

*Music Vocabulary  
Progression*





# **USE OF VOCABULARY IN MUSIC**

During every music lesson there is always a recap of previously taught vocabulary to check for understanding. Following this any new vocabulary is explicitly taught (introduced, modelled and revisited) throughout the specific lesson or periodically throughout the topic being covered. New Vocabulary is always displayed on slides of the lesson PowerPoint. Some vocabulary understanding will also be reinforced by performing related practical activities.

Using both **substantive** and **disciplinary** vocabulary in music is essential for developing children's musical understanding and skills. Substantive vocabulary provides children with the language to describe and discuss the fundamental elements of music—such as pitch, rhythm, dynamics, timbre, and texture—as well as musical concepts, genres, and styles. This enables them to articulate what they hear, perform, and create with precision. Disciplinary vocabulary, meanwhile, equips children to think and work like musicians and composers. It supports them in analysing musical structures, interpreting performances, evaluating compositions, and understanding the creative processes behind music-making. Together, these types of vocabulary allow children to deepen their musical knowledge, engage critically with diverse musical traditions, and communicate their ideas and responses with clarity and confidence.

*Please note that children do not need to remember all of the substantive vocabulary but that much of this vocabulary will be important in helping them to develop their understanding of the complex design concepts.*



# PROGRESSION OF VOCABULARY IN MUSIC

EYFS	KS1	LKS2	UKS2
<p>In the Early Years, music vocabulary is introduced through playful exploration of sound and rhythm. Children learn simple terms like <i>loud</i>, <i>quiet</i>, <i>fast</i>, <i>slow</i>, <i>high</i>, and <i>low</i> to describe what they hear. They begin to recognise basic musical concepts through songs, rhymes, and percussion instruments, using words like <i>beat</i>, <i>shake</i>, <i>tap</i>, and <i>clap</i>. This foundational vocabulary helps them express their musical experiences and develop listening skills.</p>	<p>As children progress into Key Stage 1, their music vocabulary expands to include more specific musical elements. They learn terms such as <i>pitch</i>, <i>tempo</i>, <i>rhythm</i>, and <i>dynamics</i> to describe and create music. Vocabulary related to instruments becomes more detailed, including names of different <i>percussion</i>, <i>string</i>, and <i>wind</i> instruments. Children also begin to use words like <i>compose</i>, <i>perform</i>, <i>pattern</i>, and <i>repeat</i> as they engage in simple music-making activities and start to understand musical structure.</p>	<p>In Lower Key Stage 2, pupils develop a more sophisticated understanding of musical terminology. They use words like <i>melody</i>, <i>harmony</i>, <i>texture</i>, and <i>timbre</i> to analyse and discuss music. Vocabulary extends to include musical notation terms such as <i>notes</i>, <i>rests</i>, <i>stave</i>, and <i>bar lines</i>. Children begin to explore different musical styles and genres, using descriptive language to compare pieces and explain their preferences. Terms like <i>improvise</i>, <i>ostinato</i>, and <i>accompaniment</i> become part of their active musical vocabulary.</p>	<p>By Upper Key Stage 2, children use precise and technical music vocabulary confidently across a range of contexts. They understand and apply terms such as <i>structure</i>, <i>phrasing</i>, <i>articulation</i>, <i>crescendo</i>, and <i>diminuendo</i> when performing and composing. Pupils can discuss musical elements in depth, using vocabulary like <i>major</i>, <i>minor</i>, <i>chord</i>, <i>scale</i>, and <i>duration</i>. They also develop critical listening skills, employing evaluative language to appraise performances and compositions, and understand how music reflects different cultures, periods, and purposes.</p>

# MUSIC VOCABULARY PROGRESSION- LISTENING



Disciplinary Vocabulary	Substantive vocabulary						
EY	EY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Listen, Respond, Move, Copy, Identify							
KS1							
Describe, Compare, Recognise, Identify, Discuss, Reflect, Evaluate, Appraise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound</li> <li>• Silence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch</li> <li>• Tempo</li> </ul>					
LKS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loud</li> <li>• Quiet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynamics</li> <li>• Rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melody</li> <li>• Structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmony</li> </ul>			
Analyse, Describe, Interpret, Recognise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High</li> <li>• Low</li> <li>• Fast</li> <li>• Slow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pattern</li> <li>• Instrument</li> <li>• Voice</li> <li>• Composer</li> <li>• Singal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texture</li> <li>• Timbre</li> <li>• Mood</li> <li>• Style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expression</li> <li>• Genre</li> <li>• Texture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensemble</li> <li>• Genre</li> <li>• Expression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Contrast</li> <li>• Repetition</li> <li>• Timbre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form</li> <li>• Phrase</li> <li>• Motif</li> <li>• Accompaniment</li> </ul>
UKS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beat</li> <li>• Pulse</li> </ul>						
Analyse, Evaluate, Interpret, Compare, Reflect							

