

Sonority

GCSE MUSICAL ELEMENTS

What comes under Sonority?

- ▶ Instrumentation
- ▶ Instrumental Techniques
- ▶ Timbre
- ▶ Articulation
- ▶ Dynamics



NB - These can sometimes be called '**performing forces**'.

Instrumentation

- ▶ <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/instrument-recognition-quiz-what-s-the-instrument-11934047>
- ▶ Can you get 10/10 in the above video?
- ▶ How can we learn these?

Instrumental Techniques

Can you name an instrumental technique within for each of the following instruments?

1. Viola
2. Flute
3. Electric Guitar
4. Snare Drum

Timbre

Each instrument has a wide range of sounds that it can make, no matter the note or volume.

For example:

- ▶ A Piano can play with the damper pedal or without.
- ▶ A Brass instrument could use a [mute](#).
- ▶ A Singer can sing with different mouth or throat shapes.
- ▶ An Electric Guitar could apply effects like distortion, flanger or wah-wah.

Set Works

Look through the set works, and find answers to the following questions:

- ▶ Which set work has only one instrument?
- ▶ Which set work has the highest number of instruments?
- ▶ Which set works use a Harpsichord?
- ▶ Which set work contains an Electric Bass Guitar, but no Electric Guitar?
- ▶ Which set work uses Irish instruments?

Challenge – Can you find an example of a specific instrumental technique or timbre being used (ideally referred to on the score?).

Dynamics & Articulation

► <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zjy7gwx/revision/1>

Look through this website. If there are any dynamic or articulation terms that you don't know, make a note of them on a piece of paper.

Describe the Sonority in this piece.

► <https://youtu.be/CjxugyZCfuw>



Structure

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What is Structure?

- ▶ The layout of sections in a piece of Music, including:
 - ▶ The name of the type of structure it is
 - ▶ The names of the sections
 - ▶ The lengths of the sections (in bars)
 - ▶ The lengths of the phrases within the sections
- ▶ For any set work in this GCSE, you need to be able to recognise what section you are listening to, and where it is located within the piece.

Names for different sections

'Classical' (often called 'Form', not 'Structure')	'Pop'
A B C etc	Verse
Exposition	Chorus
Development	Intro
Recapitulation	Outro
Coda	Bridge
Link	Middle 8
	Break
	Instrumental/Solo
	Link

Do you know what each of these are? Make some notes if needs be.

Names for different structures

'Classical' (often called 'Form', not 'Structure')	'Pop'
Sonata Form (exposition, development & recapitulation)	Verse/Chorus
Binary Form (AB)	Strophic (verse, verse, verse etc)
Ternary Form (ABA)	Through-composed
Rondo Form (ABACADA....etc)	
Strophic (AAA...etc)	
Through-composed (ABCDEFGH....etc)	

Which goes where?

'Classical' and 'Pop' structures use different terminology, so....
Cover your notes, and categorise the following into either
'Classical' or 'Pop':

Exposition	Chorus	D
Coda	A	Verse
Intro	Middle 8	Recapitulation
C	Development	Link
Instrumental/Solo	Bridge	E
Outro	B	Break

Recognising Section Changes

Listen to these two pieces of Music. When you hear the section change, raise your hand!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc5vxw3eijY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1gGxpitLO8>

Now, what about section length? Let's go again and count the bars in each section.

Full Analysis of a Structure

- ▶ Listen to this song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2ICtCO8TCw> and analyse:
 - ▶ The name of the type of structure it is
 - ▶ The names of the sections
 - ▶ The lengths of the sections (in bars)
 - ▶ The lengths of the phrases within the sections

Type of structure:			
Section Number	Section Name	Section Length	Phrase Length (Challenge)
1			
2			
etc			



Tonality

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What is Tonality?

Literally, **Tonality** is the specific set of different notes chosen (usually 7) to make a piece of music. Every instrument in a piece will only play these notes.

Aurally, **Tonality** will affect the mood of the piece, e.g. Happy or Sad.

The main four tonalities

1. Major
2. Minor
3. Modal
4. Atonal

Do you know what any of these are?

Major

- ▶ Sounds 'happy'.
- ▶ It uses the following set of intervals:
 - ▶ TTSTTTS

For example

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwHpDOWhkGk>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1k8craCGpgs>

Minor

- ▶ Sounds 'sad'.
- ▶ It uses the following set of intervals:
 - ▶ T S T T S T T

For example

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOk8Tm815IE>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t936rzOt3Zc>

Major v Minor

Can you work out whether each piece of music is in a major or minor key?

Number 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTc1mDieQl8>

Number 2

<https://youtu.be/VEJFuWgkGkY?t=745>

Number 3

<https://youtu.be/tETNUUb2OCc?t=110>

Modal

- ▶ Uses sets of notes based on the piano keyboard without any black notes.
 - ▶ A to A = Aeolian
 - ▶ D to D = Dorian
 - ▶ F to F = Lydian
 - ▶ etc
- ▶ Typically these sound a bit medieval or folky.

For example

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEeAN471boQ>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BakWVXHSug>

Improvisation Task – Dorian Mode

At a keyboard, improvise some melodies using Dorian Mode:

- ▶ Use the white notes from D to D only.
- ▶ Start and end your melody on the note D.
- ▶ Try to follow basic melody rules:
 - ▶ Phrases are 2 or 4 bars long
 - ▶ An equal amount of rise and fall
 - ▶ Movement mostly to next door notes (stepwise) with occasional jumps.

Challenge – In a pair, can one person accompany with chords? The best ones to use are Chord I (D F A), Chord IV (G B D) and Chord VII (C E G).

TEACHER DEMONSTRATION

Atonal

- ▶ This is a piece of Music that has no identifiable tonality. This is really hard to compose, as our brains will always attempt to hear a tonality, (unless its not played with notes, of course).

For example

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x622m18ut74>
- ▶ <https://youtu.be/jQLvGghaDbE?t=10s>

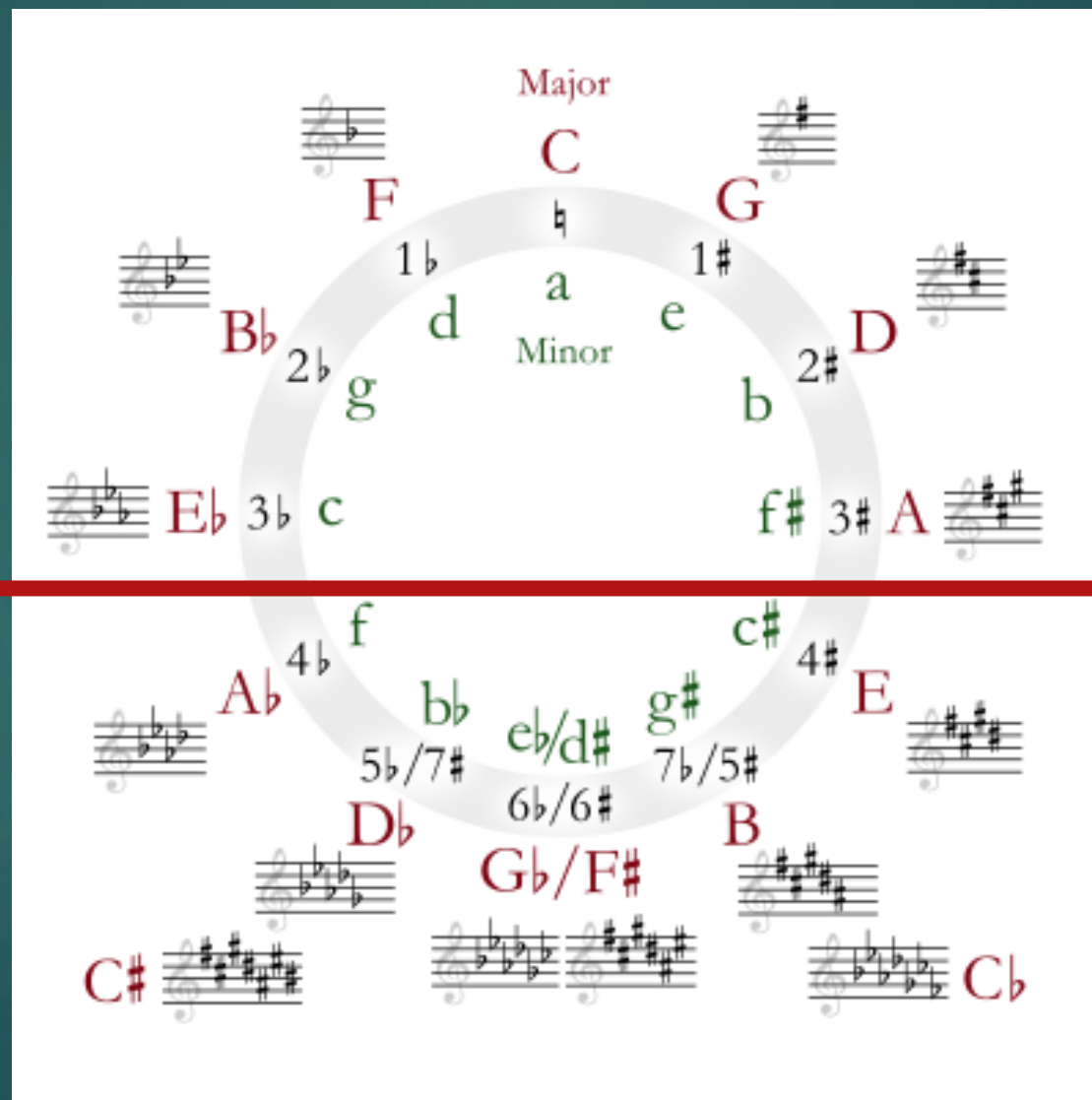
The term 'Key'

