

Max's Musical Dynamics Investigation

Learning objective: To understand, identify, and use musical dynamics (volume) to express mood and emotion in a composition.

Max the monkey is busy composing a new symphony, but he needs your help to map out the dynamics! Use this template to plan how volume changes can change the atmosphere of your music. Think about how loud or quiet different sections should be to tell a story through sound.

Word bank: Pianissimo · Piano · Mezzo-piano · Mezzo-forte · Forte · Fortissimo · Crescendo · Diminuendo · Volume · Intensity · Atmosphere

1. The Opening Scene: Describe the mood of your music at the start. Which dynamic marking would you choose to set this scene and why? (3 marks)

2. Building Tension: Explain how you would use a 'crescendo' to shift the listener's emotions during your piece. What might happen if the volume increased too quickly? (3 marks)

3. Contrasting Sections: Compare and contrast a 'fortissimo' section with a 'pianissimo' section. How does the change in volume alter the way the listener feels? (4 marks)

4. Justify your Choice: If you wanted to represent a gentle stream turning into a rushing waterfall, which dynamic markings would you use? Explain your reasoning. (4 marks)

5. The Final Flourish: How do you intend to end your composition to ensure the audience remembers the final mood? Justify your decision. (3 marks)

6. Creative Evaluation: If you were to perform this piece for an audience, what instruments would you choose to best highlight these dynamic changes? Explain why. (4 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine your music is the soundtrack for a forest adventure. Write a short paragraph describing how you would use a 'diminuendo' to signify the characters hiding from a predator. Then, create a 'Dynamic Map' on a separate sheet using symbols to show the rise and fall of volume throughout your entire piece.