

Helena School District

Middle School Music, Curricular Textbook Supplement

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“I CAN” STATEMENTS

These collected statements summarize the skills all music students should acquire throughout the course of their middle school music career. Please note that this sequence of skills is cumulative—what you learn in 6th grade will be needed in 7th and 8th grade and will continue to be honed and refined.

This guide has been created to assist in that process, and we wish you a middle school career filled with musical discovery!

6TH GRADE MUSIC

Rhythm

- Identify half and quarter notes (and their equivalent rest values) in a piece of music.
- Identify whole notes (and their equivalent rest value) in a piece of music.
- Identify eighth notes (and their equivalent rest value) in a piece of music.
- Perform half and quarter notes (and their equivalent rest values) in a piece of music.
- Perform whole notes (and their equivalent rest value) in a piece of music.
- Perform eighth notes (and their equivalent rest value) in a piece of music.
- Identify dotted note values in a piece of music.
- Explain how the dot changes a note value in a piece of music.
- Explain the relationships between note values (whole, half, quarter, and eighth) in a note hierarchy.
- Perform dotted half note values in a piece of music.

Meter

- Explain the meaning of the top number in a time signature.
- Explain the meaning of the bottom number in a time signature.
- Perform music in time signatures in which the quarter note gets one beat.
- Explain how music is organized into measures in a piece of music.

Tempo

- Identify Italian and English musical terms related to speed.
- Perform music set at different speeds.

Pitch

- Identify note names based on their position on a staff.
- Hear the difference between high and low pitches as they are performed.
- Perform an ascending and descending scale.
- Produce a tone using proper posture and breath support.
- Identify the location of a key signature in a piece of music.
- Identify the difference between steps, skips, and repeated notes in a piece of music.

Rehearsal/Performance Techniques

- Demonstrate rehearsal etiquette, including preparing to perform and focusing on director expectations.
- Respond to conducting gestures, including preparatory beats, attacks, and cut offs.

- Demonstrate posture that will support good performance techniques.
- Perform your musical part accurately while two or more different parts are being performed simultaneously.
- Perform a piece of music with a large ensemble.
- Perform a piece of music with a small ensemble.

Dynamics

- Identify four Italian musical terms that relate to volume.
- Perform music set at different volumes.

Style

- Explain the difference between and tie and a slur.
- Define the musical meaning of a phrase.
- Recognize a fermata in a piece of music.
- Explain the function of a fermata in a piece of music.
- Follow a conductor's direction before, during, and after a fermata in a piece of music.
- Differentiate between two articulation styles according to markings in the music.
- Perform two articulation styles according to markings in the music.

Structure

- Identify basic repeats in a piece of music.
- Identify first and second endings in a piece of music.
- Identify D.C. al Fine in a piece of music.
- Perform a variety of repeat markings in different pieces of music.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the thematic organization of binary form (AB).
- Demonstrate an understanding of the thematic organization of ternary form (ABA).

Musical Connections

- Explain differences and similarities between music from cultures other than my own.
- Comment about successes and areas needing improvement in my own performance.
- Visually differentiate instruments from the different instrument families (strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion).

7TH GRADE MUSIC

Rhythm

- Identify sixteenth notes (and their equivalent rest value) in a piece of music.
- Perform sixteenth notes (and their equivalent rest value) in a piece of music.
- Perform dotted quarter note values in a piece of music.
- Explain the relationships between note values (whole, half, quarter, eighth, and sixteenth) in a note hierarchy.

Meter

- Explain the meaning of the top number in a time signature.
- Explain the meaning of the bottom number in a time signature.
- Perform music in time signatures in which the half note or quarter note gets one beat.
- Perform music written with multiple time signatures (mixed meter).

Tempo

- Demonstrate an understanding of Italian and English musical terms related to speed in a performance setting.
- Perform different pieces of music set at different speeds.

Pitch

- Identify note names based on their position on a staff (including ledger lines).
- Hear the difference between high and low pitches--intervals between a third and an octave--as they are performed.
- Perform more than one ascending and descending scale.

Dynamics

- Identify six Italian musical terms that relate to volume.

Style

- Differentiate between four articulation styles according to markings in the music.
- Perform four articulation styles according to markings in the music.
- Explain the function of an accent in a piece of music.