Be careful. The term 'key' only refers to Major and Minor tonalities.

For modal, the term 'mode' is correct.

For atonal, the term 'atonal' is correct!

Key signatures



You need to know
the ones above
the line!

Applying your knowledge - Set Works

TASK - Look through the Anthology at the set works. For each set work, what does the key signature suggest? Does it change?

How can we tell whether it is the major or minor key?

- ▶ Look at the bass note at the end – this is usually the tonic note.
- ▶ Look for the minor 7th – this would tell you if it is minor.

What if it is actually modal? How can we tell?

- ▶ Look for recurring accidentals – in effect these would change a key signature.



Harmony

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What is Harmony?

Harmony is the result created when more than one note is played at the same time.

Incidentally, the definition of '**chord**' is: 2 or more notes played together.

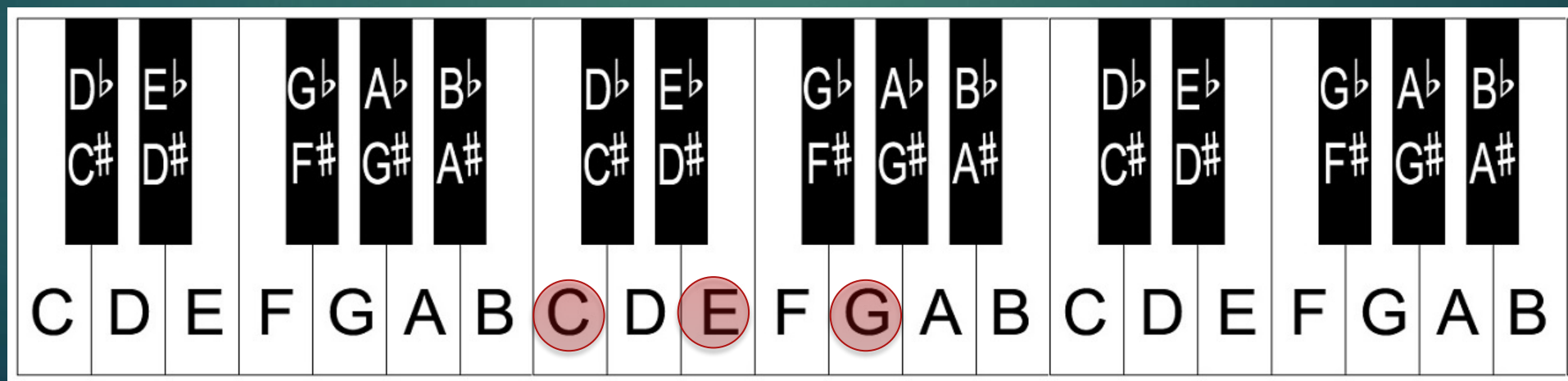
Therefore '**harmony**' and '**chords**' are very closely linked (but not entirely).

Types of Chord

1. Triad
2. Major (not the same as tonality!)
3. Minor (not the same as tonality!)
4. Extended
5. Altered
6. Inversion
7. Diminished
8. Augmented
9. Discord
10. Cluster chord

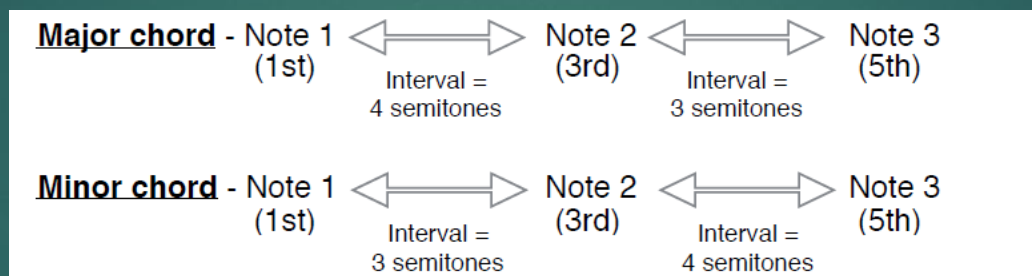
Triads, Minor and Major

- ▶ As the name suggests, these have three notes and the three notes will be the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the scale.
- ▶ For example, the chord 'C major' uses the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the C major scale. The chord 'D minor' uses the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the D minor scale. And so on...

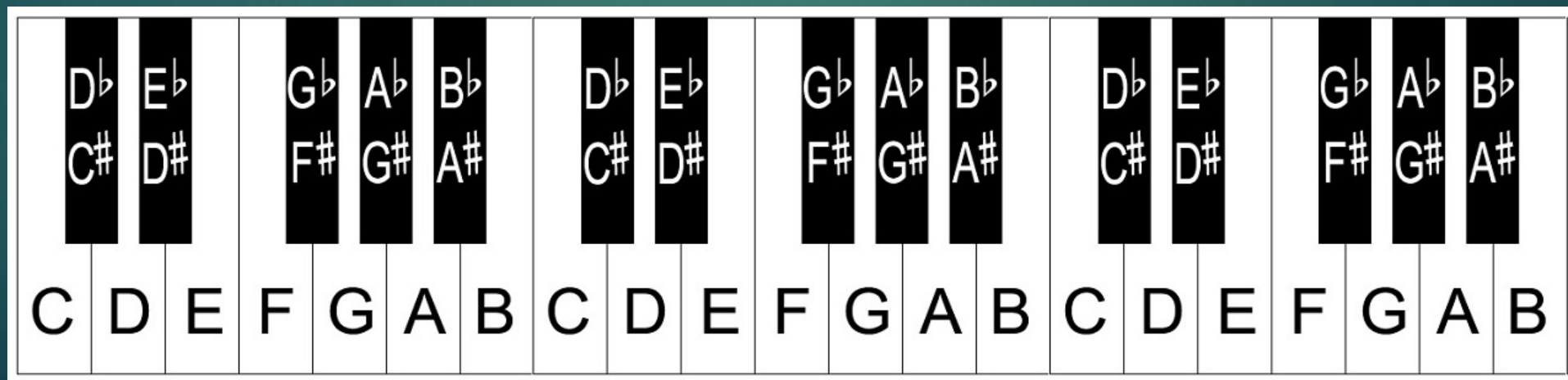


Working out triads

- ▶ Despite what was said on the last slide, you don't have to know the notes of every scale to work out the notes of a certain triad:



- ▶ TASK – work out the notes of these chords: A minor, B major, C minor, Db major, E major, F# minor and G minor.



This is not tonality!

- ▶ One thing to be careful of is to not confuse this with tonality. It is completely separate!

For example, the C major key includes chords of Dm, Em & Am, but if a piece of music in C major includes those chords (which it will), it doesn't make the tonality minor!

