

## A Level Music – EdExcel

### Overview

There are three components to the EdExcel music A-Level:

1. Performance  
Non-Exam Assessment (coursework) contributing 30% to your final grade.
2. Composition  
Non-Exam Assessment (coursework) contributing 30% to your final grade.
3. Appraisal  
Assessed in a final exam in the summer of year 13. This contributes 40% to your final grade.

For the appraisal section you have the following areas of study and set works:

Area of study	Set works
<b>Vocal Music</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein feste Burg</li><li>• Vaughan Williams, On Wenlock Edge</li></ul>
<b>Instrumental Music</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clara Wieck-Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: movement 1</li><li>• Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique</li></ul>
<b>Music for Film</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Danny Elfman, Batman Returns</li><li>• Bernard Herrmann, Psycho</li></ul>
<b>Popular Music and Jazz</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kate Bush, Hounds of Love</li><li>• Beatles, Revolver</li><li>• Courtney Pine, Back in the Day</li></ul>
<b>Fusions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Debussy, Estampes</li><li>• Anoushka Shankar, Breathing Under Water</li></ul>
<b>New Directions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kaija Saariaho, Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics</li><li>• Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring</li></ul>

<b>Component 1: Performing (*Component code: 9MU0/01)</b>
<b>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</b> <b>30% of the qualification</b> <b>60 marks</b>
<b>Content overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approaches to performing.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A public performance of one or more pieces, performed as a recital.</li> <li>Performance can be playing or singing solo, in an ensemble, improvising, or realising music using music technology.</li> <li>The total performance time across all pieces must be a minimum of 8 minutes.</li> <li>Performances must be recorded after 1 March in the year of certification and all materials for assessment submitted to arrive by 15 May in the year of certification.</li> </ul>

Students will be required to demonstrate the ability to:

- make use of musical elements, techniques and resources to interpret and communicate musical ideas with technical and expressive control and an understanding of style and context. This must be achieved by one or more of the following means: playing or singing solo or in ensemble, improvising, or realising music using music technology
- perform music with control and continuity, using appropriate tempi, showing critical understanding of the music chosen
- perform fluently, showing critical understanding of the overall shape, direction and style of the music chosen.

Students should take into account the effect of the purpose and intention of their piece of music when performing. They must also consider the effect of audience, time and place when they perform their pieces. Students should listen to how established performers communicate. They should appraise their own use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics in the light of these performances and reflect this when shaping their interpretation of their chosen music. Students should know and understand the appropriate musical vocabulary and terminology related to their performances.

### **Items for submission for assessment**

1. A complete and unedited recording of the whole performance.
2. Score: Where a written score or lead sheet exists, this must be submitted with the recording of the performance. If a piece has been learnt aurally, a professional reference recording may be submitted *in addition*. If a written score or lead sheet does not exist, then appropriate reference material must be submitted (a professional reference recording, written commentary, and stimulus for improvised performances, track sheets, tables or diagrams). The notated music must be provided for all performances from a score. This music must contain all the information necessary to assess the accuracy of the performance, for example, a guitar tab score with no indication of rhythm is unacceptable: scores should use conventional staff notation. Deviations from the score in jazz/rock and musical theatre numbers will generally be accepted where they are considered to be stylistically convincing.

For performances from a score/lead sheet, photocopies of the music must be submitted with the recording. Only the part performed needs to be submitted, for example just the clarinet part in a piece for clarinet with piano accompaniment. Original copies should not be supplied.

Performances that are not accompanied by acceptable scores/lead sheets/reference materials cannot be assessed.

As with the GCSE, the level of difficulty will affect the final mark:

For this A Level Music qualification, pieces identified as level 7 are identified as 'standard'; above this (level 8 and above) pieces are 'more difficult' and below this (levels 1-6) they are 'less difficult'. For students selecting pieces of music that are levels 1-6, they should be advised that to do so may be self-penalising as they may restrict their opportunity to access the higher levels and marks in the assessment grids for their performances.