Structure

- Identify D.C. al Coda in a piece of music.
- Identify D.S. al Coda in a piece of music.
- Identify D.S. al Fine in a piece of music.

8TH GRADE MUSIC

Rhythm

- Perform dotted eighth note values in a piece of music.
- Identify triplet note values in a piece of music.
- Perform triplet note values in a piece of music.

Meter

- Perform music in time signatures in which the half note, quarter note, or eighth note gets one beat.

Tempo

- Perform pieces of music that contain tempo changes.

Pitch

- Explain basic pitch relationships that exist within the notes of every major scale.
- Hear the difference between high and low pitches--intervals between a minor second and an octave--as they are performed.
- Perform major and minor ascending and descending scales.

Rehearsal/Performance Techniques

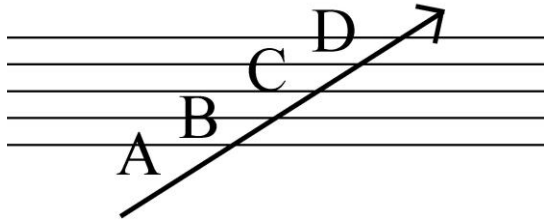
- Identify the steps to take when preparing to sight-read a piece of music.
- Perform music in a rehearsal that hasn't been practiced in advance (sight reading).

Dynamics

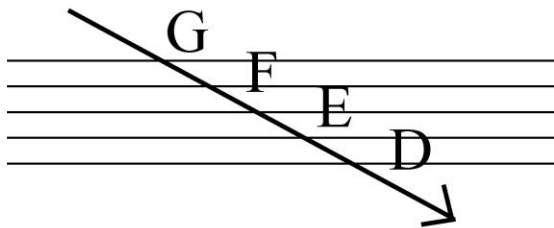
- Identify eight Italian musical terms that relate to volume.

NOTE NAMES AND CLEF SIGNS

The **musical alphabet** consists of the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. By organizing these notes on a five line staff, musicians can determine which note to sing or play. Notes placed higher on the staff are higher in pitch. As notes ascend, they move through the musical alphabet in order.



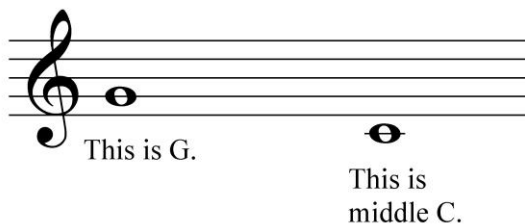
Notes placed lower on the staff are lower in pitch. As notes descend, they move through the musical alphabet in reverse order.



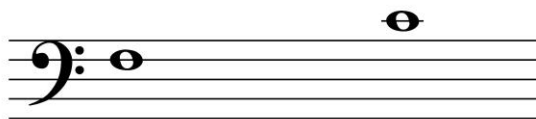
Whenever the musical alphabet reaches its end we start the sequence over. Ascending from a G will lead to an A, while descending from an A will lead to a G.

Clef signs are placed on the staff to indicate which lines and spaces will have which letter names. Different clefs are used with specific voices or instruments based on the range of notes required.

This is the **treble clef**. It is alternately called the G clef because it shows which note is G above middle C.



This is the **bass clef**. It is alternately called the F clef because it shows which note is F below middle C.

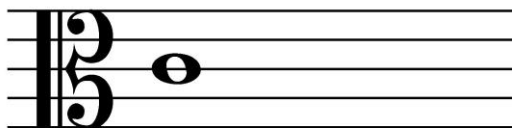


This is F.

This is
middle C.

Treble and bass clef are most frequently used because they show high notes (those above middle C) and low notes (those below middle C). Sometimes, however, we want to show notes that are in the middle-- this is best achieved using the C clef.

This is the **alto clef**. Notice that it defines the location of middle C.



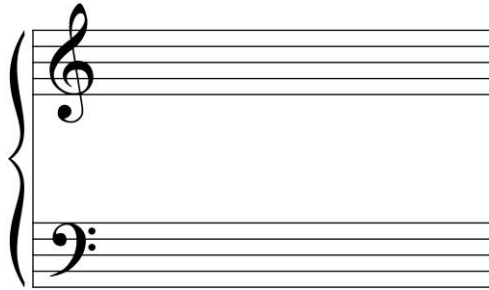
This is middle C.

