











1. Music notation

1	Stave/S taff	The horizontal lines on which notes are written to indicate their pitch. Western Classical music uses five lines, and guitar tablature uses six lines.
2	Bass Clef 	Clef used for notating notes for low-sounding instruments, or the left-hand part of piano music.
3	Tenor Clef 	Clef where middle C is on the fourth line. It is used for instruments such as the cello to avoid the excessive use of ledger lines.
4	Treble Clef 	System used for notating notes for high-sounding instruments, or the righthand part of piano music.
4	Score	The written out piece of music with all of the instruments on.
5	Bar line	The vertical line on a stave that divides the music into bars.
6	Double bar line	Two bar lines together that show the end of a section in the music.
7	Repeat marks	Indicated by a double bar line and two dots, an instruction to the player to play a section of music again
8	Slur	A curved line joining notes together, showing they must be played smoothly.
9	Tie	A curved line between two notes of the same pitch, showing that the note should be held for the value of both notes together.

2. Intervals and degrees of the scale.

1	Semitone	The smallest step in Western music, equivalent to two adjacent notes on a keyboard.
2	Tone	Also called a major 2nd interval, the distance between two notes that are two semitones apart, e.g. C–D.
3	Tonic	The first note of a scale.
4	Supertonic	The second note of a scale.
5	Mediant	The third note of a scale.
6	Subdominant	The fourth note of a scale.
7	Dominant	The fifth note of a scale.
8	Submediant	The sixth note of a scale.
9	Leading note	The seventh note of a scale.
10	Transposition.	Music that is heard or written in a different key.
11	Sharp (#)	A symbol showing that the note must be raised by a semitone.
12	Flat (b)	A symbol showing that the note must be lowered by a semitone.
13	Natural (♮)	A symbol that cancels a sharp or flat.

3. Key vocabulary - Rhythm

1		Crotchet = 1 Beat
2		Quaver = ½ Beat
3		Minim = 2 Beats
4		Semibreve = 4 Beats
5		Rest = Rest for 1 beat (Crotchet rest)
6		Rest = Rest ½ beat (Quaver rest)
7	Dotted note	A note that is held for its full length plus an extra half. E.g. A dotted crotchet would last for 1 ½ beats.
8	Fermata 	A pause, meaning the player/s hold the note on for longer – normally twice as long.
9	G.P.	Grand pause, meaning the players hold silence for as long as needed.
10	Triplet	A group of three notes played in the time of two. A group of triplet quavers would fit into the same amount of time as two normal quavers.

Other points of interest: Every piece of music we work on will use these terms, so it is really important you learn them. Some interesting rhythmic pieces to listen to include Clapping Music by Steve Reich and Take 5 by Dave Brubeck.

1. Melody		
1	Arch shaped	First half goes up, second half goes down or vice versa.
2	Arpeggio/Triadic	A chord whose notes are sounded separately, rather than simultaneously, and usually heard in an ascending or descending flow.
3	Ascending	Going down
4	Broken Chord	A form of accompaniment where the notes of a triad are heard separately.
5	Conjunct	Melody that moves by mainly by step.
6	Descending	Going down
7	Disjunct	Melody containing leaps.
8	Ornamentation	General term for various types of musical decoration, including trills, turns, mordents, acciaccaturas and appoggiaturas.
9	Riff	A short, continuous, repeated rhythmic phrase throughout a piece or significant section of pop, rock or jazz music.
10	Fanfare	Ceremonial music usually played by trumpets or other brass instruments to announce the arrival of an important person or the start of an event.
11	Imitation	Parts copy each other, normally overlapping
12	Interval	The distance between two notes.
13	Leap	Distance between two notes which is larger than one step.

