

Composition Masters: Musical Building Blocks

Learning objective: To understand the core components of musical composition, including rhythm, melody, structure, and dynamics.

Use these flashcards to test your knowledge of composition terminology. Work with a partner to define the terms and discuss how Max the monkey uses these concepts to solve his musical puzzles.

What is a 'Melody' in a musical composition?

A sequence of musical notes that are musically satisfying; the 'tune' of the piece.

Define 'Tempo' and how it affects a piece of music.

The speed or pace of a given piece of music, often measured in beats per minute.

What does the term 'Dynamics' refer to in music?

The variation in loudness between notes or phrases, such as piano (soft) or forte (loud).

Explain what an 'Ostinato' is.

A motif or phrase that is persistently repeated in the same musical voice.

What is the difference between 'Pitch' and 'Rhythm'?

Pitch is how high or low a note sounds, while rhythm is the pattern of regular or irregular pulses caused by the duration of notes.

Define 'Structure' in a musical composition.

The overall layout or 'plan' of a piece, such as verse-chorus or ABA form.

What does a 'Crescendo' mean?

A gradual increase in the volume of the music.

How would you describe 'Timbre'?

The 'color' or quality of a sound that distinguishes one instrument or voice from another.

What is 'Texture' in music?

The way that melody, rhythm, and harmonic materials are combined in a composition, determining the overall quality of the sound.

Why is 'Silence' considered an important part of composition?

Silence provides contrast, builds tension, and allows the listener to process the musical phrases.