

Year 5 Music: The Art of Composition Assessment

Learning objective: To understand, apply, and evaluate the structural and expressive elements of musical composition.

Read each question carefully. Use your musical vocabulary to explain your ideas. You have 45 minutes to complete this assessment.

Max the monkey is composing a jungle-themed piece for his school orchestra. He wants to represent the sound of a rainstorm starting quietly, building to a thunderous climax, and then fading away. He decides to use a repeating rhythmic pattern on the drums to keep the pulse steady while the strings play higher-pitched, tremolo notes to mimic the sound of falling rain.

Word bank: tempo · dynamics · timbre · ostinato · crescendo · rhythm · texture · motif · structure · pitch

1. Identify the musical term for a 'repeating rhythmic pattern' that Max uses in his composition. Explain why this is an effective tool for keeping a piece of music steady. (2 marks)

2. Max wants the music to start softly and grow louder as the storm approaches. Which musical term describes a gradual increase in volume? How would you write this on a musical score? (2 marks)

3. If Max wanted to change the 'timbre' of his piece to make it sound more 'metallic' or 'sharp', what instrument family should he incorporate and why? (3 marks)

4. Compare and contrast the effect of 'high pitch' notes versus 'low pitch' notes when trying to represent different weather patterns in music. (4 marks)

5. Explain why 'silence' (rests) can be just as important as the notes themselves when composing a piece of music. Give an example of how you would use a rest to create tension. (4 marks)

6. Justify your answer: If you were composing a piece about a busy city, would you choose a fast or slow tempo? Explain how your choice of tempo and dynamics would help the listener 'see' the city through sound. (3 marks)

7. Extended Writing Task: Imagine you are composing a soundtrack for a short film about Zara the zebra wandering across the grassy plains. Describe the structure of your piece. How will you use dynamics, tempo, and different instrument textures to tell the story of her journey? You must use at least four words from the word bank in your response. (5 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'graphic score' for a 4-second piece of music that represents a gentle breeze turning into a strong wind. Use shapes, lines, and colours to show how the pitch and dynamics change.



Extension challenge: Total: /25. Extension Task: What might happen to the 'texture' of a musical composition if you added ten extra instruments playing the same melody at once? How would this change the audience's emotional response to the piece?