2. Melody continued		
14	Melodic device	A composing technique where the melody is developed/alterd in a number of different ways, e.g. sequence, imitation.
15	Mono tone	Literally a single note, often used for the note on which a chant is recited.
16	Ostinato	Musical idea, melodic and/or rhythmic, that is heard repeatedly and often used as a unifying device.
17	Pitch	Term used to describe how high or low a note sounds; can be measured by its frequency.
18	Scalic	A 'ladder' of notes arranged in ascending or descending order. In Western music they include major, minor, chromatic, etc
19	Sequence	A motif or phrase which is repeated at a higher or lower pitch.
20	Stepwise	Also called <i>conjunct</i> , melodic movement that moves to adjacent notes.
21	Theme	A musical idea, often a melody, that forms the basis for a piece.

3. Form and structure		
1	Call and response	A texture in which a phrase is introduced by one player/singer and answered by another or by a group, like a question and an answer.
2	Retrograde	Musical device where the music is played 'backwards', from the last note to the first.
3	Strophic	A vocal form where the same music is used for each verse.
4	Ternary	A three-part (ABA) form where the A section is heard twice and the B section consists of contrasting musical material.
5	Through-composed	A vocal form where the music is not repeated for each verse, but changes to reflect the mood of the lyrics.
6	Binary	A musical structure consisting of two equal, complementary sections.
7	Ritornello	Compositional technique used extensively in the Baroque period, where a musical passage is heard repeatedly (complete or partial), alternating with sections of contrasting material.
8	Rondo	A structure where the main theme is heard at least three times, alternating with contrasting sections, e.g. ABACA in its simplest form.
9	Verse and chorus	The two-section structure of many pop songs. The two sections are repeated, and sometimes linked by a bridge.
10	Introduction	Opening section of a piece, setting the key, mood and tone.
11	Phrase	A unit of music, often two or four bars, that holds together and ends with a cadence.
12	Sonata form	A large-scale three-part structure with exposition, development and recapitulation, used for the first movements of many sonatas, symphonies and concertos.

1. Harmony

1	Anticipation	A non-harmonic note, usually a short-duration note heard just before the rest of the chord is sounded, common at cadence points.
2	Appoggiatura	A non-harmonic note, which is usually heard one note beyond and before the harmony note. It is approached by leap and quitted by step.
3	Auxiliary notes	A non-harmonic note heard between two repeated notes. The stepwise movement may be upwards or downwards.
4	Diminished 7th	Four-note chord consisting of a series of minor 3rds, e.g. A–C–E flat–G flat.
5	Diminished triad	Three-note chord consisting of two minor 3rds, e.g. A–C–E flat.
6	Dissonance	Chords that are unstable and need to be resolved. It may also refer to notes that clash, e.g. a minor 2nd interval.
7	Drone	Similar to a pedal, harmonic device held under a changing melody/harmony.
8	Imperfect cadence	Chord progression at the end of a phrase (I/II/IV–V), a non-final sound, leading the music forward.
9	Interrupted cadence	Chord progression at the end of a phrase (V – VI), a 'surprise' sound. V–I is expected by the listener, but V–VI is heard instead.
10	Perfect cadence	Chord progression at the end of a phrase (V– I), a final ending.
11	Plagal cadence	Chord progression at the end of a phrase (IV–I), a gentle 'amen' sound.

2. Harmony continued

12	Suspension	Harmonic device where a note is held back. It creates a dissonance, which is resolved when the note is sounded. The note may be tied or repeated.
13	Ground Bass	A general term referring to the part played by a low-pitched instrument or the lowest part in choral music.
14	Bass line	Musical idea, melodic and/or rhythmic, that is heard repeatedly and often used as a unifying device.
15	Cadence	Chord progression that signifies the end of a musical phrase, similar to punctuation in language.
16	Chord	Three or more notes, heard simultaneously or close together, that create the harmonic basis of a piece and are often built on the notes of the scale.
17	Chord sequence	The same as chord progression, but this term is used more in popular music.
18	Harmony	The study of the relationship of chords to one another.
19	Murky Bass	A term used in eighteenth-century piano music, where the left hand plays slow-moving chords in broken octaves.
20	Pedal	Sustained or repeated note, usually tonic or dominant and in the bass, heard against changing harmonies.