This is the **tenor clef**. Although it is on a different line than the alto clef, it too defines the location of middle C.

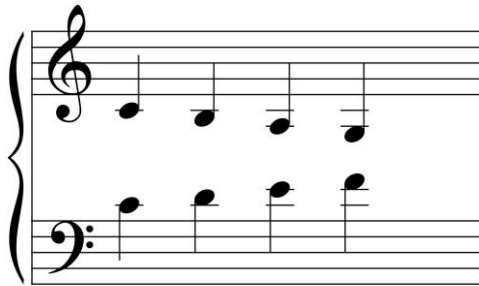


This is middle C.

When we put the treble and bass clef together, we call it a **grand staff**. Piano players use this because it presents a wide range of pitches.

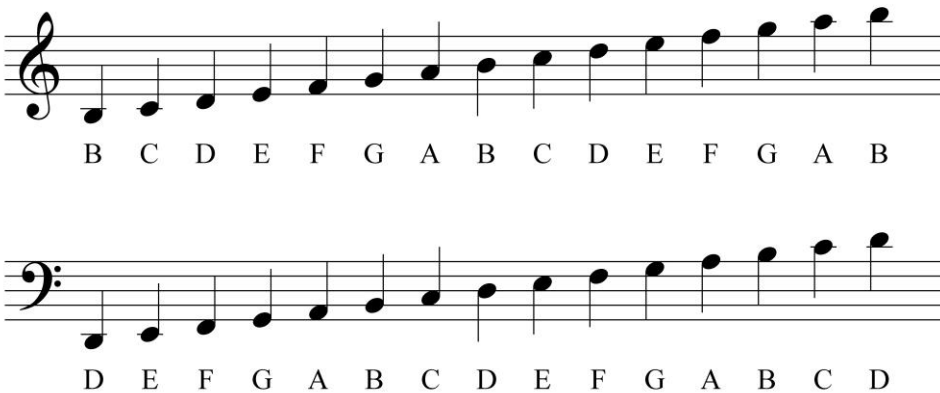


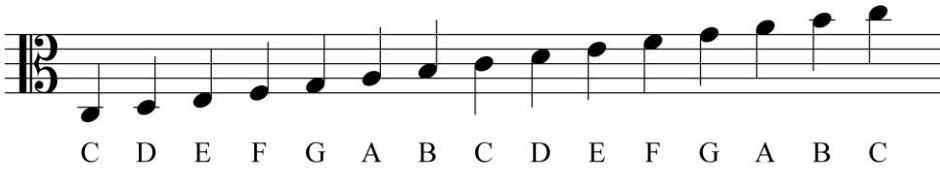
When notes are written above or below the staff, **ledger lines** are used to extend the limited range of the five lines and four spaces.



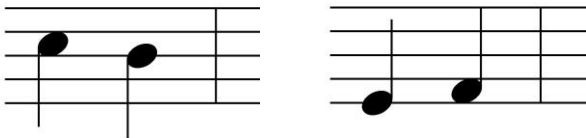
As indicated at the start of this section, notes on the staff ascend in the order of the alphabet and descend backwards through the alphabet. Letters alternate between lines and spaces, and the musical alphabet extends to ledger lines in order (as it does on the staff).

Here are the letter names for lines and spaces on each of the four clefs.

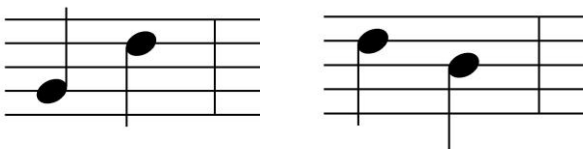




When notes appear in a piece of music right next to each other, we say that they are moving in steps.



When notes appear in a piece of music and are separated by one or more notes, we say they are moving in skips.



One other important concept connected to note names is that of range. **Range** describes the highness or lowness of notes that can be sung by a particular voice or played on a particular instrument. We use the following terms to broadly describe both vocal and instrumental ranges.