<b>Component 2: Composing (*Component code: 9MU0/02)</b>
<b>Non-examined assessment: externally assessed</b> <b>30% of the qualification</b> <b>60 marks</b>
<b>Content overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approaches to composing.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A total of two compositions, one to a brief set by Pearson and one either free composition or also to a brief.</li> <li>One composition must be from either a list of briefs related to the areas of study, or a free composition, carrying 40 marks for this component. This composition must be at least 4 minutes in duration.</li> <li>One composition must be from a list of briefs assessing compositional technique, carrying 20 marks for this component. This composition must be at least 1 minute in duration, unless the brief specifies a longer minimum duration.</li> <li>The total time across both submissions must be a minimum of 6 minutes.</li> </ul>

Composing music is the creative process by which most of the music we experience came into being. Students will be encouraged to explore a range of compositional starting points, investigate a range of techniques for developing and manipulating ideas. They will then turn their ideas into completed pieces of music. Students can also explore the skills needed to compose for different musical forces. Students must submit two compositions of a combined duration of at least six minutes:

- one composition (Free choice composition) can be chosen from six briefs relating to areas of study, or free composition, carrying 40 of the marks for the composing assessment. This composition must be at least four minutes in duration.
- one composition must be from a list of four briefs assessing technique, carrying 20 of the marks for the composing assessment. This composition must be at least one minute in duration.

<b>Free choice composition (40 marks)</b>	<b>Briefs assessing technique (20 marks)</b>
Briefs relating to areas of study 1. Vocal Music 2. Instrumental Music 3. Music for Film 4. Popular Music and Jazz 5. Fusion 6. New Directions OR Free composition	Briefs assessing technique 1. Bach chorale 2. Two-part counterpoint 3. Arrangement 4. Remix

## **Free Choice Composition**

You may choose to compose to a brief relating to one of the areas of study.

### **Vocal Music**

Students should investigate the relationship between the structure of vocal pieces and the structure of texts by studying a variety of song forms (for example da capo, strophic, verse/chorus) and word settings. They should investigate the handling of instrumental accompaniments and/or backings. They may work in any style, subject to the brief.

### **Instrumental Music**

Students should investigate the characteristics of instruments, instrumental ensembles and instrumental forms associated with music from the period (for example dance suite, sonata, string quartet). They should practice developing musical structures, relating these to the brief and working to sustain a piece with a varied and creative musical outcome. They may work in any style, subject to the brief.

**Music for Film** Students should study the techniques of underscoring moving images to produce a satisfying and flowing succession of musical moods and atmospheres. They should learn how to enhance visual or dramatic action in which the narrative and sequencing may not follow conventional forms and structures. They will not be required to follow exact timings, nor to synchronise with film and/or video clips.

**Fusions** Students should learn how harmony, melody, rhythm and instrumentation combine to create a characteristic stylistic ‘feel’ in the music. They should investigate examples of world music, for example the music of the Latin Americas and the traditional music of the British Isles, and gain practice in the handling of the musical elements that characterise them in order to create pieces that demonstrate a fusion of styles and stylistic influences.

### **Popular Music and Jazz**

Students should study the characteristics of instruments and instrumental combinations – acoustic, amplified and synthesised – that are associated with this area of study and the relationship between lead lines and backing textures. They should investigate common song structures and structural devices (for example verse/chorus, 32-bar, middle eight and head arrangements), and the role played by technology in the creation and production of popular music.

### **New directions**

Students should study how traditional melody, harmony, rhythm and form broke down at the beginning of the twentieth century. Composers branched in new directions searching for their own musical language. Students should explore atonal music and new forms of harmony such as use of a tone row. They should explore new timbres through preparing instruments such as prepared piano or through electronic means.

### **Free composition**

Students may produce one composition that is free, i.e. not related to a set brief. Free composition enables students to develop their own ideas outside of a set brief. Students are free to draw inspiration or starting points from set works and briefs from previous years as well as exploring their own interests and the music from the world around them. The piece

composed by the students may be for any instrument or voice, or combination of instruments and/or voices, and in any style.

Free choice compositions must be a minimum of four minutes in length.