3. Tonality

1	Chromatic	Harmony where the notes of chords are outside the key. E.g. in C major, chords with sharps/flats.
2	Dominant	Key starting on the 5th note of a scale and containing one more sharp or one fewer flat.
3	Major	A key that has a scale made up of the intervals: TTSTTS. Associated with brighter, happy tunes.
4	Minor	A key built around a scale with harmonic and melodic versions. In the harmonic, the 7th note is sharpened, and in the melodic, the 6th and 7th notes are sharpened on the way up but are flattened on the descent.
5	Modal	Music based on scale systems such as Ionian or Aeolian, popular in renaissance, fusion, world and jazz music.
6	Modulation	Change of key during the course of a piece.
7	Pentatonic	A five-note scale often using only degrees 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 of the major scale.
8	Relative major	Has the same key signature as minor key, but the tonic is three semitones higher.
9	Relative minor	Has the same key signature as major key, but the tonic is three semitones lower.
10	Atonal	Music that is without any key or home-base.
11	Key	In Western classical music, sounds that are organised into major or minor keys.
12	Tonality	In Western classical music, sounds that are organised into major or minor keys.
13	Tonic	Home key, where a piece usually starts and ends.

Wider listening: For harmony in a range of styles then listen to Bach (set up the system we know), Beethoven (challenged the system we know) and Webern (new ideas).

1. Texture

1	Basso Continuo	A type of instrumental accompaniment, common in Baroque music, played by organ, harpsichord or cello. Keyboard players often added chordal harmonies.
2	Chordal / Tutti	A musical texture where the parts move together at the same time, e.g. a hymn.
3	Dominant pedal	Repeated or sustained note (5th note of key) heard against changing harmonies.
4	Fugal	Imitative entry of a voice or instrument.
5	Homophonic	Musical texture where there is a melody supported by harmony.
6	Imitative	Texture where a melody or phrase is heard again immediately in a different part.
7	Monophonic	Musical texture where one single melody is heard, either in unison or octaves.
8	Polyphonic	Musical texture containing two or more independent melodic lines, also described as contrapuntal.
9	Tonic pedal	Repeated or sustained note (1st note of key) heard against changing harmonies.
10	Unison	Musical texture where a single melody is heard at the same pitch by more than one voice or instrument.
11	Accompaniment	Musical material that supports the melody being played, providing the harmony.

2. Texture continued

12	Heterophonic	Musical texture where two or more voices or instruments play simultaneous variations of the same theme.
13	Solo	In a work for ensemble, a part for a prominent single player.
14	Texture	General term that refers to the layers in the music.
15	two-part texture	Music that consists of two independent melodic lines.

3. Sonority and Music technology terms

1	Staccato	Notes that are played detached.
2	Articulation	How the notes are played e.g. legato or staccato.
3	Legato	Notes played smoothly.
4	Chorus	Effect created when several sounds of almost the same timbre are heard as one.
5	Flanger	Audio effect created by mixing two identical tracks, but adding a delay to one of them, giving a more resonant and intense sound.
6	Multitrack recording	A studio technique where sounds can be recorded separately and then combined, allowing the sound engineer to adjust each one on its own.

4. Sonority and Music technology terms

7	Overdubbing	A recording technique where a musician plays along with a pre-recorded track and both of these sound sources are recorded.
8	Pitch shift	A recording technique where a note that has been recorded is raised or lowered, often to correct the tuning.
9	Retake	Subsequent repeat recording of an audio or video section.
10	Sonority	A word used to label sound, which could be an instrument, a combination of sounds or the tonal quality of a performer.
11	Staccatissimo	Italian term describing or directing melodic movement which is extremely separated and detached.
12	Studio effects	General term for manipulating the recorded sound, including reverb, delay, filters, EQ, distortion, etc. movement which is extremely separated and detached, indicated by narrow triangles above or below the notes.
13	Timbre	Also called tone colour, the quality of the sound of a particular instrument or voice.
14	Track	(1) One of the songs on a CD or record. (2) One of the separately recorded components of a magnetic tape.

Wider listening: For harmony in a range of styles then listen to Bach (set up the system we know), Beethoven (challenged the system we know) and Webern (new ideas).