- **Soprano** - The high female voice, this term also refers to instruments that tend to play the highest notes in their instrument family (such as the violin, flute, trumpet, or snare drum)
- **Alto** - The low female voice, this term also refers to instruments that tend to play higher notes (but not the highest) in their instrument family (such as the viola, alto saxophone, or French horn)

- **Tenor** - The high male voice, this term also refers to instruments that tend to play lower notes (but not the lowest) in their instrument family (such as the cello , tenor saxophone, or trombone)
- **Bass** - The low male voice, this term also refers to instruments that tend to play the lowest notes in their instrument family (such as the bass, bassoon, tuba, or timpani)

There are additional terms that are sometimes used to describe range--baritone is between bass and tenor, and mezzo-soprano is between soprano and alto--but those listed above are the most important.

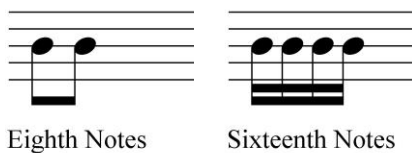
Finally, take note that instrument relates to the range of pitches they produce. Instruments with smaller vibrating media produce higher sounds, while instruments with larger vibrating media produce lower sounds.

RHYTHM VALUES

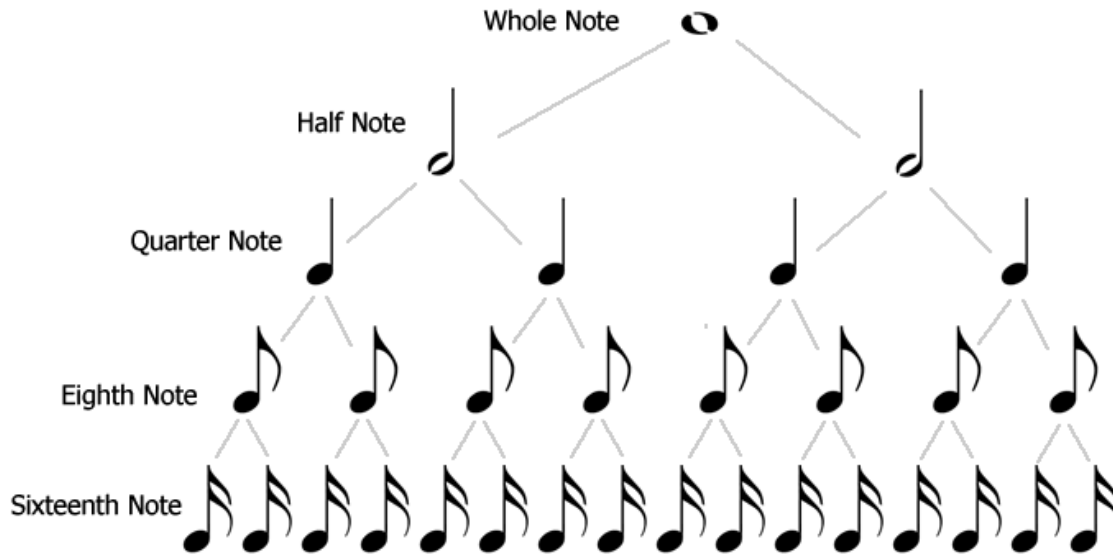
These are the basic note lengths that are used in music. Note lengths or note values are how long you play a note or sing a pitch. The whole note is subdivided, or broken down into smaller notes.



Eighth note and Sixteenth notes can be grouped together.

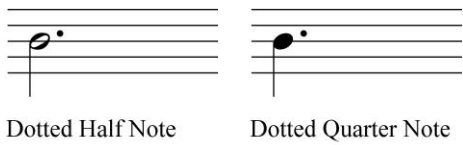


When you start learning rhythms, the quarter note is worth one beat. As you will see in time signatures, though, this is not always the case. It is helpful to remember that note lengths always relate to each other in a hierarchy.

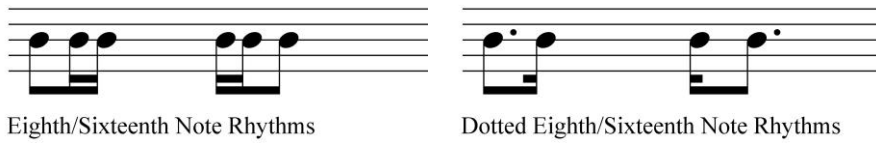


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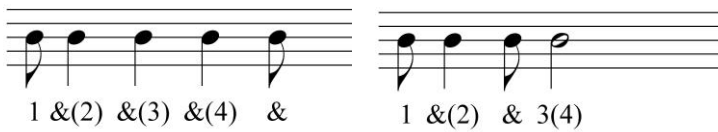
A dotted note is a note with a small dot written after it. The dot increases the duration of the basic note by half of its original value.