For any choice you will be expected to be very clear on the style of music that you are composing, and the expected performance venue and audience. This should impact how you compose the piece. Even if you are choosing a free composition it would be worth writing your own brief, based on the briefs produced by the exam board.

There is an expectation that you become familiar with a broad range of music in the style in which you are composing **before you start to compose**.

Example of briefs for the Free Choice Composition:

**Brief 1 – Vocal Music**

Compose vocal music with accompaniment to be heard at a ceremony of Remembrance. Your piece must contain at least one contrasting section. You may choose a pre-existing text, or write your own.

**Brief 2 – Instrumental Music**

Compose an original Theme and a set of Variations for String Quintet, Wind Quintet or Brass Quintet that would be suitable for use during a school awards ceremony.

**Brief 3 – Music for Film**

Compose continuous music for at least three contrasting scenes within a U-rated animated film based on a fairy tale.

**Brief 4 – Popular Music and Jazz**

Compose a piece for a contemporary jazz orchestra, based on a 32 bar structure, that would be suitable for performance at a Festival of Youth Jazz Ensembles. Your piece must contain at least one contrasting section.

**Brief 5 – Fusions**

Compose music for a piece of Indian contemporary dance, combining musical features from Indian folk and/or classical styles with western pop music. Your music should be suitable for performance at a welcoming ceremony for a new Indian diplomat.

**Brief 6 – New Directions**

Compose a piece of music in response to a work of modern art. Your piece should explore melodic, harmonic and rhythmic techniques found in the work of composers since 1950. You may write for any instruments or voices. Your music should be suitable for performance as part of the UK contribution to the Venice Biennale.

## **Briefs Assessing Technique**

You will have a choice of six styles for the briefs assessing technique:

### **Brief 1 – Bach chorale**

Students must learn how to harmonise two chorales in the manner of J.S. Bach by adding alto, tenor and bass parts to a given soprano. Using an appropriate harmonic vocabulary students need to be familiar with triads in root position and first inversion, the tonic triad in second inversion in contexts where Bach would have used it, seventh chords and their inversions typical of Bach's style. They must also learn about voice-leading and other procedures typical of Bach's style including modulation to closely-related keys, passing notes and suspensions. The given chorales will be between 12 and 18 bars in length each. Modal chorales, and chorales in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time will not be set.

### **Brief 2 – Two-part counterpoint**

Students must also learn how to complete a two-part baroque texture for bass and violin or flute using an appropriate harmonic vocabulary. They must be able to construct rhythmically satisfying and stylish melodic lines in treble and bass and to follow 18th century conventions with regard to texture, voice leading and structure. The stimulus will be between 24 and 42 bars in length and students will be required to complete passages in both treble and bass. They will not be required to add, or work to, a figured bass. In each of these studies students should be aware of the context in terms of audience and occasion in which they would originally have appeared. For example, the chorale was intended to be sung by a congregation during the performance of a longer work, and the two-part exercise, drawn from a baroque dance suite would have been intended for social occasions.

### **Brief 3 – Arrangement**

Students should learn how to harmonise a given melody and extend this to form a satisfying arrangement for instruments and/or voices. They should study the techniques of writing for different instrumental and/or vocal combinations and of extending and varying melodic material to sustain a coherently structured piece. The given melody will be between 12 and 24 bars in length and the number of instrumental/vocal parts that are specified in the brief will be no more than four. The brief will specify an audience and occasion.

### **Brief 4 – Remix**

Students should learn how to develop a given audio sample into a remix suitable for performance in a nightclub setting. They should investigate the stylistic characteristics and conventions of electronic dance music. They should learn how to edit and manipulate samples, timbres and textures and to extend these into a coherent structure by developing the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony and sound manipulation. The stimulus will be provided as a .wav file. The clarity, mixing and stereo imaging of the final recording will form part of the assessment. A stereo recording of your remix must be submitted in the following format:

- wav
- sample rate: 44.1kHz
- bit depth: 16-bit.

**Submission of compositions**

Both compositions should last for at least six minutes – with the free composition lasting a minimum of 4 minutes.