1. Tempo

1	Accelerando	Speeding up gradually
2	Allegro	A fast and lively tempo.
3	Andante	Music played at a walking pace
4	Beat	The regular underlying pulse in music.
5	Grave	A very slow tempo
6	Largo	A slow tempo
6	Moderato	A medium tempo
7	Presto	A fast tempo
8	Pulse	The regular, underlying beat in music.
9	Rallentando	Slowing down gradually.
10	Tempo	The speed of the music
11	Vivace	A very fast tempo.

2. Metre

1	Alla Breve	The time signature of two minim beats per bar (2/2).
2	Compo und time	Time signatures where the beat is a dotted note dividing easily into three subdivisions, and the top figure is 6, 9 or 12.
3	Simple time	Time signatures where the beat is a single note, such as a minim, crotchet or quaver, and the top figure is 2, 3 or 4.
4	Metre	The way the regular pulse of the music is organised, often into two, three or four beats per bar.
5	Irregular metre	Time signatures outside the normal duple, triple and quadruple metres.

3. Rhythm/rhythmic devices

1	Rubato	Less rigidity with rhythm, generally for expressiveness. Literally means 'robbed', as time is taken from one beat or beats to add to other beats.
2	Shuffle	Rhythmic pattern for drummers in 4/4 time where the beats are played in triplets.
3	Syncopation	Rhythmic device where a note is stressed on a weak beat or between beats.
4	Triplets	A rhythmic figure, indicated by a '3' where three equal notes are played in the time of two of the same note value.
5	Accented	Beats in a bar which have a stronger emphasis than others, e.g. the first beat of a bar has a natural emphasis.
6	Duration	The length of a note or rest, usually measured according to the prevailing time signature.
7	Dotted rhythm	A rhythm created when note lengths are increased by half their value.
8	Pause	Note or chord held for longer than written, at the discretion of the performer or conductor.
9	Swung rhythm	A relaxed rhythm used in jazz where the beat has a triplet feel.
10	Anacrusis	Phrase that starts before the first beat of the bar.
11	Cross rhythm	Instruments playing different rhythms that cross each other. E.g. quaver vs triplet
12	Scotch snap	A note played quickly on the beat, followed by a longer note 3 times its length. E.g. semiquaver to dotted quaver.
13	Free time	A type of rhythm that has no regular metre or constant pulse.

4. Dynamics

1	<i>pp</i>	Pianissimo = Very soft & very quiet
2	<i>p</i>	Piano = Soft & Quiet
3	<i>mp</i>	Mezzo Piano = Medium soft & quiet
4	<i>mf</i>	Mezzo Forte = Medium loud
5	<i>f</i>	Forte = Loud
6	<i>ff</i>	Fortissimo – Very loud
7	Crescendo	Getting louder
8	Diminuendo	Getting quieter
9	Terraced dynamics	Abrupt and sudden changes from forte to piano and vice versa, a key feature of Baroque music and often achieved through the adding or taking away of instruments.

Wider listening: For great examples of pieces that feature changes in tempo, dynamics and rhythms listen to pieces from the Romantic period and the nationalist composers of Russia.

1. Performance matters

1	Glissando	Slide over a series of notes, commonly found in piano, harp and string music.
2	Improvisation	Making music up as you go along, jazz does it a lot!
3	Phrasing	Often shown by a curved line over the music, it is like a musical sentence.
4	Portamento	A gentle slide between two notes.
5	Melisma	Singing technique where two or more notes are sung on one syllable.
6	Hammer on	Guitar technique where the left hand strikes the string percussively, causing the note to sound on its own.
6	Pizzicato	An orchestral string playing technique where the players pluck the strings, creating a dry, percussive sound.
7	Pull off	A guitar technique where the left hand releases a note while it is still sounding, causing a lower note to sound.
8	Cover	The re-recording of an earlier song by a different artist.
9	Double stopping	Playing of two notes together on a stringed instrument, either by bowing or plucking.
10	Doubling	The same part played by two instruments, either in unison or in octaves.

