

Music Knowledge Organiser

Musical Element	Definition	Examples / Musical Vocabulary
Pulse	The steady heartbeat of the music that continues throughout a piece.	Keeping a steady pulse when performing.
Beat	The regular pulse that helps musicians stay together and maintain a steady tempo.	Playing in time with others.
Tempo	The speed of the music.	Allegro, Adagio, Accelerando, Rallentando.
Rhythm	The pattern of long and short sounds and silences.	Syncopated rhythms, repeating rhythmic patterns.
Pitch	How high or low a sound is.	High notes, low notes, rising, falling, diatonic scale.
Dynamics	The volume of the music and how it changes.	Pianissimo, Piano, Mezzo Piano, Mezzo Forte, Forte, Fortissimo, Crescendo, Decrescendo.
Timbre	The unique quality or character of a sound.	Bright, sharp, warm, mellow, metallic, breathy, smooth, harsh.
Texture	The layers of sound heard in music.	Solo, duet, unison, melody with accompaniment, music in 3 parts (A-B-A),
Structure	The way musical ideas are organised within a piece.	Verse-chorus, music with multiple sections.

Tempo

Word	Meaning
Allegro	Fast
Adagio	Slow
Accelerando	Gradually getting faster
Rallentando	Gradually getting slower

Dynamics

Symbol/Word	Meaning
Pianissimo	Very quiet
Piano	Quiet
Mezzo Piano	Moderately quiet
Mezzo Forte	Moderately loud
Forte	Loud
Fortissimo	Very loud
Crescendo	Gradually getting louder
Decrescendo	Gradually getting quieter

Articulation

Word	Meaning
Legato	Smooth and connected
Staccato	Short and detached

Texture

Word	Meaning
Unison	Everyone performs the same melody together
Melody	The main tune
Accompaniment	Musical support for the melody

 crotchet (1 beat)

 minim (2 beats)



semibreve (4 beats)



quaver (half a beat)