You have to submit the following:

- **A recording**
- **A score / lead sheet / written account**

**Component 3: Appraising (\*Component code: 9MU0/03)****Written examination: 90 minutes****40% of the qualification****100 marks****Content overview**

- Knowledge and understanding of musical elements, contexts and language.
- Application of knowledge through the context of six areas of study, each with two set works, except Popular Music and Jazz which has three set works.
  - Vocal Music,
  - Instrumental Music,
  - Music for Film,
  - Popular Music and Jazz,
  - Fusions,
  - New Directions.
- Application of knowledge to unfamiliar works.

**Assessment overview**

- One written paper of 2 hours 10 minutes, with a total of 100 marks.
- One audio CD per student, with the extracts to accompany questions on the paper, will be given.
- This paper comprises two sections: A and B.

**Section A: Areas of study and dictation (50 marks)**

- Three questions related to the set works (audio and skeleton score given).
- One short melody/rhythm completion exercise.

**Section B: Extended response**

- Two essay questions: essay one (20 marks) and essay two (30 marks).
- Essay one asks students to draw links from their study of the set works to the music heard as an unfamiliar extract.
- Essay two gives a choice of four questions that ask students to evaluate the musical elements, context and language of one set work. Each option will be from a different area of study.

For the appraisal paper there is an expectation that you study the set works in depth, but also in the context of the style and the development of the style.

As an example – when you study music from ‘Batman Returns’ and ‘Psycho’ that is a starting point. You would be expected to have an understanding of conventions of film music across a broad variety of films, composers and time.

The exam board produce a list of the set works as well as an example of additionally listening, which provides a nice starting point.

You can also refer to any of the relevant GCSE set works.

The exam board lists are given over the next two pages.

## Set works

Area of study	Set works
Vocal Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J. S. Bach, Cantata, Ein feste Burg</li> <li>Vaughan Williams, On Wenlock Edge</li> </ul>
Instrumental Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clara Wieck-Schumann, Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: movement 1</li> <li>Berlioz, Symphonie Fantastique</li> </ul>
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New Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kaija Saariaho, Petals for Violoncello and Live Electronics</li> <li>Stravinsky, The Rite of Spring</li> </ul>

Additional listening (items highlighted in yellow are examples that used to be part of the set works):

Area of study	Set works
Vocal Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handel, <i>Messiah</i>: 'Surely he hath borne', 'And with his stripes', 'Hallelujah', 'Worthy is the Lamb', 'Amen'</li> <li>Schubert, <i>Selection of Lieder</i>: Erlkönig; 'An die Musik'; 'Die Forelle'; 'Der Leiermann' (Winterreise, no. 24)</li> <li>Fanny Mendelssohn: 'Ihr Töne schwingt euch fröhlich' (Lied zum Geburtstag des Vaters)</li> <li>Ethel Smyth, <i>Mass in D</i>: Gloria</li> <li>Verdi, <i>Rigoletto</i>: Act 3, Nos. 11 and 12</li> <li>Wagner, <i>Die Walküre</i>: Siegmund and Sieglinde ('Wie dir die Stirn' to 'Walsungen-Blut!' and orchestral postlude)</li> <li>Mozart, <i>The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte)</i>: Excerpts from Act 1, Nos. 4 (The Queen of Night) and 5 (Quintet)</li> </ul>
Instrumental music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Haydn, <i>Symphony No. 6 in D</i>: Movements 1 and 4</li> <li>Beethoven, <i>String Quartet in C</i>, Op. 59 No. 3: Movements 3 and 4</li> <li>Liszt, <i>Les Préludes</i></li> <li>Cécile Chaminade, <i>Concertino for flute and orchestra Op.107</i></li> <li>Chopin, <i>Ballade No.4 in F minor</i>, Op. 52</li> <li>Amy Beach, <i>Gaelic Symphony</i>, Op.32: Movement 1</li> <li>Vivaldi, <i>Concerto in D minor</i>, Op. 3 No. 11</li> </ul>

