

COMPOSING YOUR OWN MUSIC!

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

For many musicians, having the freedom to be expressive through music is one of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of writing your own composition. Getting started can be daunting but our step-by-step guide to composing music can help...

1. FEEL INSPIRED

Take your time to find a concept that excites you and inspires you to create a piece of music.

Composers often use the world around them to find ideas to inspire their musical creations. TV programmes, films, art, patterns, children's stories, news, and the world around us can all be a great starting point for ideas.

2. DEVELOP YOUR IDEA

Developing your idea is an important part of composing a piece of music. Start by choosing a music form and structure appropriate to your idea. Think about your time and key signatures and which instruments you are writing the piece for (don't forget to check the range and pitch!).

Write a layout of what will happen in each section. How will your piece of music flow from one section to another? How will you create moments of interest and a start and end that will have an impact on your audience?

3. EXPERIMENT, EXPERIMENT, EXPERIMENT!

Start to create a melody by choosing a chord sequence that you like. Your melody can then develop from there and you can then start to experiment with your music. Consider using repetition (exact copies or variation), rhythmic patterns, harmonies, adding or removing instruments to build layers of texture, or even a key change.

Demonstrate your ability to develop musical ideas and select appropriate timbres. The most important thing to do is have fun with it and keep listening back to your music until you are happy with it.

4. STORE YOUR IDEAS

It is unlikely that you will finish your composition in one go so storing your ideas so that you can pick up where you left off is hugely important. You could record your ideas on your phone so that you can listen back to your work so far, or you may prefer your notes in a notebook or on manuscript.

Whichever way you choose to record your composition, it's important not to rush this as it can make it difficult to carry on when you return to your composition.

5. DOES IT WORK?

One last and important step is to review your final composition to see if it works as a piece of music.

Keep in mind that success criteria at GCSE often contains the following elements:

- A distinctive melody with well-shaped phrases
- Harmonies that work with the melody
- A clear, defined structure
- Effective instrumentation and timbres that are suited to the music