

Name: _____



Top Tips and Revision Tasks for helping you achieve your very best in your GCSE Music Listening exam

- Always chase every available mark on the paper: ensure that every question has a FULL answer.
- READ the question carefully. UNDERLINE keywords and make sure you know exactly what the question demands, fully answer all sections of the question.
- When putting your answer, be guided by the number of marks available e.g. a one mark answer probably only needs a single word or two. A two-mark answer probably needs a short sentence.
- Explain CLEARLY what you mean using **musical vocabulary** at all times
- Attempt every question; look for clues as to the answer in the question
- BE THOROUGHLY PREPARED: revise as you go along week by week– “cramming” is NEVER a good idea
- LISTEN CAREFULLY: remember, the answer to every Listening question is in the musical extract somewhere

Exam terms

The words in the following list are often used in the Listening section of the Music GCSE paper. Most of them are verbs (“doing” words). It is extremely important that you know what these words are instructing you to do in your answer. (If you don’t follow ‘command’ words exactly, you’ll miss picking up vital marks).

- Compare write about similarities **and** differences
- Contrast write about the differences ONLY
- Comment on write about what YOU think
- Define give a precise meaning
- Explain give the reasons for... (these MUST be based on the main musical elements)
- Describe give a musical description using appropriate vocabulary
- Name / Identify give a precise name / musical label to...
- Justify give your musical reasons for....

Revision Task 1– write your own exam questions using these exam terms then try and answer them yourself. Alternatively, have a friend write questions too, then try answering each other’s questions.

Key features you need to be able to recognise through listening

Revision Task 2 – listen to these key features either through playing them or though listening to the set works and memorise what they sound like.

Intervals

- Unison
- Octaves
- Thirds/Sixths
- Fourths/Fifths

Melodic Movement

- Step
- Leap
- Scalic
- Chromatic

Tempo Changes

- Rit/Ritardando
- Rall/Rallentando
- Accelerando

Cadences (in order of likeliness)

- Perfect
- Imperfect
- Interrupted
- Plagal

Ornamentation

- Trill
- Turn
- Mordent

Phrasing/Articulation

- Legato
- Staccato

Dynamic Changes

- Crescendo
- Decrescendo
- Diminuendo
- Sforzando/Accent

Dynamics

pp – pianissimo, very soft
p – piano, soft
mp – mezzo piano, medium soft
mf – mezzo forte, medium loud
f – forte, loud
ff – fortissimo, very loud

Revision tips

There is no better revision for your GCSE in music than to **actively** listen to your set works. By actively listening I mean listening carefully, appraising, analysing and deconstructing music, i.e. figuring out what it is made up of. By actively listening to music I do not mean putting music on in the background whilst you get on with something else – this type of listening will be of no help in enabling you to achieve your target grade or beyond. Below are some questions that will help you with your active listening.

Revision Task 3 – answer each of the following revision questions for each of the set works to help develop your knowledge and understanding of each piece. Bear in mind that not all questions will apply to every set work. Write down your answers on a separate piece of paper and tick off each set work in the task 3 column, using the table below, once you have answered all questions.

AoS 1				AoS 2			AoS 3			AoS4				
		Task #...				Task #...			Task #...			Task #...		
		3	4	5			3	4	5			3	4	5
Bach				Purcell			Williams			Spalding				
Beethoven				Queen			Wicked			Afro-Celt				

General:

- How would you describe the music of this opening section? (Think about the six elements of music – Texture, timbre, tempo, duration, dynamics, pitch)
- When was this piece composed? (date and period)
- Who composed this piece?
- In what period was this piece composed?
- Describe the mood of this piece. How do the musical elements combine to create this mood or atmosphere?
- What are the main musical characteristics of this style of music? (e.g. expressionist, minimalism)
- Compare and contrast two set works. Justify which one you prefer? Give two musical reasons for your preference. Do this with all set works.

Tonality:

- Define the tonality of this piece (Major, minor, modal - Renaissance/church music, atonal - 20th Century)
- Key of each piece at the start, end, any changes of key in between and the key of themes.

Tempo/Meter:

- Identify how many beats there are in each bar (Is there an obvious reason for your choice?)
- Name an Italian term to describe the tempo of this piece?
- Identify the speed of the music
- Identify the time signature

Harmony:

- Name the cadence heard at the end of the piece and at the end of important sections.
- Describe the chord scheme for each section of the piece

Texture:

- Explain the texture of this music? Why? Identify the texture (homophonic, monophonic, heterophonic or polyphonic?) Is there an obvious reason for your choice?
- Identify the number of voices/instruments heard.
- Comment on the accompaniment.