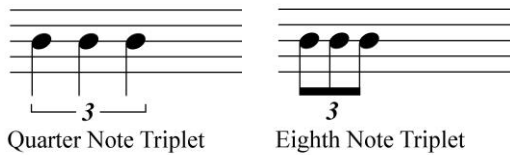
Sixteenth notes can be combined with other note values to make sixteenth note combination rhythms.



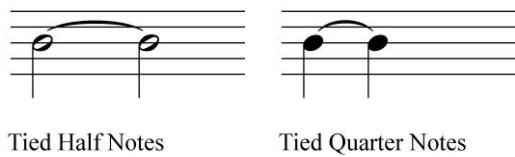
Syncopation is when the emphasis or accent is off the beat.



Triplets are three of any type of note squeezed into the space of time that is normally occupied by two of those notes.



Ties act like an addition sign in music. When notes are tied together you add the note values and that is how long you play or sing the note.



TIME SIGNATURES

Composers use a **time signature** to structure the music they write. This allows us to focus on a specific number of notes in each measure and provides a beat pattern that conductors can easily convey to the whole ensemble.

The top number of the time signature tells us how many beats are in each measure. The bottom number tells us what type of note gets one beat. Because the bottom number causes a lot of confusion for young players, it is recommended that you read a time signature like a fraction.

This is a 4/4 time signature.



If you read it as a fraction, this time signature literally says "four fourths" or "four quarters." That means there are four beats in a measure and the quarter note receives one beat (the four on the bottom represents a quarter note).

This is a 3/4 time signature.



That means there are three beats in a measure and the quarter note receives one beat (the four on the bottom represents a quarter note).

This is a 2/4 time signature.



That means there are two beats in a measure and the quarter note receives one beat (the four on the bottom represents a quarter note).

This is a 6/8 time signature.



That means there are six beats in a measure and the eighth note receives one beat (the eight on the bottom represents a eighth note). Reading this fraction can cause confusion because, like 3/4, this time signature can be broken into three quarter notes. Because this time signature specifically calls for six eighth notes, however, it should be read that way to avoid misunderstandings.

In faster tempi, 6/8 time is counted in two, with the emphasis on 1 and 4.

This is a 2/2 time signature.



That means there are two beats in a measure and the half note receives one beat (the two on the bottom represents a half note).

This is the symbol that indicates Common Time.



This is simply another name for 4/4 time, so there are four beats in a measure and the quarter note receives one beat.

This is the symbol that indicates Cut Time.

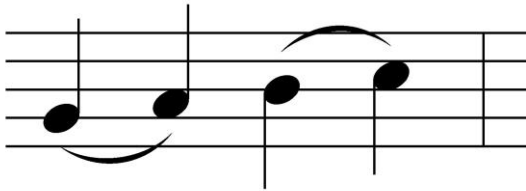


This is simply another name for 2/2 time, so there are two beats in a measure and the half note receives one beat. One other name for Cut Time is Alle Breve.

ARTICULATIONS

When a composer wants to define the way a note should be started (also known as the "attack" on that note), he or she will use an **articulation marking**. There is tremendous variety in articulation markings, but here are four that every middle school musician should know.

This is a picture of the **slur**.



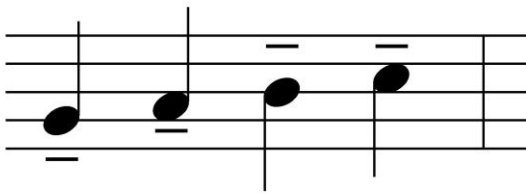
The curved line connecting these two sets of different pitches indicates that the notes should be smoothly connected to each other. Wind musicians accomplish this by not tonguing the second note, string musicians accomplish this by playing both notes on a single bow stroke, and singers accomplish this by keeping the air moving through both notes.

This is a picture of **staccato** markings.



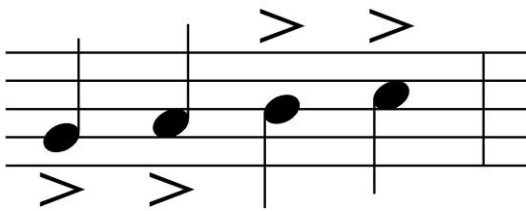
The word "staccato" literally means "detached" in Italian, so these notes are played with a separation between them.