Remember – you can have minor chords in a major key, and major chords in a minor key. The inclusion of those chords does not change the tonality.

Diatonic vs Chromatic

- ▶ **Diatonic** – when a chord use notes that are in the tonality (key).
- ▶ **Chromatic** – when a chord uses notes that are not in the tonality (key).

The majority of the chords used in a piece of music will be **diatonic**, as these will sound 'right'.

TASK – work out the diatonic chords of C major, and for each, write down the name of the chord (i.e. major or minor).

Chord symbols – major or minor

C = C major

Cm = C minor

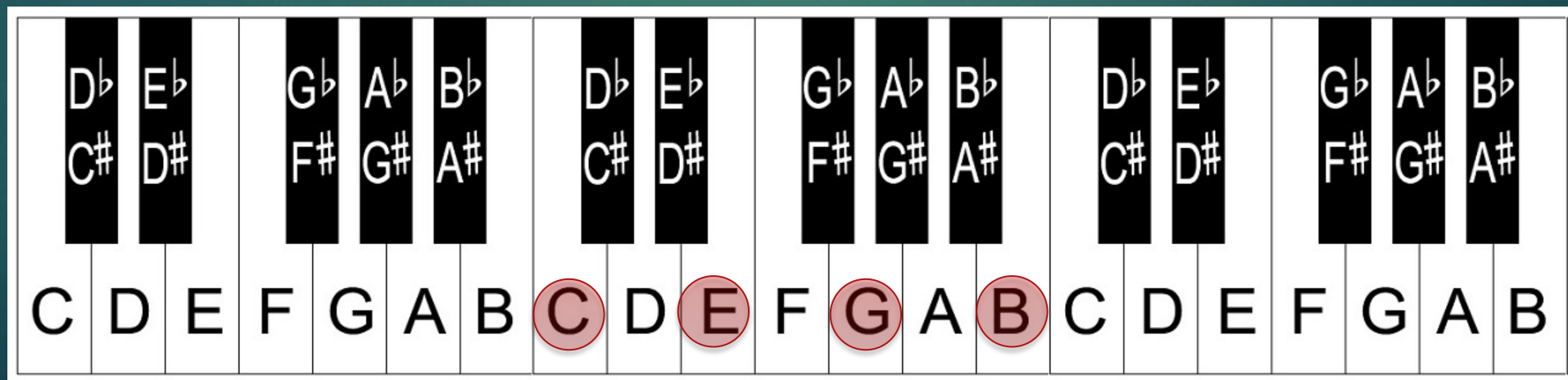
Note that the 'm' is used to signify the minor, even though both words 'major' and 'minor' start with an 'm'!

Extended Chords

- 7th chords

All triads use the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the scale. For example, the chord of C major uses the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the C major scale, so C, E & G.

A 7th chord adds on the 7th note of the scale as well.



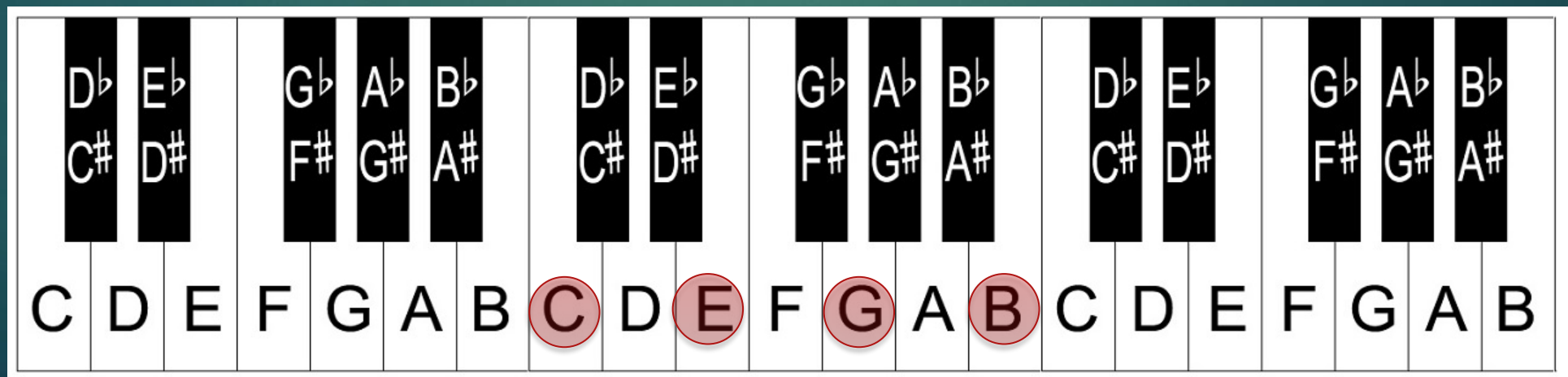
Major 7th vs Minor 7th

However it gets slightly more complicated. There are two types of 7th, called Major 7th and Minor 7th. These refer to whether the 7th is major or minor, not the chord.

A major 7th is the 7th note in the major scale.

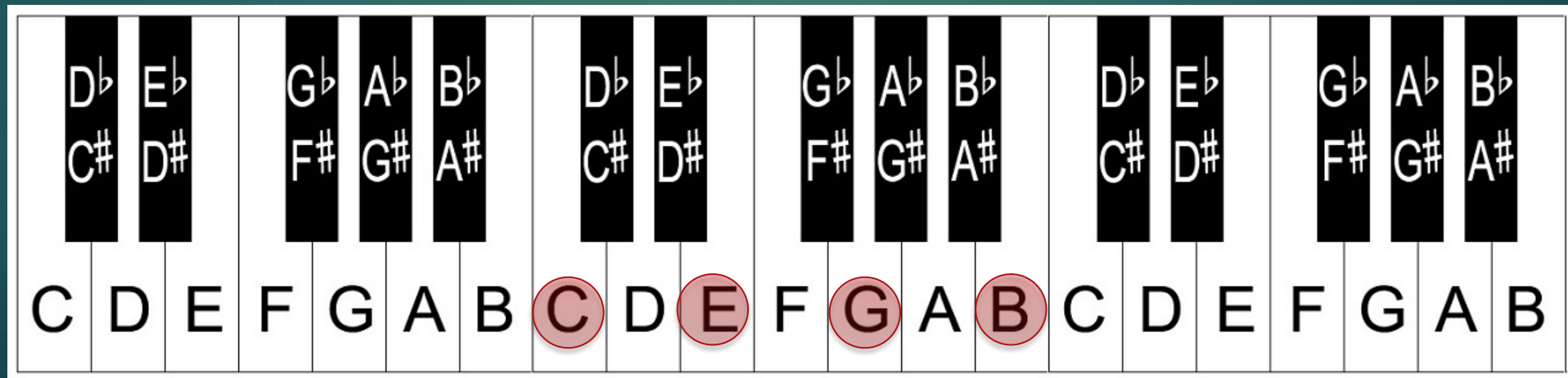
A minor 7th is the 7th note in the minor scale.

In theory, you could have a major or minor 7th with either a major or minor triad, as the table on the next slide shows.



Triad	Type of 7th	Example in C	Chord Symbol
Major	Major	C E G B	Cmaj7
Major	Minor	C E G Bb	C7
Minor	Minor	C Eb G Bb	Cm7
Minor	Major	C Eb G B	Cm maj7

These chords will all have their own unique sounds and mood.
TASK – now work out all of the diatonic 7th chords with the root note D.