2. Performance matters continued

1	Dynamics	The volume of the music.
2	Ensemble	A group of musicians.
3	Harmonics	A flute like sound created on a string instrument by lightly touching the string.
4	Lyrics	The words of a song.
5	Range	The span of notes possible on an instrument/voice.
6	Slide	When two different notes are played after each other and everything in between is sounded.
7	Solo	A work for voice/instrument without accompaniment.
	Tablature	A way music is written for guitar, with six lines representing the string, and numbers representing frets.
8	Tessitura	The specific range being used by an instrument/voice.
9	Tremolo	An articulation particularly used by strings, where a note is repeated as rapidly as possible to give a shimmering effect.
10	Wah wah	Instruments playing different rhythms that cross each other. E.g. quaver vs triplet
11	Word painting	Feature of vocal music depicting the literal meaning of the lyrics, e.g. a descending run on the lyric 'down'

3. Types of musical work

1	Sonata	Work for solo instrument, in 3 or 4 movements.
2	Ballade	From the words dance and story, a piece that has narrative and dance like qualities.
3	Cantata	A medium-length multi-movement work for soloists, choir and orchestra, often with a religious text.
4	Chorale	Type of hymn for four voice parts – soprano, alto, tenor and bass.
5	Concerto Grosso	A Baroque form which contrasts a groups of soloists against the main body of the orchestra, usually in three movements.
6	Gigue	A quick Baroque dance, usually in compound metre and frequently used as the last movement in a suite.
7	March	Music with a strong rhythmic beat designed to synchronise walking steps, often used in military music.
8	Prelude	A large-scale work for soloist and orchestra, often in three contrasting movements.
9	Solo concerto	Abrupt and sudden changes from forte to piano and vice versa, a key feature of Baroque music and often achieved through the adding or taking away of instruments.
10	Suite	A set of separate works with a sense of unity. Those written in the Baroque period were often collections of dance movements.

Wider listening: For great examples of guitar techniques, look at Andy McKee. For word painting listen to Baroque or Vaughan-Williams. For suites listen to Handel.

1. Genres

1	Genre	A word used to describe a style.
2	Fusion	Music that combines two or more styles.
3	Musical theatre	A dramatic, narrative stage performance that includes singing, talking, acting and dancing.
4	Rock	A genre of popular music that emerged in the 20 th century.
5	Jazz	A general term to 20 th century improvisatory music. E.g. Ragtime, swing, Dixie and blues.
6	Oral tradition	Music passed down generations by playing and listening, rather than writing it down. World and folk.
7	Samba	A dance and music style with African and Brazilian influences.

2. Musical periods

1	Renaissance	Era in Western music between 1400 and 1600. Composers included Byrd, Gabrielli and Palestrina.
2	Baroque	Era in Western music between 1600 and 1750. Composers included Bach, Vivaldi and Handel.
3	Classical	Era in Western music between 1750 and 1820. Composers include Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert.
4	Romantic	The era referred to in Western music between 1820 and 1900. Composers include Wagner, Tchaikovsky and Strauss.

3. Instrumental music 1700-1820

1	Alberti Bass	Accompaniment style found in the left hand of many Classical piano works, where the chord is split into four notes – low, high, medium, high.
2	Counterpoint	The combination of two or more independent melodic lines.
3	Figured Bass	A type of Baroque musical shorthand where numbers are written below a continuo part to indicate the harmonies.
4	Fortepiano	The first type of piano, invented and popular in the classical period.
5	Fugue	A complex polyphonic genre for any number of parts, where a theme is stated and copied by others.
6	Harpsichord	A Baroque stringed keyboard instrument, the forerunner of the piano.
7	Movement	An independent, self-contained piece which is part of a larger work such as a symphony concerto or sonata.
	Orchestra	A large group of performers playing a variety of instruments. In Western music, it consists of strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion instruments.
8	Overture	Opening orchestral section of an opera, setting the mood and tone.
9	String quartet	A small ensemble made up of two violins, a viola and a cello.
10	Symphony	Large-scale work for orchestra, usually in four movements (fast–slow–dance–fast).