This is a picture of **tenuto** markings.



Some people refer to this style as **legato**, but either term means that the notes should be long without being completely connected like a slur. Every conductor and composer will have a preference regarding how to play tenuto, but there should be a clear start and end to each note.

This is a picture of **accents**.



This marking indicates that the note should have extra emphasis at the beginning of the note. Usually the notes are long, but (like tenuto) different conductors and composers have their own preferences about the exact length.

DYNAMICS

This is a fancy word for the volume at which music should be played.

This is the symbol for forte.

f

This dynamic marking means the music should be played or sung loudly, but many directors like to use the word "strong" to clarify that the tone should still be beautiful.

This is the symbol for piano.

p

This dynamic marking means the music should be played or sung softly.

The Italian suffix "-issimo" means "very" in English. Thus, very strong is fortissimo while very soft is pianissimo. Here is how both dynamic markings would look in your music.

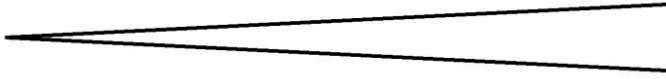
ff *pp*

When you see an "m" in front of forte or piano, it stands for "mezzo" in Italian, which means "medium" in English. Note that mezzo piano is a little louder than piano, whereas mezzo forte is a little quieter than forte. This chart shows the dynamic range from softest to loudest.

pp *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *ff*
softest-----loudest

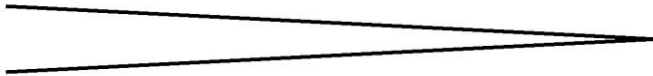
When dynamics change all of a sudden, you will see the markings listed above. Sometimes, however, composers want changes in dynamics to happen incrementally over time.

This marking is a **crescendo**.



It means that the music should get steadily louder. Sometimes composers write "cresc." when the technique takes place over several measures.

This marking is a **decrescendo**.



It means that the music should get steadily softer. Some people prefer the term diminuendo, and some composers will write "decresc." or "dim." when the technique takes place over several measures.

TEMPO MARKINGS

These markings communicate the speed at which a piece of music or song is performed. Tempo markings always appear at the beginning of the music and are sometimes accompanied by metronome markings.



The **metronome marking** that follows the tempo term provides added details about the speed of this music. In the case of this example, the metronome markings tells the player that Moderato requires a speed of 108 quarter notes per minute. Sometimes the abbreviation "BPM" is used to indicate "beats per minute."

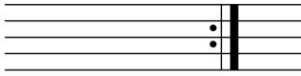
There is considerable variation in the language and meaning of tempo markings, and conductor preference plays a big role, but here are essential Italian terms and the generally accepted range of metronome markings for each one.

- Largo - broadly and very slow (40-60 BPM)
- Adagio - slow and stately; literally "at ease" (66-76 BPM)
- Andante - at a walking pace (76-108 BPM)
- Moderato - moderately (108-120 BPM)
- Allegretto - moderately fast (112-120 BPM)
- Allegro - fast and bright (120-168 BPM)
- Vivace - lively and fast (168-176 BPM)
- Presto - extremely fast (168-200 BPM)

REPEAT SIGNS

Composers use a variety of notational markings to tell a player or singer to repeat a section of music.

This is the simplest repeat sign you will see in music. It means that the performer should return to the beginning of the music and play or sing it again.



Backwards Repeat

When you see these two repeat signs, it means to just play the music within the signs again.



Forward/Backward Repeat

Here are other types of repeats that you will see in music.

When you see a First and Second Ending you play the first ending on the first time of the repeat. On the second time of the repeat you skip the first ending and play the second ending.

Repeat Terminology:

D.C. = Da Capo (the beginning of the piece)

D.S. = Dal Segno (the Sign)

Fine = End

Coda = Passage that brings the piece to an end

MUSICAL FORM

Form (also known as musical structure) describes the layout or plan of a piece of music.

Binary Form - This also known as AB Form (when repeated it is structured as AABB). It has two sections that are related to each other but that sound different.



Ternary Form - This also known as ABA Form. It has three sections; the first and last are identical or very similar, and the middle section is different.