Extended Chords

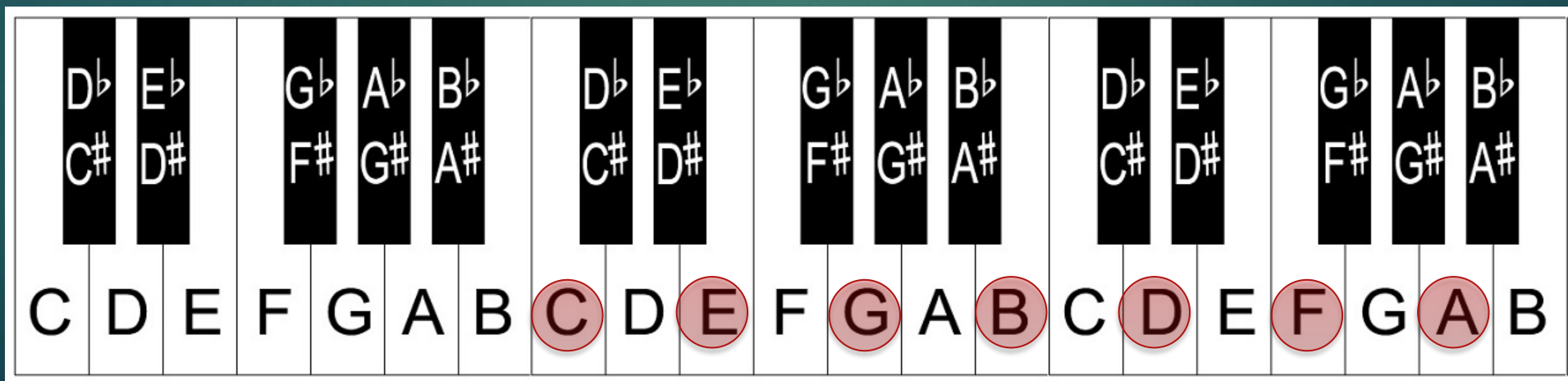
You don't have to stop at 7! For example:

9th chords – 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, & 9th of the scale.

11th chords – 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th & 11th of the scale.

13th chords – 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th 13th of the scale.

Why is there no 15th chord?

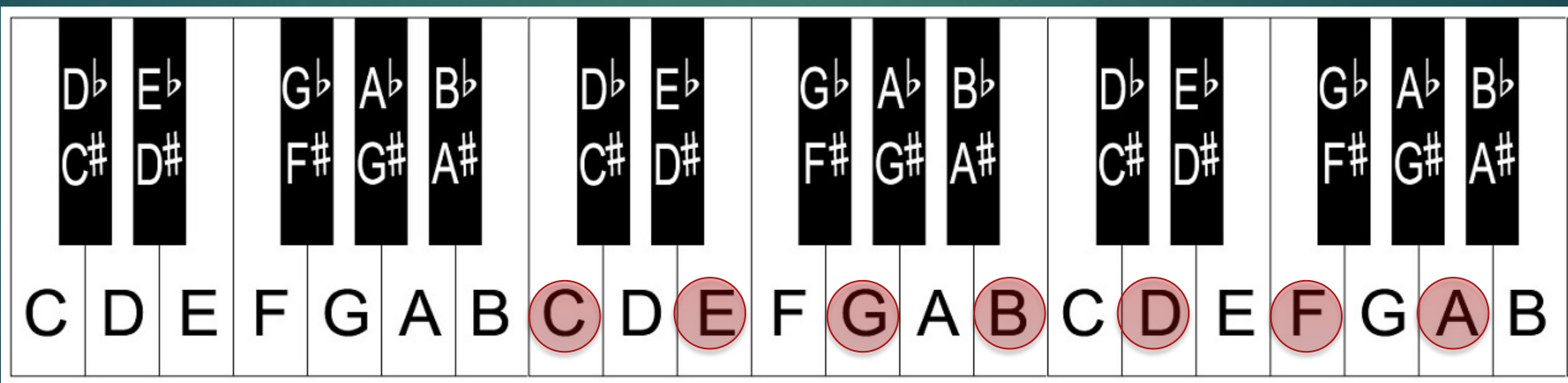


Extended Chords

In reality, it is not necessary or possible to play all of these notes. In fact, a 13th chord has every single note of the scale, so may sound odd if you used them all.

It is more common for some of the middle notes (i.e. not the root note or the top note) to be missed out.

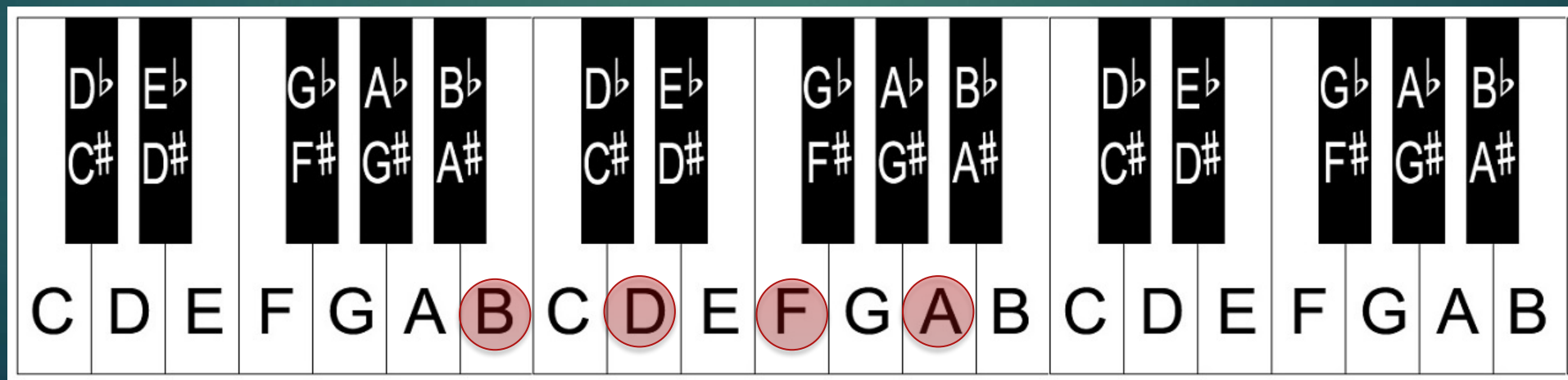
The most common chord that is extended is the **dominant**.



Altered Chords

An altered chord is when one of the notes is flattened or sharpened. Typically, it is the 5th note that is flattened.

For example, the notes of Bm7 ^b5 are: B D F & A



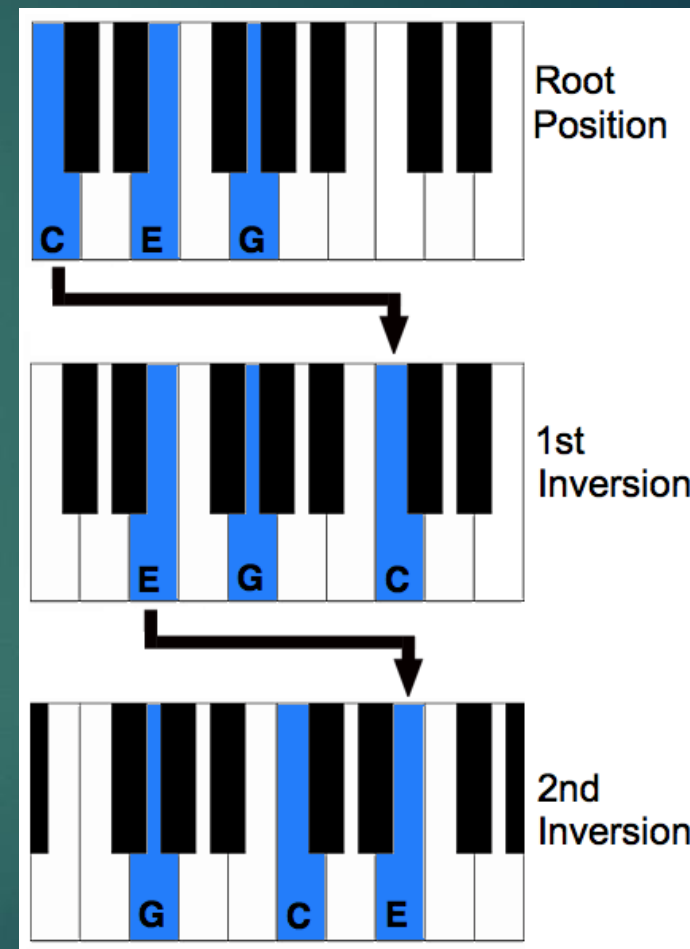
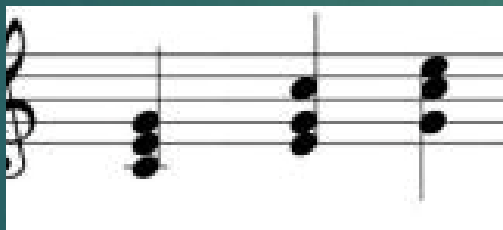
Set Works Task

Look through the set works. Find one with chord symbols and find 3 examples of an extended chord. Then, work out the notes.

