Max’s Tempo Treasure Hunt

Learning objective: To understand and identify tempo in music, including how different speeds convey mood and style.

Max the monkey is listening to music from around the world to solve his rhythm puzzles. Read the terms and use your knowledge of music theory to complete the tasks below.

Tempo is the speed at which a piece of music is played. Composers use Italian terms to tell musicians how fast or slow to play. A metronome is a device that helps musicians keep a steady beat, measured in BPM. A slow tempo can make a piece feel sad or calm, while a fast tempo can feel exciting or energetic.

Word bank: Largo · Adagio · Andante · Allegro · Presto · BPM (Beats Per Minute)

1. Max is listening to a very fast, energetic song that makes him want to jump around. Which Italian term from the word bank best describes this tempo, and why? (2 marks)

2. If a song has a tempo of 60 BPM and another has 120 BPM, which one is faster? Explain how you know. (2 marks)

3. Define the term 'Largo'. If you were writing a piece of music about a sleepy sloth, would you choose 'Largo' or 'Presto'? Explain your choice. (2 marks)

4. Look at the word 'Andante'. In musical terms, this is often described as a 'walking pace'. Why might a composer choose this tempo for a song about a steady journey? (2 marks)

5. Imagine a piece of music starts at 'Adagio' and gradually speeds up to 'Allegro'. What effect does this change in tempo have on the listener? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of a musical instrument (like a drum or a violin) and use lines and patterns around it to show the difference between a 'Presto' tempo and a 'Largo' tempo.

Extension challenge: Choose a favourite song you know. Research its tempo (BPM) online or try to tap along with a stopwatch. Write down why you think the composer chose that specific speed for the mood of the song.