Area of study	Set works
<b>Vocal Music</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handel, <i>Messiah</i>: 'Surely he hath borne', 'And with his stripes', 'Hallelujah', 'Worthy is the Lamb', 'Amen'</li> <li>• Schubert, <i>Selection of Lieder</i>: Erlkönig; 'An die Musik'; 'Die Forelle'; 'Der Leiermann' (Winterreise, no. 24)</li> <li>• Fanny Mendelssohn: 'Ihr Töne schwingt euch fröhlich' (Lied zum Geburtstag des Vaters)</li> <li>• Ethel Smyth, <i>Mass in D</i>: Gloria</li> <li>• Verdi, <i>Rigoletto</i>: Act 3, Nos. 11 and 12</li> <li>• Wagner, <i>Die Walküre</i>: Siegmund and Sieglinde ('Wie dir die Stirn' to 'Walsungen-Blut!' and orchestral postlude)</li> <li>• Mozart, <i>The Magic Flute (Die Zauberflöte)</i>: Excerpts from Act 1, Nos. 4 (The Queen of Night) and 5 (Quintet)</li> </ul>
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<b>Music for Film</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Max Steiner, <i>King Kong</i></li> <li>• Ennio Morricone, <i>Once upon a time in the West</i></li> <li>• John Williams, <i>Schindler's List</i></li> <li>• Debbie Wiseman, <i>Wilde</i></li> <li>• Toru Takemitsu, <i>Black Rain</i></li> <li>• Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard, <i>Gladiator</i></li> <li>• Rachel Portman, <i>The Duchess: The Duchess and End titles, Mistake of your life, Six years later, Never see your children again</i></li> </ul>
<b>Popular Music and Jazz</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charles Mingus, <i>Blues and Roots</i></li> <li>• Carole King, <i>Tapestry</i></li> <li>• Jay Z, <i>Blueprint 3</i></li> <li>• Björk, <i>Vulnicura</i></li> <li>• Bix Beiderbecke, <i>Jazz Me Blues</i></li> <li>• Michael Jackson, <i>Thriller</i></li> </ul>

Area of study	Set works
<b>Fusions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afro Celt Sound System, <i>Volume 2: Release</i>: 'Eireann', 'Riding the waves'</li> <li>• Villa Lobos, <i>Bachianas Brasileiras</i>: Nos. 2 and 5</li> <li>• R. Rahman, 'Jai jo' (<i>You are my destiny</i>)</li> <li>• Gloria Estafan, <i>Mi Tierra</i></li> <li>• Robert Glasper Experiment, <i>Black Radio</i>: 'Afro Blue'</li> <li>• Sara Tavares, <i>Xinti</i></li> <li>• Familia Valera Miranda, <i>Caña Quema</i>: 'Allà va candela, Se quema la chumbambà'</li> </ul>
<b>New Directions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karlheinz Stockhausen, <i>Gesang der Junglinge</i></li> <li>• Pierre Boulez, <i>Structures</i>: 1a</li> <li>• Peter Maxwell Davies, <i>Eight Songs for a Mad King</i>: Nos. 6–8</li> <li>• Unsuk Chin, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>: The Mad Tea Party</li> <li>• Olivier Messiaen, <i>Des Canyons aux étoiles</i>: Nos. 8 and 10</li> <li>• Tansy Davies, <i>Re-greening for a large orchestra</i></li> <li>• Cage, <i>Three Dances for two prepared pianos</i>: No. 1</li> </ul>

## Summer Task

### Performance

Practise as much as possible over the summer. The more time you put into your instrument / voice, the better equipped you will be for the A-Level. It is worth using the EdExcel website to find the difficulty level booklets to see the standard that you are aiming for by the end of the course (level 7 or above). If you are not at level 7 at the start of year 12, that is not a problem, but you can use the difficulty levels and suggested pieces to monitor your progress.

### Composition

Try writing little pieces of music that have a clear **melody, accompaniment (ideally based on chords)** and **structure**. It is a nice idea to try to write in the style of music that you are playing. For example, if you are learning a Bach 2-part invention, try to write a short 8 or 16 bar piece that uses the same style.