4. Vocal music

1	Chorus	The catchy, repeated section of a song that comes between the verses.
2	A cappella	Choral music that is sung without any instrumental accompaniment.
3	Accompaniment	Music played by the instruments backing the vocals in a pop song.
4	Aria	A song, usually found within a larger work, such as an opera or oratorio.
5	Backing vocals	A general term for a group of singers who support the lead singer by providing harmonies and adding to the texture of a song.
6	Four-part harmony	Music written for soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices, each singing a different part and sounding together as chords.
7	Oratorio	Genre of musical drama that combines soloists, choir and orchestra, but no movement, costume or props. The text is often religious.
8	Recitative	A style of setting words to music where the singer follows the natural inflections of speech, often with sparse accompaniment.
9	Round	Song which can be sung by two or more singers with staggered entries, and often repeated.
10	Syllabic	Singing only one note per syllable.
11	Vocal counterpoint	The combination of two or more independent sung melodic lines.

1. Music for stage and screen

1	Action songs	Songs involving movement, often linked to the meaning of the lyrics.
2	Character song	A song where the lyrics reflect the image of the singer, often found in musicals.
3	Cue	A signal given by a conductor or band leader to indicate the entrance of a player.
4	Diegetic music	Music which comes directly from the characters or the action in films.
5	Film score	Original music which is composed to accompany a movie.
6	Leitmotif	A short musical idea linked to a person, place or feeling.
7	Libretto	The words or text for the music of an opera or oratorio.
8	Mickey-Mousing	A movie technique that synchronises the music and the acting.
9	Non-diegetic music	Music which doesn't come directly from the characters or the action in films.
10	Orchestration	The art of writing or arranging music for a variety of instruments.
11	Recitative	A type of half-singing, half-speaking technique used in movies.
12	Soundtrack	The music that accompanies a movie, a television show or a video game.
13	Sung-through	An opera, movie or musical that has no spoken dialogue.
14	Underscore	Soft music in movies heard as background to dialogue or visuals.

2. Fusions

1	Groove	The 'feel' of the music, created mainly by the rhythm.
2	Bolero	A Spanish dance in moderate tempo and with three beats per bar.
3	Cubop	A genre that combines Cuban traditional music with bebop; a style used by jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie.
4	Danzon	A genre of Cuban instrumental dance music with complex rhythms.
5	Experimental music	Twentieth-century music that bypassed normal boundaries and tried to achieve something brand new.
6	Idiomatic	Music that is well suited to a particular instrument, where the composer knows the instrument's strengths and capabilities.
7	Jazz fusion	Genre that combines elements such as improvisation, syncopation and blue notes with other popular styles.
8	Salsa	Popular dance for male and female pairs, where the upper body has relatively small movements. It has strong Latin American influences.
9	Aeolian Mode	A scale system going from A-A using the white notes, popular in fusion.
10	Bebop	A jazz style featuring complex rhythms and melodies with an emphasis on improvisation. Prominent artists include Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie.

3. Fusion continued

1	Celtic	Term generally used to describe the distinctive sound of Irish and Scottish music. It makes extensive use of modes and the pentatonic scale.
2	Dorian mode	Scale system from D-D using the white notes, popular in fusion.
3	Electronic dance music	Term for music produced for clubs and raves – often combined with other styles to create fusions.
4	Folk Rock	Genre that combines traditional songs with modern styles.
5	Latin Jazz	A genre that combines jazz and Latin American rhythms.
	Loop	Where a sample is digitally repeated continuously.
7	MIDI	Musical instrument digital interface. A device used to transfer musical information between electronic instruments and computers.
8	Son	A Cuban song and dance genre that combines Hispanic and African music.
9	Folk music	Songs, dances or instrumental melodies of a particular region or country, often passed on orally and with an unknown composer.
10	World music	Broad term that describes the traditional, ethnic music of all countries.
11	Worldbeat	Genre that combines traditional world music elements with Western styles such as pop and rock.