Bonus Question – Look at the set works that have chord symbols and look at those which do not. How does this correlate with the style/genre of the piece?

Inversions

To invert a chord is to change the order of the notes. It is still the same chord, but it is in a different inversion.



Inversions – Chord Symbols

Inversions can be shown in one of two ways:

1. In Roman Numerals by the letters 'a' (root), 'b' (1st) and 'c' (2nd), e.g. Ib or IVc.
2. In Chord Symbols, the inversion is represented by using a forward slash '/' and then the note that should appear in the bass, e.g: Dm/F is Dm in 1st inversion.

Diminished

- ▶ **Diminished 7th chords** are built up entirely of minor 3rds, e.g. C, Eb, Gb, A – they therefore sound eerie and generally very glum.
- ▶ **Diminished triads** have only the 1st, 3rd and 5th i.e. C, Eb & Gb.
- ▶ **Half diminished chords** have a diminished triad with a 'normal' 7th i.e. C, Eb, Gb & Bb.

Did you know? There are only three different Diminished 7th chords in the whole world!

Augmented

- ▶ **Augmented chords** are built up entirely of major 3rds, e.g. C, E & G# – they therefore sound very positive and optimistic. They also sound very dreamy as they use notes of the whole tone scale.
- ▶ **Augmented 7th chords** add the minor 7th e.g. C, E, G# and Bb.

Discord

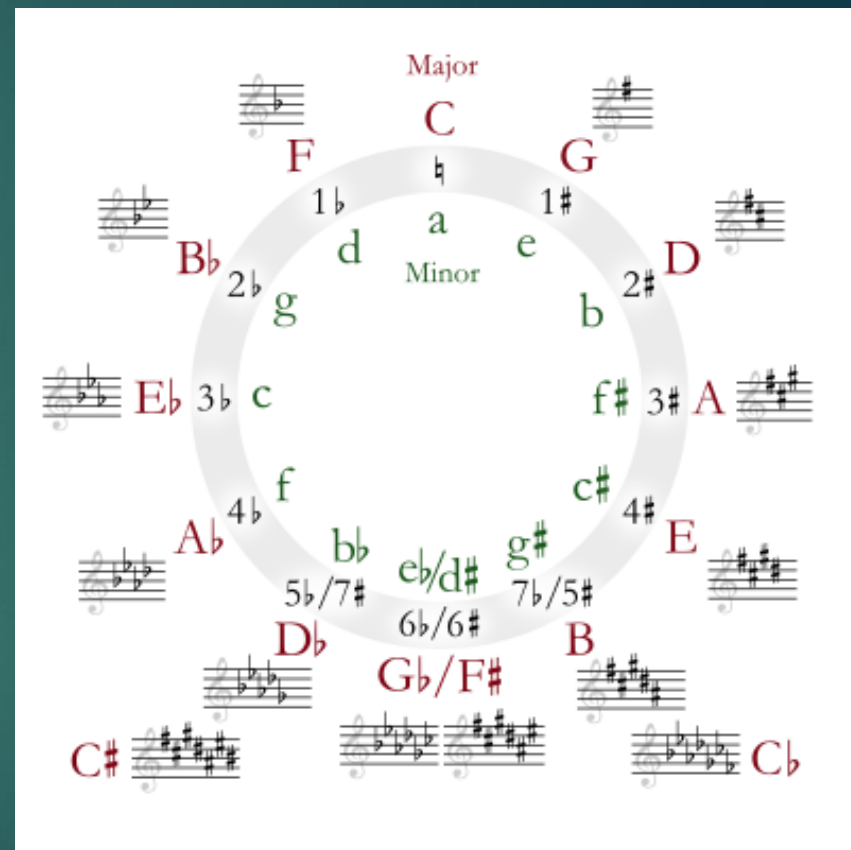
- ▶ A **discord** is when the harmony played at the same time create dissonance.
- ▶ **Dissonance** is when the harmony does not sound 'nice'. It can sound harsh or unpleasant.
- ▶ However, dissonance can be part of a nice sounding chord. For example, a 7th chord contains dissonance (between the 7th note and the tonic) but sounds ok.
- ▶ The opposite of dissonance is **consonance**, which is where the harmony sounds pleasant or acceptable.

Cluster Chord

- ▶ A **cluster chord** is a very specific type of dissonance created when notes right next to each other are played e.g. C, D & E, or Ab, Bb and B.

Harmonic Devices

- ▶ **Pedal note** – when the same bass note is played across a chord sequence. In effect, this creates inversions of the chords.
- ▶ **Circle of 5ths** – a chord sequence that moves around the circle of 5ths, i.e. moves up/down in 5ths.



Cadences

Name	Chord Progression	Finished/ Unfinished?	Description
Perfect	V - I	Finished	Sounds very complete and finished, as if it has gone 'home'.
Imperfect	? - V	Unfinished	Any chord followed by 'V'. Sounds as if there is something else about to follow.
Plagal	IV - I	Finished	Often called the 'Amen' cadence as it is heard in sacred music. Doesn't sound quite as finished as a Perfect cadence.
Interrupted	V - vi	Unfinished	Sounds like a 'surprise' because: a) it is the only cadence that ends on the opposite to the tonality e.g. it ends on a minor chord when in a major key; b) the first chord of the cadence is V, so it sounds like the start of a Perfect cadence.

Suspensions



- ▶ Suspensions in music are like bridges, they suspend above a note.
- ▶ A note from the previous harmony is suspended over to the next chord to create dissonance. The note then resolves.

Suspensions



Diagram illustrating musical suspensions in a 4/4 time signature, showing the relationship between chords and notes across two measures.

Measure 1:

- Chord:** G (G-B-D) - Preparation
- Chord:** C (C-E-G) - Suspension
- Chord:** C (C-E-G) - Resolution

Measure 2:

- Chord:** C (C-E-G) - Prep. (no tie)
- Chord:** C (C-E-G) - Sus.
- Chord:** C (C-E-G) - Res.

Chord Progression: C: V I C: V I



Melody

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What is a Melody?

A **Melody** is the 'tune'.

Typically it is the bit that people sing if you ask them how a song goes.

It is very commonly sung, but could be an instrumental melody instead (e.g. in a concerto).

The melody may move to another instrument within a piece of music, e.g. a Guitar Solo in a Rock song.

Describing Melody

When an Edexcel exam asks about melody, it is only asking about one thing: changes in **pitch**.

Try using the squiggly line method (TEACHER DEMONSTRATION).

'Melody'	Not 'Melody'
Anything which changes the pitch.	How long the notes are in the melody (rhythm). Whether the melody is repeated or not (structure). How long the phrases are (structure). Who plays the melody (sonority).

Describing Melody

When asked 'describe the melody', think of the following questions:

1. Can you name any specific pitches of notes?
2. What is its pitch range? *Say the lowest and highest notes, or name the interval between them.*
3. What direction does the melody go in? *Ascending or Descending.*
4. Does it move by step or by jump? *Conjunct vs Disjunct, Stepwise vs Jumpwise, Scalic vs Triadic, Broken Chords.*
5. Are there any particular intervals that you can recognise? *Perfect 5th, Minor 3rd, etc.*
6. Have any melodic devices been used? *See next slide.*
7. Have any ornaments been used? *See the slide after that.*

Melodic Devices

A **melodic device** is a particular 'tool' used by a composer when writing a piece of music.

There are three: sequence, inversion & retrograde.

Do you remember what they are? Write a definition in your book!

Sequence - the same melody repeated, but either up (**ascending sequence**) or down (**descending sequence**) a note.

Inversion - the same melody repeated, but upside down.

Retrograde - the same melody repeated, but from back to front.