Remember that even **bad compositions** will teach you something!

### Appraisal

Listen to all of the listed set works and additional listening pieces in this document. Also, try to listen to as wide a set of styles as possible. There are some podcasts that are particularly worth listening to.

### Podcasts

Composer of the Week – a BBC podcast that looks at different aspects of composers lives and works. You can search by composer and it is worth noting that there are episodes available featuring Bach, Vaughan Williams, Clara Schumann, Berlioz, Debussy, Kaija Saariaho and Stravinsky.

Other podcasts to listen to (although they are not specific to the set works):

The Listening Service, Sodajerker on Songwriting, Song Exploder.

There will be many more podcasts available.

## Summer Tasks

Make sure that you are familiar with the following:

The notes of the treble and bass clef staves.

Time values

Time signatures

Dynamic markings

Simple speed indications

If you need to learn or revise any of these topics, there are numerous websites and resources.

The AB Guide to Music Theory Part 1 is an excellent starting point, if you need to buy a book to catch up. (Both parts of the AB Guide to Music Theory are excellent reference books anyway, and if you are interested in studying music beyond A Level, they are definitely worth buying)

Read the following:

### Keys and Intervals

Music is in a key when one particular note is more important than all the others. This note is called the **tonic, key note** or **note 1**, and it will usually occur more frequently than all the others. Most music in a key will end on this **tonic** note.

This idea of the music revolving around the **tonic** note is what we mean when we describe music as **tonal**.

### Scales

Each key is based on a set of notes called a **scale**. The notes shown below form the scale of **C major**. This type of scale has eight notes, and notes 1 and 8 will be an **octave** apart. Scales will always be shown in alphabetical order, moving by step. They can be shown to be ascending or descending (the example below is ascending).



The two types of scales that we will focus on most closely are **major scales** and **minor scales**.

## Major scales and major keys

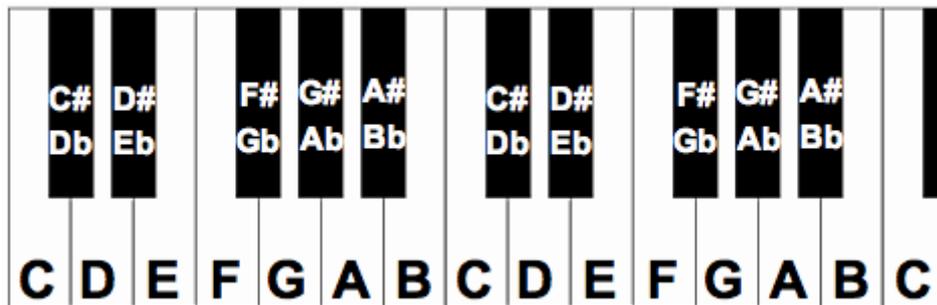
The most important aspect of a major scale is the **sound of the scale**. You can tell that the C major scale on the previous page is a major scale **because it has a bright, major sound**.

The reason it has this sound is down to the specific gaps, or **intervals**, between each note of the scale. Every major scale has the same pattern of intervals between each note. This is why D major, C major and F major all sound alike. The pattern of a C major scale is shown below, where **s** indicates a semitone (the smallest interval normally used in Western music) and **t** indicates a tone (an interval that is the equivalent of two semitones).

C major scale:



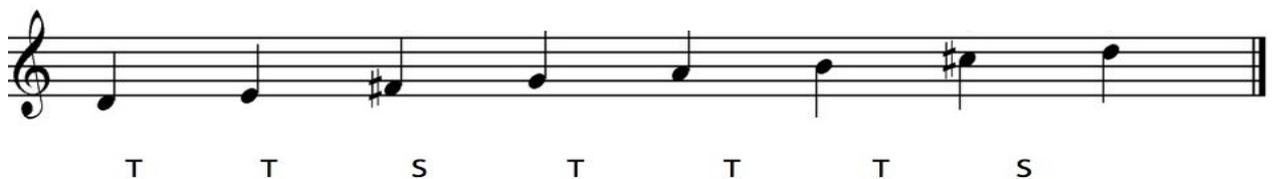
The easiest way of understanding tones and semitones is to think in terms of the notes on a piano:



Examples of **semitones**: E to F, B to C, C to C#, C# to D

Examples of **tones**: C to D, D to E, B to C#, F# to G#

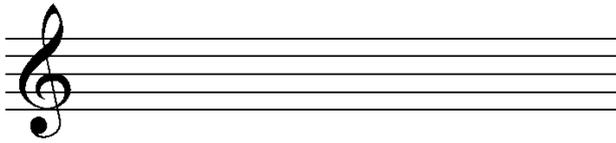
The interval pattern of **T T S T T T S** shown in the C major scale is the same for all major scales. As an example, D major is shown below:



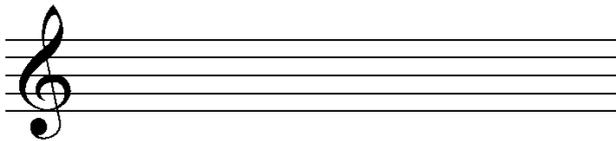
## Activity 1

Work out the notes for F major, B $\beta$  major and E major, and write them on the treble clefs below (labelling the notes):

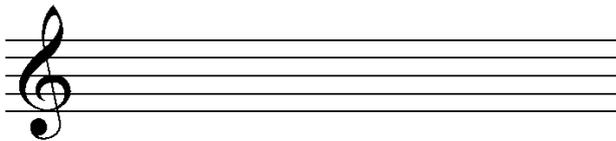
### F major



### B $\beta$ major



### E major



## Key Signatures

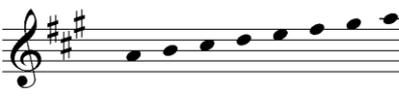
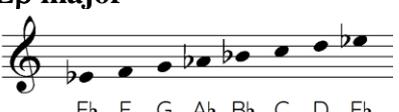
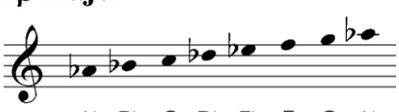
A piece of music will often have a key signature to show the sharps and flats that are to be used in the music.

The order of sharps and flats is the same in every key.

For all key signatures, the sharps and flats will apply to every version of a note. As an example, in music with a G major key signature all of the Fs should be played as F#.

The table on the next page shows all of the major keys that you need to know for A-level music. The table shows the scale using accidentals, the scale with a key signature, and the key signature only for bass clef.

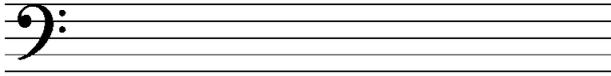
C major		
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 <p>C D E F G A B C</p>	 <p>C D E F G A B C</p>	
<b>G major</b>  <p>G A B C D E F# G</p>		
<b>D major</b>  <p>D E F# G A B C# D</p>		
<b>A major</b>  <p>A B C# D E F# G# A</p>		
<b>E major</b>  <p>E F# G# A B C# D# E</p>		
<b>F major</b>  <p>F G A B<math>\flat</math> C D E F</p>		
<b>B<math>\flat</math> major</b>  <p>B<math>\flat</math> C D E<math>\flat</math> F G A B<math>\flat</math></p>		
<b>E<math>\flat</math> major</b>  <p>E<math>\flat</math> F G A<math>\flat</math> B<math>\flat</math> C D E<math>\flat</math></p>		
<b>A<math>\flat</math> major</b>  <p>A<math>\flat</math> B<math>\flat</math> C D<math>\flat</math> E<math>\flat</math> F G A<math>\flat</math></p>		

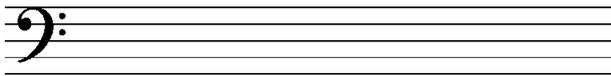
## Activity 2

Write out each of the major scales below on a bass clef staff. Do not use key signatures, and label the notes and tones and semitones:

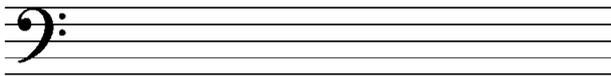
**F major**



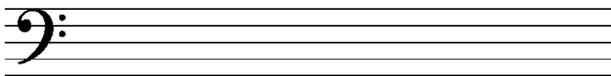
**G major**



**D major**



**A major**



**A $\beta$  major**



### Degrees of the scale

So far, we have numbered the degrees of the scale from 1 to 8. The notes are sometimes referred to by names. The table below shows the names of the scale degrees, with an example given from D major:

Degree of scale	Name of degree	Example in D major
1	Tonic	D
2	Supertonic	E
3	Mediant	F#
4	Subdominant	G
5	Dominant	A
6	Submediant	B
7	Leading note	C#
8 (=1)	Tonic	D

### Activity 3

#### Complete the questions below on manuscript paper

- Write, using accidentals, one octave ascending of each of the following scales
  - On a treble clef staff: E major, B $\beta$  major, A $\beta$  : major
  - On a bass clef staff: E major, E $\beta$  majorWrite each scale twice – once with accidentals, and once with a key signature. Label the tones and semitones and write the number of each note (1 to 8).
- Write, using accidentals, one octave descending of each of the following scales:
  - On a treble clef staff: F major, E $\beta$  major
  - On a bass staff: D major, A $\beta$  major
- Give the degree names and numbers, plus the letter names, for each degree of the G major scale. Begin as follows: Tonic = 1 = G

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- Identify the key of the music below:



### Minor scales and minor keys

Each major key has a related minor, called the **relative minor**, which has the same key signature. The notes of a relative minor scale can be found by starting three semitone steps below the tonic of the major scale. For example, the relative minor of C major is A minor.

Minor scales rise in steps, using every letter name once, just like the major scales, and they follow any sharps or flats given in the key signature. However, note 7 of a minor scale (and sometimes also note 6) is frequently raised a semitone by means of an accidental.

Raising a note by a semitone often means sharpening it, as shown the first stave of the example below. But if the note is a flat, as is the case with the B $\flat$  on the second stave then you need a natural sign ( $\nu$ ) to raise it.



If you need the normal version of one of these altered notes later in the same bar, you will have to cancel the effect of the accidental. For instance, you would need to write G $\nu$  to cancel the effect of G $\sharp$ , or B $\flat$  to cancel the effect of B $\nu$ .

The diagram below shows the three forms that a scale of A minor can take, due to the different permutations of raised notes 6 and 7.

The scale of A major is shown for comparison.

A minor (melodic, ascending)	A minor (melodic, descending)	
<p>A   B   C   D   E   F<math>\sharp</math>   G<math>\sharp</math>   A   A   G   F   E   D   C   B   A</p>		
<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>A minor (harmonic)</td> </tr> </table>		A minor (harmonic)
A minor (harmonic)		
<p>A   B   C   D   E   F   G<math>\sharp</math>   A   A   G<math>\sharp</math>   F   E   D   C   B   A</p>		
<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>A major</td> </tr> </table>		A major
A major		
<p>A   B   C<math>\sharp</math>   D   E   F<math>\sharp</math>   G<math>\sharp</math>   A   A   G<math>\sharp</math>   F<math>\sharp</math>   E   D   C<math>\sharp</math>   B   A</p>		

A melodic scale uses a raised note 6 and 7 when it is ascending. In an ascending melodic minor there are no raised notes.

In a harmonic minor there is a raised note 7 both ascending and descending.

## Activity 4

Using manuscript paper create yourself a guide to the keys that you will need to know for A-level music. The scales that you need are:

C major, A minor  
G major, E minor  
D major, B minor  
A major, F# minor  
E major, C# minor  
F major, D minor  
B $\beta$  major, G minor  
E $\beta$  major, C minor  
A $\beta$  major, F minor

An example of the layout is shown below (write each scale ascending and descending, and label notes and note numbers. For minor keys, show the melodic and harmonic version).

From G major onward, use key signatures.

C major



A minor (melodic, ascending)

A minor (melodic, descending)



A minor (harmonic)

