

Year 5 Music: Exploring Great Composers

Learning objective: To evaluate the influence of historical composers and analyse how musical elements are used to convey emotion and narrative.

Read each question carefully. Use your musical vocabulary to explain your reasoning. Ensure your answers are clear and written in full sentences where requested.

Max the monkey is currently studying how 18th and 19th-century composers built musical masterpieces. He has noticed that these composers often used specific musical 'tools' to paint a picture in the listener's mind. For example, by changing the dynamics from pianissimo (very quiet) to fortissimo (very loud), a composer can build tension, much like a story building to a climax. By altering the tempo, they can make the music feel hurried and anxious or slow and reflective. Every instrument in an orchestra provides a unique timbre, which the composer carefully chooses to represent different characters or environments.

Word bank: Orchestra · Tempo · Dynamics · Pitch · Texture · Rhythm · Melody · Harmony · Composer · Timbre

1. Define the role of a 'composer'. How does their work differ from that of a performer? (2 marks)

2. Identify two musical elements that a composer might change to make a piece of music sound 'scary' or 'mysterious'. Explain why these choices work. (3 marks)

3. If a composer wants to represent a gentle stream, which instruments in an orchestra might they choose? Justify your answer by referring to the instrument's timbre. (3 marks)

4. Compare and contrast the effect of a 'presto' (very fast) tempo with an 'adagio' (slow) tempo on the listener's emotions. (4 marks)

5. Imagine you are writing a piece of music about a storm. Describe how you would use dynamics and texture to show the storm beginning, reaching its peak, and fading away. (5 marks)

6. Extended Writing Task: Choose a famous composer you have studied. Explain how their musical style changed over their lifetime and justify why their contributions are still significant to musicians today. (8 marks)

Draw: Draw a graphic score representing a thunderstorm. Use different patterns, lines, and symbols to show where the music is loud, quiet, fast, or slow.



Extension challenge: What might happen to the audience's perception of a film if the background music was replaced by a completely different genre? Justify your answer. Total: /25