Ornaments

Just like ornaments on a mantelpiece or shelf, ornaments in Music are used for decoration! You should know about:

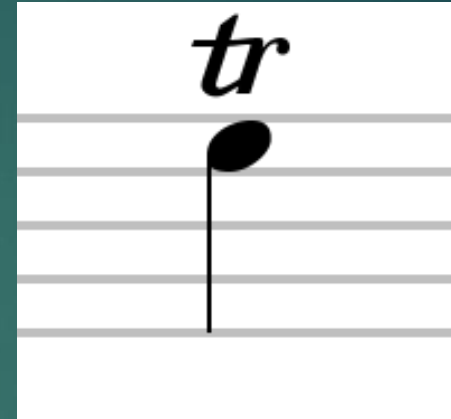
- ▶ Trill
- ▶ Acciaccatura (called a Grace Note in pop)
- ▶ Appoggiatura
- ▶ Mordent (Upper and Lower)
- ▶ Turn

Look at this website (scroll near to the bottom):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zwj2jty/revision/2>

Trill

Alternating a note with the note above it, using shorter note lengths.



Upper Mordent



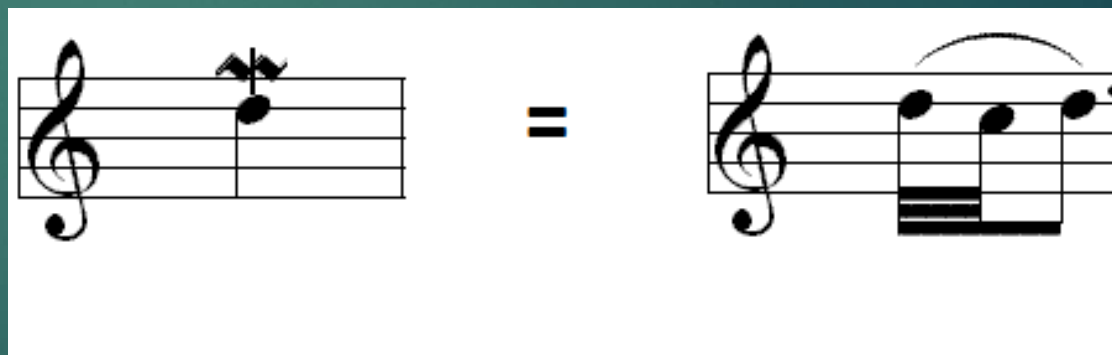
Playing the note written followed quickly by the note above it followed by the original note for the rest of the note value



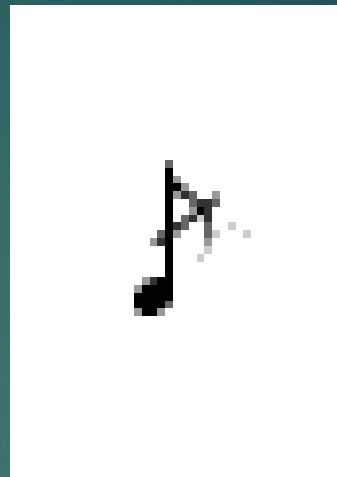
Lower Mordent



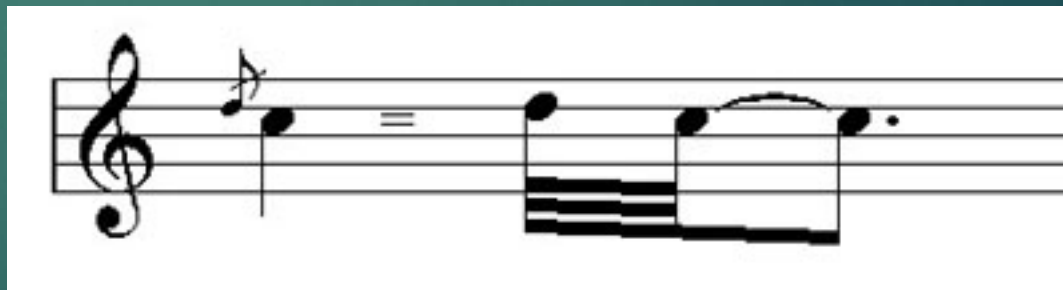
Playing the note written followed quickly by the note below it followed by the original note for the rest of the note value



Acciaccatura

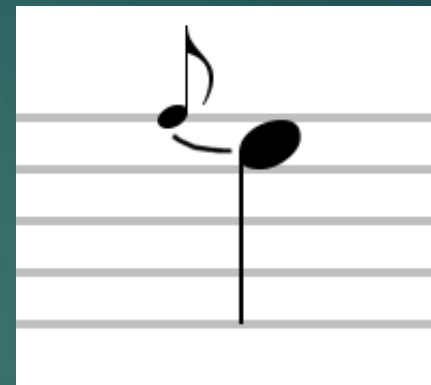


A crushed note
played just before
the note written



Appoggiatura

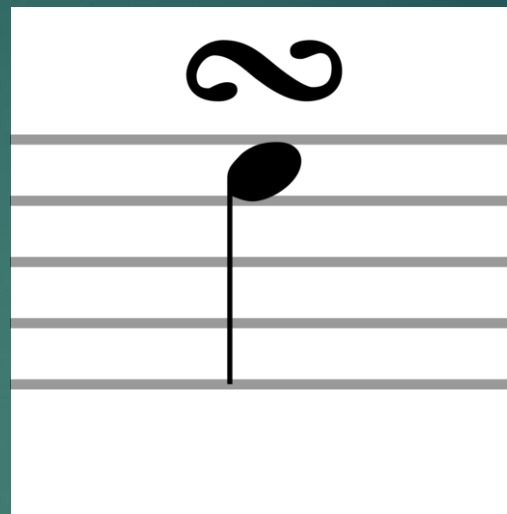
A leaning note that take up at least half of the written note' duration



Written	Played

Turn

Play the note above, followed by the note written, followed by the note below, followed by the note written equally.



use 4 semiquavers (16th notes)

written	played

Listening

- ▶ Describe the melody played to you on the piano. Make 4 points.



Texture

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Banned words

We **DO NOT** use the following words to describe texture at GCSE:

▶ Thick



both



Lush

Texture Vocabulary

- ▶ Monophonic
- ▶ Homophonic
- ▶ Polyphonic
- ▶ Melody with accompaniment
- ▶ Contrapuntal (inc counterpoint, fugal)
- ▶ Dialoguing/Interweaving/Imitation
- ▶ Antiphony
- ▶ Heterophonic

Techno terms such as: Drop Outs, Build Up, Break Down, Stop Bar,

Monophonic

- ▶ One instrument playing one note at a time.



Another example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BkUFSSeNKb8>

Homophonic

- ▶ More than one instrument. All of the instruments have different notes but the same rhythm. The result sounds **chordal**.

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (Sop.), Alto, Tenor (Ten.), and Bass. Each voice part is written on a staff with a treble or bass clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (C). The lyrics for all parts are: "If ye love me, keep my com-mand-ments,". The melody is identical for all four voices, illustrating a homophonic texture where multiple instruments or voices play the same rhythm with different pitches.

<https://youtu.be/A3cpLfhYn1k?t=16s>

Polyphonic

- More than one instrument. All of the instruments have different rhythms. It sounds very 'busy'.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydpmzU_i2hg

Melody with accompaniment

A melody is played at the same time as an accompaniment. The accompaniment is homophonic but the melody has a different rhythm.

By definition, this is 'polyphonic' but this doesn't really do it justice as *real* polyphony is very busy – this is not.

This is therefore called 'melody with accompaniment'. Some people call this 'Mel Dom Hom' (MELOdy DOMinated HOMophony) but Edexcel do not!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6T5C-jzSH0>

This style of writing is called 'counterpoint' and the resultant texture is, by definition 'polyphonic' however as this is a special case we called it 'contrapuntal'.

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

Dialoguing

This is when the different instruments sound as if they are having a conversation.

Imitation is similar, but the instruments copy each other.

Both of these can be described as **interweaving**.

Antiphony

- ▶ Music performed by two groups who are literally physically separated.
- ▶ The texture could be contrapuntal or dialoguing – it depends on the music.
- ▶ Antiphony can be one of the words used to describe this.

Heterophonic

- ▶ When two or more instruments play the same thing but with slight variations, perhaps due to different embellishments.

Describing Texture

When asked to describe texture, we should foremost describe the layers, for example:

'The extract begins with a trumpet solo. Then the rest of the ensemble enter with an accompaniment whilst the solo continues over the top.'

