The Elements of Music and their definition

These are essential to know for every topic at KS3! These elements of music are involved in every topic over the 3 years at KS3.

Knowledge Organiser: Theme and variation

1. Dynamics - The volume of the music — RAG

2. Duration- The length of a sound — RAG

3. Harmony- The relationship of notes — RAG

4.Melody - The main tune — RAG

5. Metre - How many beats in a bar — RAG

6. Pitch - How high or low the sound is — RAG

7. Rhythm - The pattern of the notes — RAG

8. Structure - The sections of the music — RAG

9. Tempo - The speed of the music — RAG

10. Timbre - The sound of an instrument — RAG

11. Tonality - The mood of the music — RAG

12. A theme is a short musical idea. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star was originally called theme and variation and Mozart wrote a piece whereby the original is heard followed by a variation of the same theme.

13. A variation is a slight change from the original. For example the original theme may be loud (forte) and the variation may be quiet (piano).

14. Flat - A flat in music is a note that has been lowered by 1 note (a semitone). For example B would become Bb (the black key between A and B).

15. Minor - Music in a minor key has a more solemn and mournful sound to it. It can be used to convey sad/scary emotions and is very powerful. To work out a minor chord you need to start on a note, count up 3 semitones, then from that note count up 4 semitones. For example Cm = C - up 3 - Eb - up 4 - G.
C Eb G

16. Major - Music in a major key has a more happy and uplifting sound to it. It can be used to convey joyous and calm emotions. To work out a major chord you need to start on a note, count up 4 semitones, then from that note count up 3 semitones. For example C = C - up 4 - E - up 3 - G.
C E G

17. Chord - A chord is where multiple notes are played at the same time. Commonly a 3 note chord is played.

You can play the notes separately but this is called a broken chord.

18. Arrangement - A musical arrangement is where you play/record an existing piece/pieces of music and arrange them to make a coherent performance. This is also linked to the term structure.