

Grade 3 Music Assessment: The Art of Composition

Learning objective: To demonstrate understanding of musical elements, notation, and the creative process of composition.

Read each question carefully. Use your musical vocabulary to explain your ideas clearly. Show your working for any calculations or rhythmic notation tasks.

Max the monkey is composing a jungle symphony to celebrate the annual harvest. He wants to capture the sound of rustling leaves, the sudden pitter-patter of rain, and the rhythmic drumming of sticks on hollow logs. He has decided to use a steady beat to keep all the jungle animals playing in time together, but he is struggling to decide how to build excitement throughout his piece.

Word bank: Tempo · Dynamics · Pitch · Rhythm · Ostinato · Crescendo · Texture · Timbre · Structure · Duration

1. Define the term 'dynamics' and explain how a composer might use a 'crescendo' to change the mood of a piece of music. (2 marks)

2. Max wants to create an 'ostinato' for his jungle piece. Explain what an ostinato is and why it is a useful technique in composition. (2 marks)

3. If Max decides to change the 'tempo' of his composition from 60 beats per minute to 120 beats per minute, describe the effect this would have on the listener. (2 marks)

4. Max is buying small percussion instruments for his band. A shaker costs £2.50 and a pair of claves costs £3.75. If he buys two shakers and one pair of claves, what is the total cost in dollars and cents? (3 marks)

5. Compare and contrast the 'timbre' of a metal triangle compared to a wooden drum. How would these different sounds contribute to the atmosphere of a composition? (4 marks)

6. Justify why a composer might choose to use 'silence' (rests) within a composition. What impact does this have on the overall texture of the music? (4 marks)

7. Max wants to structure his composition in an A-B-A format. Describe what this means, and explain why this structure provides a sense of balance for the audience. (5 marks) (5 marks)

Draw: Draw a graphic score representing a 4-beat pattern for Max's jungle piece. Use symbols to show where you would place loud (forte) and quiet (piano) sounds.



Extension challenge: Explain what might happen to the audience's emotional response if Max suddenly switched from a major key to a minor key halfway through his piece. How does this change the 'texture' and 'mood' of the music? Total: /25