# MUSIC VOCABULARY PROGRESSION- CREATING



Disciplinary Vocabulary	Substantive vocabulary						
EY	EY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Explore, Create, Copy, Play, Experiment							
KS1							
Combine, Explore, Select, Record, Invent, Adapt, Develop, Refine, Represent							
LKS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound</li> <li>• Beat</li> <li>• Pattern</li> <li>• Loud</li> <li>• Quiet</li> <li>• High</li> <li>• Low</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pulse</li> <li>• Rhythm</li> <li>• Pitch</li> <li>• Tempo</li> <li>• Dynamics</li> <li>• Tune</li> <li>• Lyric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compose</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Pattern</li> <li>• Phrase</li> <li>• Melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ostinato</li> <li>• Drone</li> <li>• Chord</li> <li>• Harmony</li> <li>• Texture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form</li> <li>• Motif</li> <li>• Repetition</li> <li>• Contrast</li> <li>• Timbre</li> <li>• Rest</li> <li>• Stave</li> <li>• Bar Line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notation</li> <li>• Graphic score</li> <li>• Symbol</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Dynamics</li> <li>• Ostinato</li> <li>• Time Signature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form</li> <li>• Expression</li> <li>• Structure</li> <li>• Phrasing</li> </ul>
UKS2							
Represent, Variation							

# MUSIC VOCABULARY PROGRESSION- PERFORMING



Disciplinary Vocabulary	Substantive vocabulary						
EY	EY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Perform, Copy, Move, Join in, Respond							
KS1							
Practise, Follow, Listen, Rehearse, Present, Adjust, Focus, Evaluate							
LKS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound</li> <li>• Beat</li> <li>• Pulse</li> <li>• Loud</li> <li>• Quiet</li> <li>• Fast</li> <li>• Slow</li> <li>• Clap</li> <li>• Shake</li> <li>• Tap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhythm</li> <li>• Tempo</li> <li>• Dynamics</li> <li>• Voice</li> <li>• Instrument</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch</li> <li>• Ensemble</li> <li>• Solo</li> <li>• Group</li> <li>• Unpitched Percussion</li> <li>• Pitched Percussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expression</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> <li>• Control</li> <li>• Technique</li> <li>• Posture</li> <li>• Melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynamics</li> <li>• Tempo</li> <li>• Articulation</li> <li>• Accompaniment</li> <li>• Cue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conductor</li> <li>• Ensemble</li> <li>• Balance</li> <li>• Stage</li> <li>• Audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expression</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Articulation</li> <li>• Crescendo</li> <li>• Diminuendo</li> </ul>
Reflect, Lead, Blend							
UKS2							
Perform, Variation							

# MUSIC VOCABULARY PROGRESSION- SINGING



Disciplinary Vocabulary	Substantive vocabulary						
EY							
Sing, Copy, Join in, Listen, Respond	EY	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
KS1							
Match pitch, Follow, Perform, Rehearse, Evaluate							
LKS2							
Blend, Breathe, Project, Lead, Practise, Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice</li> <li>• Song</li> <li>• Loud</li> <li>• Quiet</li> <li>• High</li> <li>• Low</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitch</li> <li>• Tempo</li> <li>• Dynamics</li> <li>• Beat</li> <li>• Pulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melody</li> <li>• Phrase</li> <li>• Verse</li> <li>• Chorus</li> <li>• Refrain</li> <li>• Repeat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmony</li> <li>• Unison</li> <li>• Round</li> <li>• Canon</li> <li>• Choir</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tone</li> <li>• Expression</li> <li>• Posture</li> <li>• Breathing</li> <li>• Warm-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocal range</li> <li>• Projection</li> <li>• Major</li> <li>• Minor</li> <li>• Duration</li> <li>• Chord</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control</li> <li>• Technique</li> <li>• Ensemble</li> <li>• Performance</li> </ul>
UKS2							
Sing, Blend, Lead, Evaluate, Reflect, Perform, Evaluate, Reflect, Lead, Adjust							