

Maestros and Melodies: Exploring Musical Composition

Learning objective: To identify the role of a composer, understand how music is structured, and analyse the influence of mood and tempo in musical pieces.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of musical terminology to answer. Max the monkey is curious about how patterns in maths help composers create beautiful symphonies!

Word bank: Composer · Tempo · Pitch · Rhythm · Orchestra · Symphony · Dynamics · Notation

1. Max is looking at a piece of musical notation. He says that a composer is like an architect for sound. Explain why a composer needs to understand both rhythm and pitch to build a piece of music. (2 marks)

2. If a composer wants to create a feeling of excitement and urgency in their music, how should they adjust the tempo and the dynamics? Justify your answer. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast a solo performance with a full orchestral performance. Why might a composer choose one over the other for a specific piece of music? (3 marks)

4. Imagine you are a composer. You have been commissioned to write a short piece representing a thunderstorm. Which instruments would you choose to represent the rumbling thunder and the sharp strikes of lightning, and why? (3 marks)

5. What might happen to the 'mood' of a well-known, slow, and gentle lullaby if a composer suddenly changed the tempo to 'allegro' (fast) and used loud, harsh dynamics? (2 marks)

6. Look at the word 'Symphony'. Based on your musical studies, explain the relationship between a composer's written score and the final sound produced by an orchestra. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'sound map' of a piece of music that tells a story. Use symbols and colours to represent loud, quiet, fast, and slow sections as if you were composing a score for a forest scene.



Extension challenge: Research a famous historical composer. Write a short paragraph explaining one way their music broke the 'rules' of the time, and argue whether this innovation made their music better or worse.