Rondo Form - In this musical form, the initial section alternates with several related sections that each sound different. The basic letter analysis is ABACADA, but it can vary based on the number of sections that alternate with the "A" theme.

Three musical staves in 4/4 time illustrating the Rondo Form (ABACADA). The first staff shows the "A" Theme (8 measures), "B" Theme (8 measures), and "A" Theme (8 measures). The second staff shows the "C" Theme (8 measures) and "A" Theme (8 measures). The third staff shows the "D" Theme (8 measures) and "A" Theme (8 measures).

Theme and Variations - An initial melody (also known as the theme) is introduced; it is followed by one or more altered versions of that initial melody. The letter analysis would be AA'A''A''' (depending on how many variations are written) with the apostrophe indicating a slight change to the initial melody. When used in this context, A' is referred to as "A Prime."



March Form - This form is common to band repertoire. Usually there are two distinct sections that are followed by a Trio. Many times there is a "dogfight" (two groups of instruments alternate in a vigorous call and response format) before the Trio.

Sonata-Allegro Form - This form is common to orchestra repertoire, specifically the first movement of symphonies from the Classical era. It is Ternary form on a large scale with the Exposition ("A" theme) outlining a melodic idea, the Development ("B" theme) altering and experimenting with that melodic idea, and the Recapitulation ("A" theme) bringing back the music from the beginning.

MUSIC HISTORY

Historians break music history into the music eras according to the style of music composed during that time period.

There are overlapping dates because of historical views on music, as well as the composers who were writing music during these eras. Music is constantly evolving and changing, which is why composers and music styles can and will continue to overlap in years.

Sacred Music: Music composed and performed for religious purposes.

Secular Music: Music composed and performed outside the influence of religion.

Musical Eras

Medieval Era (500-1400)

- Early Medieval music was very monophonic in texture, meaning that there was only one melodic line being heard throughout a piece. Later Medieval music started to expand its texture to polyphony, which is more than one melody line being heard at the same time throughout a piece. Sacred vocal music was very prominent for the majority of this era. Secular music was performed by Troubadours, which were traveling musicians who would often sing of love and chivalry.
- Famous Composers
 - Hildegard von Bingen
 - Philippe de Vitry
 - Guillaume de Machaut

Renaissance Era (1400-1600)

- Renaissance, meaning 'rebirth', was a time in which music expanded its boundaries and left the musical restraints of the Medieval Era music. Music became an art form that composers could use to express themselves and their feelings. Secular music began to use and adapt musical concepts and techniques that sacred music had only previously used. Polyphony became very advanced and Madrigal became very popular. Many musical styles, both sacred and secular, vocal and instrumental, flourished during this era.
- Famous Composers
 - Johannes Ockeghem
 - Giovanni Gabrieli
 - Thomas Tallis
 - William Byrd
 - John Dowland

Baroque Era (1600-1750)

- Baroque Era music, meaning flamboyant or overly ornate, was a time when music notation and theory became more structured and precise, and tonality became a main focus of music compositions. Many composers still heavily used polyphony. Opera emerged as an important musical form during this period, along with chamber music, concertos and cantatas. There was a high demand for music and the musicians to perform these types of music.
- Famous Composers
 - Johann Sebastian Bach
 - George Frideric Handel
 - Antonio Vivaldi
 - Georg Philipp Telemann
 - Claudio Monteverdi

Classical Era (1700-1825)

- Classical Era music, referring to Greek architectural emphasis on symmetry and structure, was lighter and less complex than Baroque music. Musical texture made a big shift from polyphony to homophony, which is one melodic line with an established accompaniment. Composers used more variety and contrast with their music in ways such as; varying keys, melodies, rhythms, and dynamics. Symphonies grew larger and became very popular for public audiences, as well as, the newly designed piano, which became a prominent solo instrument.
- Famous Composers
 - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
 - Ludwig van Beethoven
 - Joseph Haydn

Romantic Era (1800-1900)

- Romantic Era music, referring to spontaneity, imagination, and passion, had more priority placed on emotional expression, melody and tone color over that of structure, symmetry, and tonal center from the Classical era. Nationalistic music was composed to celebrate pride for country and kinsman. Opera was one of the main forms of entertainment and reached new highs in popularity with audiences, and many operas from this period are still being performed regularly today.
- Famous Composers
 - Johannes Brahms
 - Richard Wagner
 - Giuseppe Verdi
 - Franz Schubert
 - Gioachino Rossini
 - Robert Schumann
 - Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Modern/20th Century Era (1900-Present)