Then we add special Texture vocabulary if it fits:

'The extract begins monophonic with a trumpet solo. Then the rest of the ensemble enter with an accompaniment whilst the solo continues over the top, making the texture melody with accompaniment.'

NB – the emphasis is on describing the layers, NOT on finding a special word.

Listening

What textures are these?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQLvGghaDbE> (there are two, one is the first 27 seconds, then the rest)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGq3-Fi_zQY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0r8zxsWoR4>



Rhythm

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What is rhythm?

Rhythm is created as the result of various different note lengths being placed together.

We therefore describe rhythm in two ways:

- ▶ The note lengths used
- ▶ Any rhythmic features that may result

Note lengths

Various note (and rest) lengths will now be drawn on the board. You need to:

1. Write down the name of that note length.
2. Identify the length in beats.

Rhythmic Features/Devices

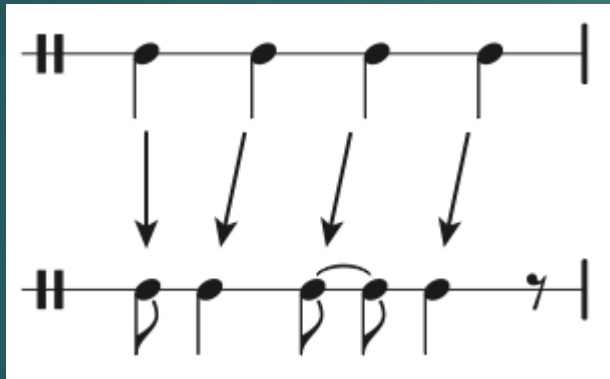
The following might result from a particular combination of note lengths:

- ▶ Syncopation
- ▶ Dotted
- ▶ Triplets (and other tuplets)
- ▶ Ties
- ▶ Swung
- ▶ Cross-rhythms (inc hemiola)

Syncopation

This is first as it is the main one – there will be at least one question in your exam where the answer is ‘syncopation’.

Syncopation is when the emphasis is off the beat.



Dotted

When a series of dotted notes (followed by a note length to 'finish' the beat) are heard, it can be described as a dotted rhythm. It sounds a bit like a horse galloping (apparently this should say 'cantering').



Triplets

When a space that is usually meant for two of a note has three instead.

3 Notes in the Space of 2

8th note triplets

8th notes

The diagram shows a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature. It contains four groups of three eighth notes, each group bracketed with a '3' above it. An arrow labeled '8th note triplets' points to the first group. Another arrow labeled '8th notes' points to the first note of the first group. A copyright notice '©2007 www.studybass.com' is at the bottom right.

A musical score for piano and bass in 4/4 time. The piano part (top staff) consists of quarter notes and eighth note triplets. The bass part (bottom staff) consists of quarter notes and eighth notes. The score is divided into four measures by vertical bar lines.

Ties

Notes tied together make one note that is the length of the two notes combined.

Tied notes often create **syncopation**.

The image displays two musical staves in 4/4 time, illustrating the concept of ties and syncopation. Each staff has a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (Bb).

Staff 1:

- Measures 1-4: Four eighth notes (Bb, D, F, Bb) beamed in pairs. A tie connects the second eighth note of measure 3 to the first eighth note of measure 4.
- Measures 5-8: Four eighth notes (Bb, D, F, Bb) beamed in pairs. A tie connects the second eighth note of measure 7 to the first eighth note of measure 8.

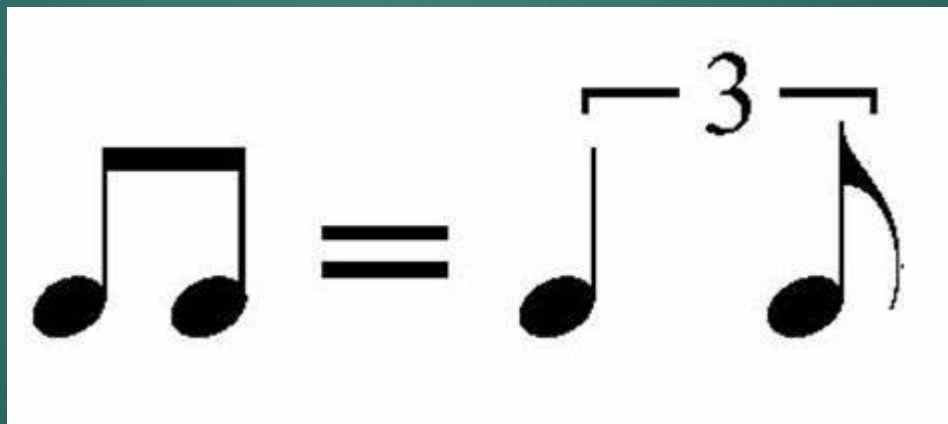
Staff 2:

- Measures 1-4: Four eighth notes (Bb, D, F, Bb) beamed in pairs. A tie connects the second eighth note of measure 2 to the first eighth note of measure 3.
- Measures 5-8: Four eighth notes (Bb, D, F, Bb) beamed in pairs. A tie connects the second eighth note of measure 5 to the first eighth note of measure 6.

Below each staff, a sequence of numbers and plus signs indicates the beat structure: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +. The ties are positioned such that they cross the midline of the staff, visually representing the syncopation where the note's duration spans across the expected beat boundaries.

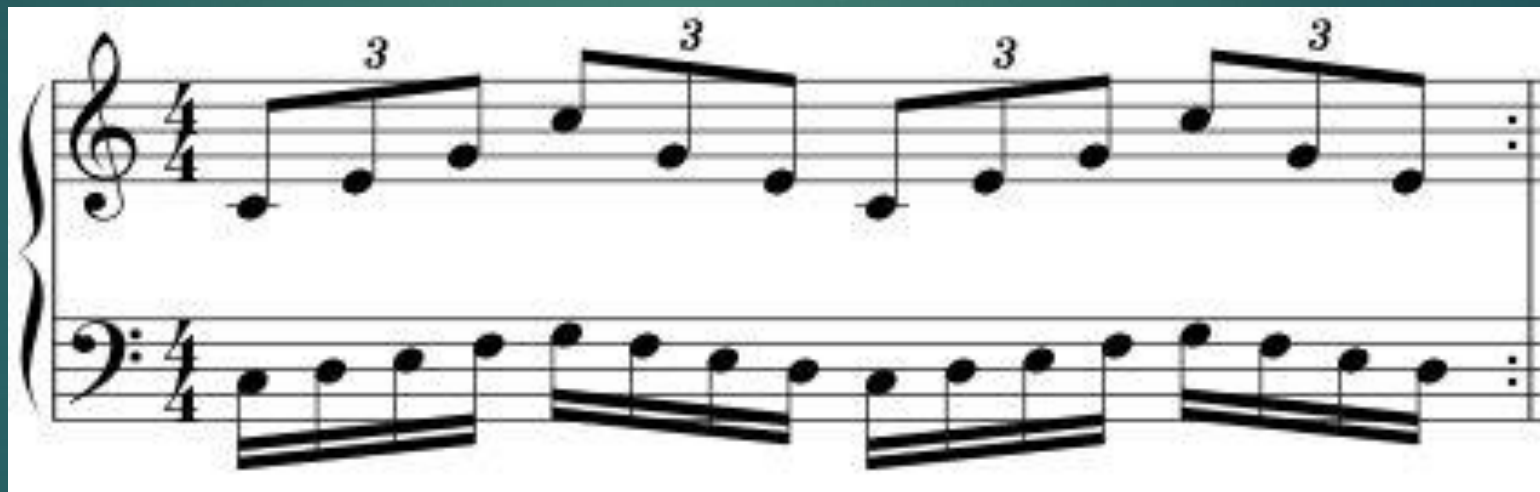
Swung

Commonly used in Jazz music, a swung rhythm lengthens the first quaver and shortens the second (of each beat).



Cross-rhythm

When 3 are played against 2, or 4 against 3 (etc) it creates a cross-rhythm.





Metre

GCSE MUSICAL ELEMENTS

What is metre?

Metre is the number of beats in the bar and how each beat is sub-divided.

