

GCSE Music Grade Descriptors (9-1)

	PERFORMANCE	COMPOSITION	LISTENING
Grade 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Wholly accurate and fluent. ❖ Techniques used are skilfully applied and the student is in complete technical demand throughout the piece. ❖ Intonation and rhythm are accurate and the overall performance is exceptional. ❖ Interpretation is stylish and dynamics, musicality, feeling and other marks of expression are fully realised throughout. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Imaginative with a well-developed sense of audience and occasion. ❖ Successfully developed with convincing stylistic features. ❖ Elements are handled accurately and securely throughout. ❖ Textures are varied/complex and wholly stylistically appropriate. ❖ Coherent, with a convincing sense of direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the nature of listening work in music it is very difficult to provide a set of criteria based judgements. However the best way forward it to use a numerical %age system for any listening paper taken in class as a mock. • For example, for a test marked out of 100 marks the best marking criteria would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade 9 = 97 - 100 Grade 8 = 86 - 96 Grade 7 = 75 - 85 Grade 6 = 64 - 74 Grade 5 = 53 - 63 Grade 4 = 42 - 52 Grade 3 = 32 - 41 Grade 2 = 21 - 31 Grade 1 = 10 – 20 Unclassed. = 0-9
Grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Accurate and fluent with one minor which error which does not impact on the overall success. ❖ All technical demands are met. ❖ Convincing, with good control of tonal contrast throughout. ❖ Musical expression markings are all fully realised, which gives a truly engaging musical performance. ❖ One or less successful moment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Creative with a good sense of audience and occasion. ❖ Musical ideas developed and effectively extended. ❖ Stylistic characteristics and conventions are convincing despite maybe a minor misjudgement. ❖ Elements are handled accurately and securely throughout. ❖ Textures are varied/complex and wholly stylistically appropriate. ❖ Coherent, whole and balanced piece with a convincing sense of direction. 	
Grade 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Accurate and fluent with no more than two minor errors in pitch and or rhythm, not impacting on overall success. ❖ Technical demands are within the ability of the performer. ❖ Convincing performance with good control of tonal contrast throughout. ❖ Musical expression markings are all almost all realised, resulting in a committed performance. ❖ No more than two less successful moments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Creative a relevant to the audience and occasion. ❖ Musical ideas developed and extended effectively for the most part. Stylistic characteristics and conventions are largely convincing despite one or two minor misjudgements. ❖ Elements are handled accurately and securely throughout with only minor misjudgements. ❖ Textures are varied and stylistically appropriate. ❖ Piece has some sense of wholeness, is balanced with good fluency and contrast. 	
Grade 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mostly coherent and fluent; no more than one noticeable error in either pitch and/or rhythm. ❖ Technical demands are mainly met with no more than one instance which is beyond their abilities. ❖ Mostly convincing performance with consistently good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Relevant to the brief and its audience and occasion, although the response may be a little formulaic. ❖ Musical ideas are developed and extended appropriately for the most part but there may be a few inconsistencies. ❖ Stylistic characteristics and conventions appropriate but 	

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	<p>tonal quality on the whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Tempo is usually appropriate throughout and musical expressive markings are mainly observed. ❖ Performance is communicated well and demonstrates involvement with the music. 	<p>there may be inconsistencies that do not seriously impact on the piece.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Elements are handled accurately and mainly securely throughout. Minor misjudgements are evident and instruments are largely used idiomatically. ❖ Textures are appropriate but may lack variety. ❖ Satisfactory structure but this may be formulaic. ❖ Fluency and contrast are evident for the most part. ❖ The piece has a sense of direction. 	
Grade 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mostly coherent and fluent with no more than two obtrusive errors in either pitch and/or rhythm. ❖ Technical demands are mainly met with no more than two instances, which are beyond their abilities. ❖ Some errors, due to the technical demands of the piece. ❖ Generally convincing performance with mainly consistent tonal quality on the whole. ❖ Tempo is usually appropriate throughout and musical expressive markings are mainly observed. ❖ Communicates well demonstrating some involvement with the music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Largely relevant to the brief and its audience and occasion, although the response may be formulaic. ❖ Limited, but appropriate development of musical ideas but there may be a few obvious misjudgements. ❖ Stylistic characteristics and conventions are largely appropriate but not maintained throughout the piece. ❖ Elements are handled accurately and mainly securely throughout. Minor misjudgements are evident and instruments are largely used idiomatically. ❖ Textures are appropriate but limited. ❖ A satisfactory but simple structure. ❖ Fluency and contrast are evident for the most part with a consistent sense of direction. 	
Grade 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More than two noticeable errors in either pitch and/or rhythm. ❖ Technical demands are mainly met with more than two instances which are beyond their abilities. ❖ Fluency may be compromised in parts. ❖ Demonstrates limited technical control on their chosen instrument. ❖ Tempo maybe inconsistent in places and musical expressive markings are attempted. ❖ Sometimes lacks conviction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Musical ideas are mainly developed. ❖ A sense of structure which helps to shape the piece well. ❖ An attempt to develop appropriate stylistic conventions and traditions. ❖ Musical elements control generally secure with no more than two noticeable errors. ❖ Textures have been considered and help provide shape and contrast. Vocal and/or instrumental passages generally musical and shaped well. ❖ A sense of fluency in the piece which helps to achieve a sense of direction. 	

