

Music Concepts

Melody	Melody is formed from a succession of single pitches. Melody can be created using steps, leaps and repeated notes. The collection of notes from which a melody is formed is called a scale.
Harmony	Harmony is the sound made by two or more notes simultaneously. These combinations are sometimes called chords. Harmony can sound pleasing to the ear or clashing, depending on the notes used. We use harmony when we play or sing in two or more parts and when we play chords on the ukulele.
Pitch	Pitch is the sound of a single note in relation to other notes. Words which can describe the pitch include: high, low, treble, bass, sharp or flat.
Tempo	Tempo is the speed of the beat or pulse of music. The tempo can sometimes change during a piece of music. Sometimes we use Italian words to describe the tempo such as <i>lento</i> , which means slow, or <i>allegro</i> , which means lively.
Dynamics	Dynamics are used to describe the energy level of one or more notes in a piece of music. The dynamic can change gradually or suddenly. Symbols, known as dynamic markings, based on Italian descriptions are often used, such as <i>f</i> for <i>forte</i> which means 'strong' or 'loud'.
Structure	Structure is the overall framework of a piece of music. For example, the structure of a song will usually have several sections including an introduction, some verses and a chorus.
Texture	The texture of a piece of music describes how the different sounds are being woven together. A thick texture uses several ideas at once. A thinner texture will have fewer parts. A whole class singing "Frere Jacques" all together is a thin texture. A few children singing the same song as a four-part round, starting the melody at different times will create a thicker texture.
Timbre	Timbre is the unique sound quality which helps us to distinguish between different instruments and voices. The different ways an instrument is played can change its timbre.
Rhythm	Rhythm is the organisation of long and short sounds around a pulse or beat. Some rhythms coincide with the beat; others use syncopation, in which most of the sounds fit between the main beats.

Composing	Composing is the process of selecting and organising sounds to make music. Good compositions have an intention which is successfully communicated to the audience. For example, music to describe a journey by train.
Performing	Performing is the act of making music for an audience at a particular time and place. Most performances need to be practised beforehand.
Notation	Notation is the method used to record, on paper or on screen, music that is heard or performed. A musician needs to read and write notation to share ideas. There are several different types of notation. At our school, we use staff notation, graphic notation, chord boxes and tablature.