- Modern music has been, and still is, very diverse and highly progressive. There is no dominant style of Modern classical music. Music during this time has become experimental and modernized through technology and availability. Prominent styles of modern music include; Impressionism, Serialism, Minimalism, Jazz-influenced classical music, Experimentalism and Expressionism.
- Famous Composers
 - Arnold Schoenberg
 - John Cage
 - Claude Debussy
 - Bela Bartok
 - George Gershwin
 - Aaron Copland
 - Phillip Glass
 - Steve Reich

REHEARSAL TECHNIQUES

As a member of an ensemble, each musician is expected to contribute to the process by which the group learns and grows. Unlike disciplines where educational activities are individualized, musical ensembles rely on the full participation of every member of the group.

While each ensemble director has their own style and preferences, most ensemble rehearsals follow a similar format.

- Set up - Assemble your instrument or prepare your voice, tune (when applicable), put music in order, and make sure to have a pencil ready to use.
- Warm up - While instrumental ensembles generally have time for individual warm ups, most groups will engage in some kind of group playing activity to get everything listening and performing consistently.
- Technique study - At the middle school level, there is likely to be some rehearsal time dedicated to improving instrumental or vocal technique. This can include scale study and rhythm reading, but it can extend into the finer points of producing a quality tone.
- Music study - At all levels, everyone is excited to get to playing real music! Remember, though, that ensemble rehearsal is not always going to involve singing or playing straight through a song or piece of music. To improve as an ensemble, you must practice as an ensemble; this routinely requires stopping to analyze what is working and what needs improvement.
- Clean up - Pack up instruments, materials, and music and get ready to leave.

To make every rehearsal an enjoyable experience, attend to these simple concepts.

- Personal Practice - No matter how good the player, every musician needs to practice outside of the ensemble rehearsal. Individuals should work on rhythms, pitch, technique, and the preparation of difficult sections in each song or piece.
- Listen to Directions - Conductors share a lot of information with their ensemble verbally, but musicians must listen if they are to make use of that information.
- Watch the Conductor - Conductors also share a lot of information through the conducting process, but musicians must watch and if they are to make use of that information.
- Respect the Podium - Every conductor has personal preferences, but almost all expect that the ensemble will be silent when he or she is on a podium or otherwise ready to conduct. It can be tempting to make noise or talk, but make sure to refrain from this bad habit!

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

As a member of an ensemble, each musician is expected to contribute to the performance process. Presenting music to an audience is an important part of learning to sing or play an instrument, and as with the rehearsal process it requires full participation from every musician.

To make every performance an enjoyable experience, attend to these simple concepts.

- **Timely Arrival** - Musicians are "called" to a performance 15-30 minutes before it begins. This allows them time to set up, tune, warm up, and mentally prepare for the act of performance. Follow your director's expectations, and remember that it serves an important purpose.
- **Concert Attire** - Every director has specific preferences, but dressing up nicely is an important part of performing. The audience should be able to enjoy the music you make free from distractions caused by slovenly clothing choices.
- **Materials** - Bring everything you need to the concert, particularly if you are an instrumentalist. Make sure your instrument is in working order and make sure you have all the music you will need to enjoy a successful performance.
- **Stage Behavior** - Remember that your audience is watching you when you are on stage, so refrain from talking or otherwise distracting other people. Make sure you are attending to the conductor at all times so you don't miss any cues or important information in the excitement of the moment.
- **Audience Behavior** - When watching other performers, show as much respect for them as you would want from your audience. Stay silent while others perform, stay in your seat until a piece of music has ended, clap politely at the end of each piece (whooping and catcalls is considered inappropriate), and stay for the entire concert to avoid disruptions to the musicians on stage.

ESSENTIAL DEFINITIONS

Interval - The distance between two notes.

Pitch - The highness or lowness of a sound or note.

Rhythm - Patterns of sound or silence.

Value - The duration or length of a note.

Measure - Music is divided by bar lines into measures.

Note - Shows pitch and rhythm.

Meter - The number of beats in a measure.

Beat - A steady recurring pulse.

Accidentals - Sharps, flats, or naturals that appear in a measure.

Rest - A beat or beats of silence.