It contributes greatly to the 'feel' of a piece of music.

Isn't it just time signature?

A time signature is how the metre is communicated to a performer on a written score, however there is so much more to metre than just its time signature.

In addition, some pieces might not sound like the metre indicated by the time signature. **Metre** is therefore more about how it sounds than how it is written.

Describing Metre

Metre is described with terms like:

‘Simple Quadruple Metre’



Whether the beats are sub-divided into 2 or 3 quavers.



How many beats there are in a bar.

Other examples: ‘Simple Triple Metre’ ‘Compound Duple Metre’.

Describing metre - Number of beats

When describing the number of beats, words like 'triple' are used.

Number of beats	Word used
2	Duple
3	Triple
4	Quadruple
5	Quintuple
etc	etc

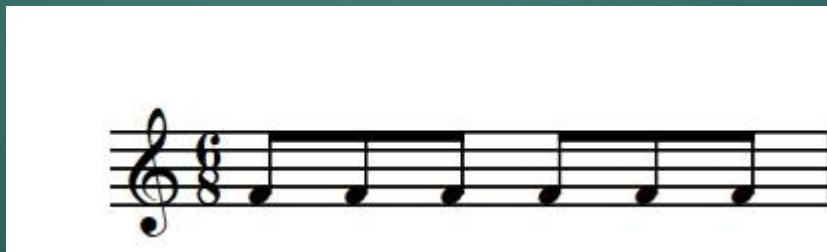
Describing metre – Subdivisions of beats

Beats can be divided in two ways:

Simple time – Each beat is subdivided into 2 quavers:

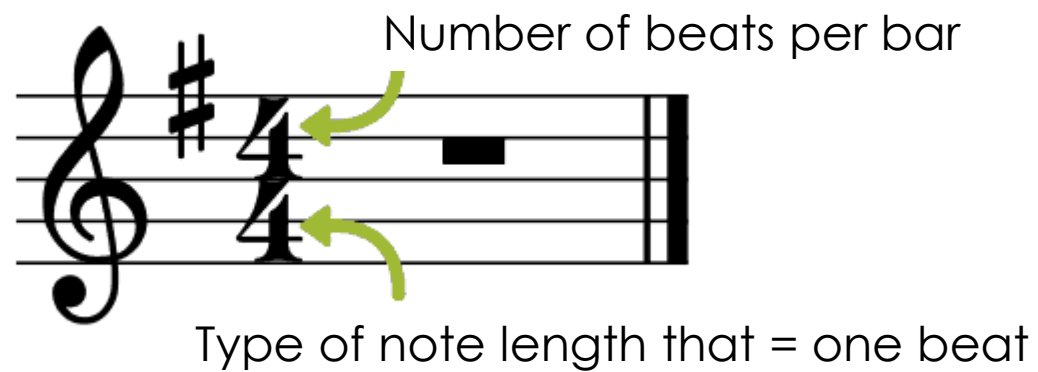


Compound time – Each beat is subdivided into 3 quavers:

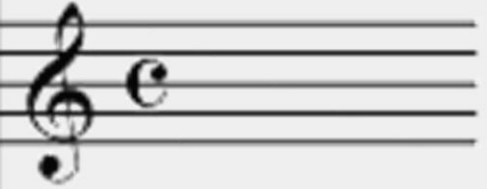
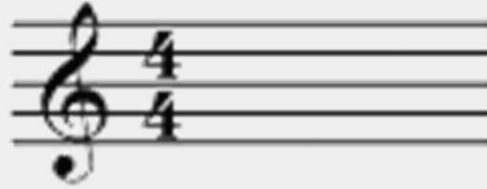
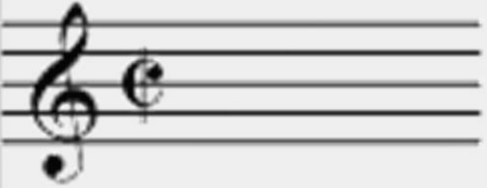
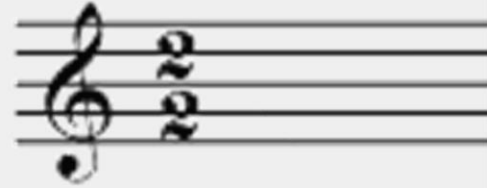


These have a very different 'feel' – compound is more 'twirly', more dance-like

Time signatures



Other time signature symbols

	=	
"Common time"		Four four time
	=	
"Cut time"		Two two time

Regular time signatures

Number of beats	Simple	Compound
Duple	2 or 2 or 2 4 2 8	6 8
Triple	3 or 3 4 2	9 8
Quadruple	4 or 4 or 4 4 2 8	12 8

Note that in the simple column, the list is not exhaustive e.g. 6 beats in bar exists in simple time.

Compound time signatures are easily recognisable as they always are a multiple of 3, over 8. This means that in compound time the top number is **not** the number of beats (unlike with simple time)

Irregular time signatures

Irregular time signatures are where the number of beats in the bar is an odd number of 5 or above.

Typically these are broken down so 5 is broken into 3 + 2, for example.

Irregular Time Signatures

5 **5** **7** **7**
8 **4** **8** **4**

Beats



5

Pulse



Irregular
Simple & Compound
pulse divisions in
each bar

Simple



Compound



Diagram illustrating the breakdown of irregular time signatures. The top row shows four time signatures: 5/8, 5/4, 7/8, and 7/4. The middle row shows the 'Beats' section with five eighth notes, a large '5' in the center, and the 'Pulse' section with two options: two eighth notes beamed together followed by a dotted quarter note, or two dotted eighth notes beamed together. The bottom row shows the 'Irregular' section with a purple box containing the text 'Irregular Simple & Compound pulse divisions in each bar', and two examples: 'Simple' (two eighth notes beamed together) and 'Compound' (two dotted eighth notes beamed together). Red arrows point from the 'Pulse' section to the 'Simple' and 'Compound' examples.



Tempo

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What is tempo?

TASK - Write down, on your whiteboard, what you think the definition is.

The speed of the pulse of the music.

Remember that *typically* the pulse is the 'type of beats' as indicated by the time signature (i.e. the bottom number).

How can I describe tempo?

TASK - On your whiteboard, write down some words that could be used to describe tempo.

Avoid: 'fast' or 'slow'.

Instead use: bpm or Italian terms.

Avoid: 'gets faster' or 'gets slower'

Instead use: 'accelerando', and 'rallentando' or 'ritardando'.

HOWEVER, when comparing two pieces it is acceptable to say that one is 'faster' or 'slower' than the other.

BPM

Stands for 'Beats Per Minute'. A 'beat' is one click of the pulse. All beats are evenly spaced within the minute, so the more beats there are per minute, the faster the music.

Is it possible to work out BPM by listening to a piece?

Yes!

1. Identify the pulse.
2. Look at a clock with a second hand.
3. Count how many beats you hear in 15 seconds,
4. Multiply that by 4!

Let's try it, with this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNFzfwLM72c>

Italian terms for Tempo

Often, an Italian tempo term is the best to use, particularly for 'Classical' music (i.e. not Pop). It also lets you off if your calculation of the bpm is not entirely accurate, or it subtly changes as the piece goes on.

These terms occur a lot, so you must know them:

Italian	English	Beats per minute
<i>Presto</i>	Very fast	168-208
<i>Allegro</i>	Fast	120-168
<i>Moderato</i>	Moderate speed	108-120
<i>Andante</i>	Moderate walking speed	76-108
<i>Adagio</i>	Slow (literally "at ease")	66-76
<i>Largo</i>	Slow and solemn	40-66

Changes of speed

If a piece gets faster or slower gradually *during* a passage or phrase then the following terms are used:

Accelerando – getting faster (like ‘accelerate’)

Rallentando/Ritardando – getting slower (in Physics, the opposite of acceleration is retardation).

Rallentando vs Ritardando? – Some people believe a rall. to be less sudden than a rit., however in reality they are exactly the same!

Set Works

Look through the set works and answer the following:

1. Which piece is the fastest?
2. Which piece is the slowest?
3. Which pieces are in compound time?
4. Find an irregular time signature in one of the set works.
5. Can you find an example of syncopation? *Hint – look for tied notes over the strong beats.*