

# Elements of Music-KS4 Knowledge Organiser

Element of Music	Definition
Melody	A collection of notes which form a tune or a riff. The melody is usually the catchy bit – the bit we can sing.
Harmony	The harmony is any notes that accompany the melody. It is usually made up from notes of chords that work well with the notes in the melody.
Tonality	Tonality means key: a piece may be in a major tonality/key or a minor tonality/key. The piece may be atonal (have no key and sound strange)
Structure / Form	Structure or form in music refers to how the piece is put together. We look at the sections of a piece and how they are arranged. We often use letters to show structure or form i.e. AAB (in this structure the first section is played twice and then a contrasting section is played)
Sonority/Timbre	Sonority/Timbre refer to the sound quality of an instrument. The sound of the instrument can change depending on how it is played i.e. if I pluck a violin (called pizzicato) it has a different timbre than if I use the bow on it (called arco). The violin has a very different timbre to the electric guitar.
Instrumentation	This is similar to Timbre/sonority. Instrumentation refers to which instruments are playing AND to the types of ensemble (group) of instruments you might hear i.e. String quartet, full symphony orchestra, barbershop quartet etc.
Texture	This refers to how the piece is layered-does it have only a melody line (monophonic texture) or does it have an accompaniment of some sort. We can describe the types of accompaniment using texture key terms i.e. homophonic (melody with simple chords) etc.
Tempo	Tempo refers to the speed. We use Italian terms quite often to describe speed (i.e. Allegro is lively/fast and Largo is slow and broad). If we are unsure of the Italian term we can just describe the speed we hear i.e. the tempo gets faster towards the end of the excerpt...
Metre	This is a posh way of referring to the time signature. The most common metre is 4/4
Rhythm	Rhythm refers to the different lengths of the notes. We have long, short and medium length notes i.e. semiquavers are quicker than crotchets etc. Rhythm creates a pattern in the music and can be syncopated (off the beat) or it can be on the beat.
Dynamics	Dynamics are how loud or quiet the music is. We often use Italian terms i.e. piano means quiet and forte is loud BUT if, in the exam, we forget this we can just describe the dynamics we hear i.e. the music starts quietly and gradually gets louder towards the end of the excerpt
Articulation	Articulation is how the notes are played. We might play notes short and detached (staccato), smoothly (legato) or with accents (where we emphasise the notes). Don't get me started on portato. It is completely not okay.

**TIPS: REVISE THIS PAGE VERY CAREFULLY. THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC ARE THE FOUNDATION OF EVERYTHING IN THE EXAM. TRY LISTENING TO YOUR FAVOURITE MUSIC AND CONSCIOUSLY DESCRIBING IT USING EACH ELEMENT. WHAT IS THE MELODY LIKE? DESCRIBE ITS TEXTURE.**