

GCSE Terms Knowledge Organiser AQA

GCSE Music

Instrumentation

1. **Distortion** – An effect that makes the guitar sound gritty
2. **Reverb** – An effect to make the vocals seem further away
3. **Double Tracking** – Technique to make music thicker
4. **Vibrato** – Wavering the note to make it more expressive
5. **Falsetto** – Vocal technique of moving into the upper register
6. **Pizzicato** – Plucking the instrument (ARTICULATION)
7. **Con Arco** – Using the bow on the instrument (ARTICULATION)
8. **Mute** – Changes the timbre of the brass instrument

Melody (main tune)

1. **Conjunct** - Stepwise
2. **Disjunct** - Leaps
3. **Scalic** – Uses the scale (90% of music)
4. **Triadic** – Uses the chord
5. **Chromatic** – Moves in semitones
6. **Sequence** – Same tune, up or down a step
7. **Staccato** – Snappy, short
8. **Legato** - Smooth
9. **Glissando** – Sliding one note to another
10. **Acciaccatura/Grace Note** – A quick note
11. **Trill** – Repeatedly alternating between two notes
12. **Mordent** – Alternating once with the note above or below
13. **Ostinato** – A repeating musical pattern
14. **Riff** – Repeating musical pattern in popular music
15. **Syllabic** – When each note has its own syllable
16. **Melisma** – When a note is spread across many syllables

Tonality – Is it major or minor?

1. **Major** - Happy
2. **Minor** – Sad
3. **Perfect Cadence** – Sounds finished
4. **Imperfect Cadence** – Sounds unfinished
5. **Plagal Cadence** – Finished by church-y
6. **Tierce de Picardie** – Minor key but finishes on a major chord
7. **Harmony**
8. **Consonant** – The notes match
9. **Dissonant** – The notes clash
10. **Pedal** – Repeating note in the bass

Texture (layers of sound)


1. **Monophonic** – One line
2. **Homophonic/Melody and Accompaniment** – Chords and melody moving together.
3. **Polyphonic** – Interweaving lines
4. **Octaves** – Thickens the texture
5. **Unison** – Same tune, same pitch
6. **Call & Response**
7. **A Cappella** – Without instruments
8. **SATB** (soprano, alto, tenor, bass)

Structure (layout)

1. **12-bar blues** – Chords I, IV, and V
2. **Verse-Chorus Form** – Standard form used in popular songs
3. **Symphony** – Orchestra
4. **Concerto** – Solo + orchestra
5. **Sonata Form**: Exposition (exposes the theme), Development (develops the theme),
6. **ABA** - Ternary
7. **AB** - Binary

Dynamics (volume)

Pianissimo, piano - quiet
Mezzo piano/forte - medium
Forte/fortissimo - loud
Sforzando - forced
De/crescendo – gradually quieter/loud



Recommended Links:

<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspe/cs/zfwv7nb>

Rhythm (beats)

1. **Metre/Time signatures**: 4/4, 3/4, 3/8, 6/8
2. **Upbeat/Anacrusis** – Starts before beat 1
3. **Crotchet** – 1 beat
4. **Quaver** – ½ beat
5. **Dotted rhythms**
6. **Triplets**
7. **Augmentation** – Doubling the rhythm length.
8. **Diminution** – shortening the rhythm length.
9. **Syncopation** – Off the beat
10. **Backbeat** – Emphasis on beats 2 and 4

Tempo (speed)

Lento (slow)
Andante (walking)
Moderato (moderate)
Allegro (quick)
Presto (very quick)

