

KS4 GCSE	
Music	Musical Elements

	Knowledge	Answer
1	What is pitch?	How high or low a note is.
2	What is an interval?	The distance between any two notes.
3	What is a motif?	A fragment of a melody.
4	What is a phrase in music?	A longer melodic idea, like a musical 'sentence.'
5	What is a hook or riff?	A memorable repeated melodic idea designed to catch the ear.
6	What is melodic movement by step?	Movement between notes that are next to each other in the scale.
7	What is a skip?	A movement equal to two steps, skipping over a note in the scale.
8	What is a leap?	A melodic movement larger than a skip.
9	What does scalar mean?	When a melody moves along using notes in scale order.
10	What does chromatic mean?	Melodic movement using notes not in the key.
11	What is a passing note?	Notes which link chord tones.
12	What is a countermelody?	A secondary melody played alongside the main melody.
13	What is sequence?	Repeating a melodic idea starting on a different note.
14	What is ostinato?	Constant repetition of a melodic idea.
15	What is inversion?	Turning a melody upside down.
16	What is retrograde?	Playing a melody backwards.

17	What does articulation mean in music?	How you play or sing a note; it adds expression.
18	What is staccato?	Playing notes short and detached.
19	What is legato?	Playing notes smoothly and connected.
20	What is a slur?	A smooth articulation between two notes.
21	What is an accent?	Emphasising a note so it sounds louder than others.
22	What is pizzicato?	Plucking string instrument notes with the fingers.
23	What is arco?	Playing strings with the bow.
24	What is tremolo?	Rapidly bowing to create a trembling effect.
25	What is vibrato?	A slight wobbling of pitch for expression.
26	What is tonguing?	A technique brass and wind players use to articulate notes.
27	What is a glissando?	A dramatic slide across a wide range of notes.
28	What is portamento?	A smooth slide between two notes.
29	What is sforzando?	A sudden, strong emphasis on a note.
30	What do dynamics refer to?	How loud or soft music is played.
31	What does fortissimo (ff) mean?	Very loud.
32	What does forte (f) mean?	Loud.
33	What does mezzo-forte (mf) mean?	Fairly loud.
34	What does mezzo-piano (mp) mean?	Fairly soft.
35	What does piano (p) mean?	Soft.
36	What does pianissimo (pp) mean?	Very soft.
37	What does crescendo mean?	Gradually getting louder.
38	What does diminuendo mean?	Gradually getting softer.

39	What does texture mean in music?	The layers and parts in music and how they fit together.
40	What is monophonic texture?	A single melodic voice or instrument.
41	What is unison?	Two or more instruments/voices playing the same notes at the same time.
42	What is polyphonic texture?	Multiple independent lines interweaving.
43	What is homophonic texture?	Chordal texture or melody with accompaniment.
44	What is contrary motion?	Notes moving in opposite directions.
45	What is parallel motion?	Notes moving in the same direction with the same interval.
46	What is structure in music?	How sections of a piece are ordered.
47	What is a typical pop song structure?	Intro – Verse – Chorus – Bridge/Middle 8 – Chorus – Outro.
48	What is binary form?	Music with two sections (AB).
49	What is ternary form?	Music with three sections (ABA).
50	What is rondo form?	A recurring section (A) alternating with contrasting sections (ABACA).
51	What is strophic form?	Verses sung to the same music.
52	What is through-composed form?	New music for every section, no repeats.
53	What is theme and variation?	A main theme is repeated with changes in melody, rhythm, chords, tempo, instrumentation, or key.
54	What does harmony mean in music?	How chords are used in a piece.
55	What is a triad?	A chord made up of three notes (1, 3, 5 of a scale).
56	What is an inversion?	Rearranging the order of notes in a chord.
57	What is a power chord?	A chord using only the root and 5th.
58	What is an arpeggio?	Playing the notes of a chord separately.

59	What is modulation?	Changing key during a piece.
60	What is a cadence?	The movement between two chords at the end of a phrase.
61	What are the four main cadences?	Perfect (finished), Plagal (Amen), Imperfect (cliffhanger), Interrupted (surprise twist).
62	What is rhythm?	The organisation of notes and rests in time.
63	How many beats is a semibreve worth?	4 beats.
64	How many beats is a minim worth?	2 beats.
65	How many beats is a crotchet worth?	1 beat.
66	How many beats is a quaver worth?	½ beat.
67	How many beats is a semiquaver worth?	¼ beat.
68	What does a dot after a note mean?	It increases the note's length by half its original value.
69	What is a tie?	Joining two notes to extend their duration.
70	What is a triplet?	3 notes played in the time of 2.
71	What is polyrhythm?	Two or more rhythms with the same metre played at the same time.
72	What is cross-rhythm?	Conflicting rhythms played simultaneously, often in different metres.
73	What does tempo mean?	The speed of music.
74	What is Largo?	Slowly and broadly (40–60 bpm).
75	What is Adagio?	Slow, but not as slow as Largo (60–75 bpm).
76	What is Andante?	At a walking pace (75–105 bpm).
77	What is Moderato?	At a moderate pace (105–120 bpm).
78	What is Allegro?	Quite fast (120–155 bpm).
79	What is Vivace?	Quick and lively (155–175 bpm).
80	What is Presto?	Very fast (175–200 bpm).
81	What does accelerando mean?	Gradually speeding up.

82	What does ritardando/rallentando mean?	Gradually slowing down.
83	What does ritenuto mean?	A sudden slowing down.
84	What is rubato?	Flexible tempo for expression.
85	What is a time signature?	It shows how beats are organised in a bar (the metre).
86	What does the top number show?	The number of beats in a bar.
87	What does the bottom number show?	The type of beat (2 = minims, 4 = crotchets, 8 = quavers).
88	What is common time?	4/4 time signature, shown with a 'C.'
89	What is simple metre?	Beats divided into two notes.
90	What is compound metre?	Beats divided into three notes.
91	What is irregular metre?	Time signatures with odd numbers of beats per bar.