Timbre/Instrumentation:

1. Name all instruments you can hear, use traditional/full names.
2. Identify the instrument families that each of these belong to
3. Identify the type of voice heard (soprano, alto, tenor, bass)
4. Name the solo instrument/s heard.
5. Name the instrumental group heard (e.g. string quartet)
6. Comment on the instrumentation
7. Explain how the instrument is being played?

Dynamics:

1. Describe the dynamics of this piece and how they vary? Use Italian terms.
2. Name the dynamic marking that opens and ends this piece.



Word setting:

1. Explain how the music reflects the words?
2. Explain the word setting (e.g. melismatic/syllabic)

Form and structure:

1. Name the form of this piece? (e.g. binary, ternary, verse & chorus, rondo, theme & variations)
2. Use A / B / C to describe the form of this piece
3. Explain the main structural features of this form?
4. Describe the features of each 'section' (e.g. verse, exposition)

Melody :

1. Identify key motifs and their location in the piece.
2. Name who/what is playing the tune?

Rhythm:

1. Comment on the rhythm of the extract (e.g. triplets, swung rhythm, syncopated, dotted etc.)



Playing techniques:

1. Name any playing techniques/effect heard in the set work, by which instrument and where in the piece (e.g. pizzicato, slide...)

Revision Task 4 - Now that you are able to answer these questions for each of the set works, memorise these key points.

Revision Task 5 – Now get a parent/relative/friend to test you. Once they are happy with your answers for each set work, get them to tick off the set work on the grid above. If they are not happy that you can't remember all of the relevant information then go back to Revision Task 4 and continue memorising the key features of the piece. Then ask to be retested... Continue until you can answer all of the questions without error!

Revision Task 6 – When asked to 'name a musical device used in the bass' the examiner is likely to be looking for one of the following... Ensure you understand the meaning of the following musical devices heard in the bass, perhaps try playing examples of each in order to help you remember what they mean:

1. Augmentation – double note values
2. Diminution – halving note values
3. Sequence – repeating a passage at the same, higher or lower pitch
4. Ostinato – a repeated chord pattern, melody or rhythm
5. Pedal – a sustained note in the bass (can be in the middle or top part too)
6. Retrograde – playing a melody backwards
7. Inversion – playing a melody upside down
8. Retrograde inversion – upside down and back to front
9. Syncopation – off beat rhythms

Revision task 7 - When asked to 'name a rhythmic device' the examiner is likely to be looking for one of the following, depending on the given set work. Ensure you understand the meaning of the following rhythmic devices:

1. Swung rhythm
2. Syncopation
3. Triplet rhythm
4. Hemiola
5. Rhythmic displacement
6. Cross rhythms

A. Further Important Revision Tasks – Learn the following:

1. Understand the key features of the Baroque period (examples of which can be heard in the Handel set work), Classical period (examples of which can be heard in the Mozart set work), Romantic period (examples of which can be heard in the Chopin set work) and Modern period (examples of which can be heard in the Schoenberg set work).
2. Understand the key features of minimalism (examples of which can be heard in the Reich set work), musicals (examples of which can be heard in Berstein set work) and expressionism (examples of which can be heard in the Schoenberg set work).
3. Know the key themes/motifs/riffs in each piece – try singing them, listen to them and writing them down in music notation.
4. Know the intervals between notes in key themes.
5. Know and understand all of the key words in your glossary, from the revision sheets and from discussion in class. Know what set work each word can apply to.
6. Draw up a chart and list all the instruments in each set work, note the instruments playing the main melodies. Make sure you can recognise which instrument are playing and when.
7. Know the chord sequences in All Blues (Davies set work) and Grace (Buckely set work)
8. Understand the key features of dance music (Moby set work)
9. Understand how to write chords in root position on the staff.
10. Know the meaning of tonality and the differences between major, minor and modal.
11. Know the different sections of an Indian piece of music (Rag Desh set work)
12. Know the notes of Rag Desh (Rag Desh set work)
13. The style of each piece of music, e.g. Moby's Why Does My Heart feel so bad is a form of dance music
14. Where appropriate, know how music technology is used in the set work



B. Further Important Revision Tasks

1. In order to reinforce your understanding of the set works answer all of the listening and appraising questions again. Check your answers against the answer sheets found on BSpace.
2. Listen to the 'further listening' recommendations in the GCSE text book (you might like to try you tube or Spotify) and identify how the key features of your set work are similar or dissimilar to these pieces.