

Moving from the mechanical to the creative?

Developing composition skills in KS3 to prepare for KS4.

Helen Temple

The image displays a musical score for Violin and Piano, measures 11 to 15. The score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Violin part (labeled 'Violin' and 'Vln.') features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Piano part (labeled 'Piano' and 'Pno.') provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both the right and left hands. Measure numbers 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 are indicated at the bottom of the staves.

1. What musical knowledge and understanding can be heard in this composition?
2. What is less secure or not understood?

In your experience, what makes a successful GCSE composition?

What makes a successful GCSE Composition?

- Melody – shaped and developed.
- Rhythm – varied and developed.
- Harmony – understand chords, and varied accompaniments.
- Development of ideas – not just repetition
- Structure – pacing of ideas – including introduction and ending.
- Planning – Octaves, ideas between instruments, variety and imitation
- Textures – developed. Not just block chords or repeated layers.

What other skills does a KS4 pupil need to compose?

- Work independently
- Time management
- Use technology/notation software

Moderator Report

Candidates who did well composed pieces that demonstrated a clear understanding and application of well-taught compositional devices, such as contrasting keys, melodic extension, variation and development, and a harmonic awareness.

KS3 - NATIONAL CURRICULUM

- improvise and compose; and **extend and develop** musical ideas by drawing on a range of musical structures, styles, genres and traditions
- use staff and other relevant notations appropriately and accurately in a range of musical styles, genres and traditions
- identify and use the inter-related dimensions of music expressively and with increasing sophistication, including use of **tonalities**, different types of **scales** and other **musical devices**

KS3 - Model Music Curriculum

The Key Stage 3 curriculum introduces more opportunities to learn about harmony so that by the end of Year 9, all pupils should be able to form and use primary chords in a number of keys and embellish these with bass lines, melodies and rhythmic accompaniment.

Many pupils will have developed confidence in handling more sophisticated harmony as a result of the curriculum.

What are some of the challenges of teaching composition at KS3?

We do composition,
but not enough.

My pupils are
reluctant to
explore and are
afraid to make
mistakes.

We are more
experimental at KS3 and
probably should be more
ambitious.

It's difficult to teach
composing effectively
with large group
numbers and sharing
resources.

We don't have
enough access
to music
technology at
KS3.

I do less composition in
Year 9 as many are so
disengaged.

Topic based curriculum?

OR

Skills based curriculum?

Listening and analysis.



Writing about music.



Music Technology (and notation)



Compose short melodies



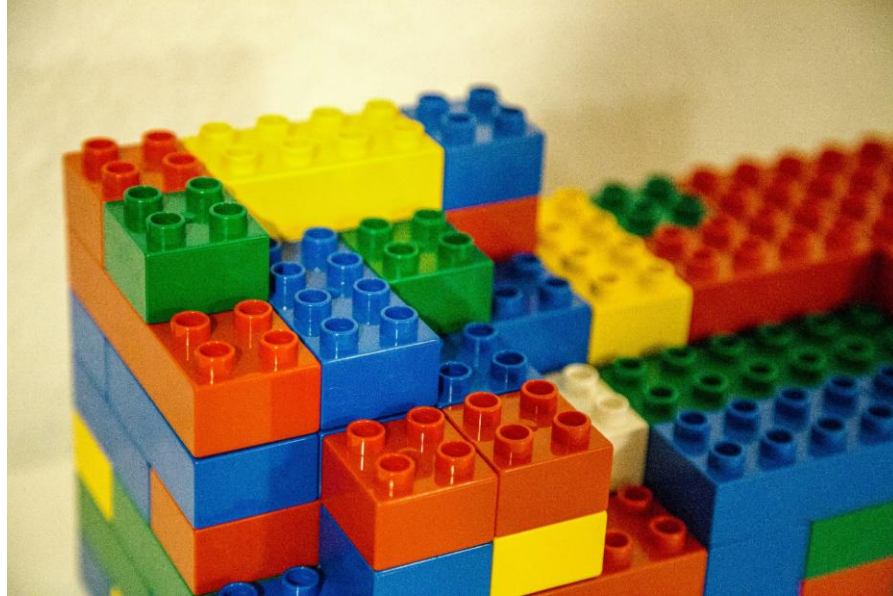
Understand chords



Compose using a given starting point.



Explore simple structures



Use simple composition features.



How to develop a melodic idea



Change the mood/style of a melody





Other common issues

- Chord note melodies
- Too long
- Sound effect pieces – (film)
- Limited use of Stimulus
- Disjointed structure – often in film comps
- Set chord patterns – 12 bar blues
- Set structures – Ternary, Rondo – lack dev
- Rhythm only pieces – drum comp/ raps
- Plagiarism
- EDM – copy and paste/layers
- Songs MUST have a vocal line/lyrics.

VERY IMPORTANT - Please do not rely on a Facebook group for information!

If you need help, contact your subject advisor at your exam board.

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