARIATION STROPHIC
THROUGH COMPOSED

TEXTURE

HOMOPHONIC

POLYPHONIC/CONRAPUNTAL

PERIODS OF MUSIC

MEDIEVAL

RENAISSANCE

BAROQUE

CLASSICAL

MODERN

TIME

SIMPLE

COMPOUND

HIGHER – Understanding Music Paper LAYOUT

Multiple Choice Questions

Tick the boxes/write the concepts you are sure of.

Score out any you are sure do NOT appear.

Use sensible guesswork for remaining concepts.

Musical Map - 5 Marks

5 numbered boxes. Voice says the number over the music & you must answer the question in the related box when the number is said.

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | The first woodwind instrument is a/an _____. | 1 |
| 2. | The playing technique used by the lower strings is _____ (Italian term). | 1 |
| 3. | There is a/an _____ note in the bass. | 1 |
| 4. | The melody features a descending _____ scale. | 1 |
| 5. | The tonality here is _____. | 1 |

‘Write the concepts’ questions

Write in the correct concepts in the spaces provided.

Remember:

“...that describes the **Timbre**” = instruments/voices/effects

“...that describes the **texture**” = homophonic/polyphonic

“...that describes the **tonality**” = major/minor/atonal

“...that describes the **word setting**” = syllabic/melismatic

“...the **rhythmic** feature” = anacrusis/scotch snap/3 against 2/
cross rhythms (etc.)

“...the **ornament**” = acciaccatura/mordent/trill

“a **scale**” = major/harmonic or melodic
minor/chromatic/pentatonic/blues/whole tone

Literacy question – 6 Marks

e.g. Write in Time Signatures, identify Key Signatures,
Describe intervals, write in notes/rests/bar lines,
name the chords you hear, bass clef transposition,
identify accents, staccato marks etc.

Write the concept beside the lyrics – 5 Marks

- melismatic singing in harmony
- modulation to relative minor
- first example of imperfect cadence
- imitation
- orchestra and voices in unison/octaves

Insert the five underlined words at the point where they occur.

Insert each word once only.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Ah....., | 1 |
| Amen, | 2 |
| Amen, | 3 |
| Amen, | 4 |
| Allelujah, amen. | 5 |
| <i>(String interlude)</i> | 6 |
| God save the king. | 7 |
| Long live the king. | 8 |
| May the king live forever. | 9 |
| | |

Write the underlined word next to the numbered line in which the concept occurs. Write each word **ONCE** only or you will lose marks.

Prominent features of the music - 6 Marks

3 boxes worth 2 marks each.

Choose 2 strong and safe concepts for each box, then add any others you are sure of. **You DO NOT lose marks for writing incorrect answers in this question.**

Possible boxes + safe concept choices are:

Melody: Ornaments, Scales, Repetition/Sequence/Imitation

Harmony: Cadences, Tonality **Rhythm:** Time Signature

Tempo:

Adagio/Andante/Moderato/Allegro/Accelerando/Rallentando

Dynamics: Crescendo/Diminuendo/Piano/Forte/Mp/pp/Mf

Timbre: Instruments/Voices/Groups

Texture: Homophonic/Polyphonic

Rough work

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Melody/Harmony | |
| Texture | |
| Timbre | |

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO COPY FINAL ANSWER INTO OTHER PAGE

DOES NOT NEED TO BE SENTENCES – JUST LIST CONCEPTS !

COMPARISON Question – 5 Marks

| | Concepts | Column A Excerpt 1 | Column B Excerpt 2 | Column C Five features common to both |
|---------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Melody | Melodic minor scale | | | |
| | Counter melody | | | |
| | Syllabic | | | |
| Harmony | Interrupted cadence | | | |
| | Perfect cadence | | | |
| | Tierce de Picardie | | | |
| Rhythm | Anacrusis | | | |
| | Time changes | | | |
| | Rallentando | | | |
| | Compound time | | | |
| Timbre | Con sordino | | | |
| | Ripieno | | | |
| | Bodhran | | | |
| | Glockenspiel | | | |
| | | | | 5 marks |

Tick boxes in Columns A and B when you hear concepts

Put small x in Columns A and B when you know they are definitely incorrect/incompatible (i.e. can't be Baroque and Classical or Sonata and Concerto).

LEAVE COLUMN C TO THE END!