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Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More than two noticeable errors in either pitch and/or rhythm resulting in minimal impact. ❖ Coherence may be lost, but still reasonably fluent. ❖ Technical demands are met with limited success. More than two instances which are beyond their abilities. ❖ Fluency is compromised in parts. ❖ Demonstrates limited technical control on their chosen instrument. ❖ Tempo may be unsuitable and inconsistent. ❖ Musical expressive markings are limited in realisation. ❖ Performance is mechanical. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Musical ideas are somewhat developed. ❖ Some sense of structure to the composition but limited to basic musical structures. ❖ An attempt to develop appropriate stylistic conventions but these can be unconvincing for the most part. ❖ Control of the musical elements sometimes insecure and some obtrusive errors are heard. ❖ Textures have been considered but may be mishandled in sections. ❖ Vocal and/or instrumental passages are functional. ❖ Attempt at basic structures is made, but are often too repetitive. ❖ Some attempts made at achieving a sense of direction in the piece. 	
Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Several obtrusive errors in either pitch and/or rhythm. ❖ Coherence and fluency are compromised by breakdowns and/or omissions. ❖ Poor technical control is demonstrated. ❖ Demands of the music are largely beyond their ability. ❖ Tempo may be unsuitable and inconsistent throughout. ❖ Little or no attention to musical expressive markings evident. ❖ Performance is mechanical and lacks conviction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Musical ideas are limited. ❖ Little sense of structure. ❖ No attempt to develop appropriate stylistic conventions in the piece. ❖ Control of the musical elements is sometimes insecure. ❖ Obtrusive errors are heard and may affect effectiveness. ❖ Textures are narrow and unvaried in places. ❖ Vocal and/or instrumental passages are sometimes compromised by a poor standard of realisation. 	
Grade 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Several obtrusive errors in either pitch and/or rhythm. ❖ Coherence and fluency are frequently compromised by breakdowns and/or omissions. ❖ Poor technical control is demonstrated. ❖ Demands of the music are beyond their ability. ❖ Tempo is unsuitable and inconsistent throughout. ❖ No attention to musical expressive markings is made. ❖ No attempt to communicate or awareness of audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Musical ideas are very limited. ❖ No appropriate sense of structure. ❖ Incomplete with sections missing. ❖ The control of the musical used is insecure. ❖ Obtrusive errors are frequent and seriously affect effectiveness. ❖ Textures are narrow and unvaried. ❖ Vocal and/or instrumental passages are compromised by a poor standard of realisation. 	

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U3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More difficult pieces with accuracy (grade 1 equiv) ❖ Secure technical ability in tone, dexterity and control ❖ Follow simple expressive directions – dynamics and articulation ❖ Confidently perform significant parts from memory and from notations. ❖ They make some subtle adjustments to fit their own part within a group performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Can compose and improvise in different genres and styles. ❖ Melodic/musical material demonstrates some structure ❖ Ideas show evidence of harmonic and non-harmonic devices ❖ Rhythms are simple but some attempt at variety ❖ Accompaniment is often simple with some sense of harmonic framework – (chord sequence) ❖ Notation is simple but appropriate, with some attempt to add musical detail, but which may not be wholly appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Can identify the different processes and contexts of selected musical genres and styles. ❖ Can analyse, compare and evaluate how music reflects the contexts in which it is created, performed and heard.
U2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Simple pieces performed with accuracy ❖ Reasonable technical ability in tone, dexterity and control ❖ Follow some expressive directions – dynamics and articulation ❖ Perform significant parts from memory and from notations ❖ Aware of their own contributions – leading others/taking a solo part and/or providing rhythmic support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Can compose/improvise musical/melodic/rhythmic ideas ❖ Develop ideas for a range of occasions. ❖ Ideas lack appropriate musical directions ❖ Rhythms are often simple but with a sense of time signature ❖ A very simple accompaniment – (block chords) ❖ Notation is varied but simple with some accuracy and may lack appropriate performance detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Can identify and explore how music reflects time and place ❖ Can compare musical features using appropriate musical vocabulary
U1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Very simple pieces performed with reasonable accuracy – from graphic scores/ annotations or by ear ❖ Some limited technical ability in tone, dexterity and control ❖ Inconsistent following of any expressive directions ❖ Maintain own part with an awareness of how the different parts fit together ❖ An awareness of the overall style/effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Can compose/improvise a simple melodic/rhythmic idea ❖ Develop simple ideas within musical structures ❖ Ideas may be brief and lack consistent musical direction ❖ Rhythms are simple and limited ❖ A very simple accompaniment – (drone, ostinato) ❖ Notation uses basic symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Can identify and explore how music reflects different intentions ❖ Can describe musical features using appropriate musical vocabulary