

Mastering Tempo with Max and Zara

Learning objective: To understand, identify, and apply the concept of tempo in music, using accurate Italian terminology.

Read each question carefully. Use your knowledge of musical terminology and rhythm to provide detailed, thoughtful answers.

Max the monkey is trying to conduct a jungle orchestra, while Zara the zebra is busy mapping out rhythmic patterns. They have discovered that tempo, the speed at which a piece of music is played, changes the entire 'mood' of a composition. By measuring the BPM, they can ensure every performer stays in perfect time.

Word bank: Largo · Adagio · Andante · Moderato · Allegro · Presto · BPM (Beats Per Minute) · Metronome

1. Max is composing a lullaby for the forest animals. He wants the music to feel slow and relaxed, like a sleepy sloth. Which tempo marking should he choose from the word bank, and why would a higher BPM be unsuitable for this specific mood? (3 marks)

2. Zara is painting a mural inspired by a frantic, high-speed chase scene. If she chooses 'Presto' for the background music, explain how this tempo would influence the listener's heart rate and perception of the action. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast 'Andante' and 'Allegro'. In your response, describe a scenario for each where that tempo would be the most effective choice. (4 marks)

4. If a piece of music has a tempo of 60 BPM, how many beats occur in a single second? Show your calculation. (2 marks)

5. Justify your answer: If a conductor decided to suddenly change the tempo from 'Moderato' to 'Largo' halfway through a song, what might happen to the audience's emotional connection to the performance? (3 marks)

6. What might happen if a drummer in a band ignored the set tempo and started playing at double speed compared to the rest of the musicians? Explain the impact on the ensemble's performance. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a visual representation of 'Allegro'. Use lines, shapes, and patterns to show how the movement of the music feels fast and energetic, just like Zara's striped patterns when she dances.



Extension challenge: Choose a favourite piece of music you listen to at home. Research its approximate BPM. Write a short paragraph explaining why the composer chose that specific tempo and how the music would change if the tempo were doubled or halved.