

MUSICIANSWEST

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A Comprehensive Musical Knowledge Exam for Piano Students

Terms and Symbols
All Levels

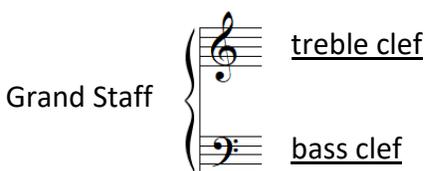
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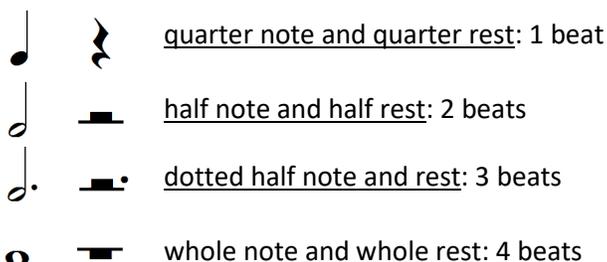
Young Beginner Level

p piano: soft, quiet

f forte: loud



LH = Left Hand
RH = Right Hand



Preparatory Level

Students must be able to identify all terms and symbols in the Young Beginner Level.

> accent: play the note or chord louder

p piano: soft, quiet

f forte: loud

staccato: detached, crisp

fermata: hold the note longer

repeat sign: play the music again

slur: curved line that indicates *legato*

fine: the end

D.C. al fine (da capo al fine): return to the beginning, and continue until *fine*

rit., ritard., ritardando: gradually slower

a tempo: return to the original speed

dynamics: symbols that mean varying degrees of loud or soft

legato: smooth and connected

Level 1

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols from the Young Beginner and Preparatory Levels.

mp mezzo piano: medium soft

mf mezzo forte: medium loud

pp pianissimo: very soft

ff fortissimo: very loud

cresc. (crescendo): gradually louder

decresc., dim. (decrescendo, diminuendo): gradually softer

first and second endings

repetition: repeating a melodic pattern exactly

accidentals: sharp #, flat b, and natural ♮

tenuto: line over or under a note, hold for full value and give stress to the note

ottava: play an octave higher (or lower if under notes)

Level 2

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols from Young Beginner Level through Level 1.

allegro: fast, quick tempo

andante: walking tempo

moderato: moderate tempo

ppp pianississimo: very, very quiet

fff fortississimo: very, very loud

sf sfz fz sforzando: sudden, sharp accent on a note or chord

vivace: quick, lively, faster than *allegro*

Sequence: repeating a pattern at a higher or lower pitch, usually by 2nds or 3rds

Level 3

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols through Level 2.

adagio: slow tempo, slower than *andante*

accel., accelerando: gradually faster

dolce: sweetly, with pure and beautiful sound

molto: much, very

poco: little

spiritoso: with spirit, excitement

una corda: depress the left (soft) pedal

tre corde: release the left (soft) pedal

relative Major/minor: keys that share a key signature

motif/motive: a short musical idea

Level 4

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols through Level 3.

andantino: slightly faster or slower than *Andante*

allegretto: moderately fast

cantabile: in a singing style

espressivo: expressively

leggiero: lightly

presto: extremely fast

subito: suddenly

tr trill (always trill to the note above)

parallel Major/minor: two keys that share the same keynote

transposition: playing in a different key than what is written

imitation: restatement of a motive in another voice

articulation: the manner in which notes are played (*staccato, legato, accents, etc.*)

Historical eras in order: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th-21st Centuries

Level 5

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols through Level 4.

animato: animated, spirited

arpeggio: broken chord

con: with

con brio: with excitement

con moto: with motion

enharmonic: two names for the same sound (F# - G^b)

largo: broadly, quite slow

ostinato: repeated musical pattern

tranquillo: tranquil, peaceful

vivo: fast and lively

Identify these symbols:

 appoggiatura 

 mordent 

 turn (gruppetto)  or 

Historical eras in order: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th-21st Centuries,
and name at least one composer from each era.

Level 6

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols through Level 5.

doloroso: sadly

marcato: accented, bring out the melody

robusto: boldly, robustly

modulation: changing from one key to another

scherzando: jokingly, light and fast

simile: similarly, the same

sostenuto: sustained, full note values

deceptive cadence: a resolution on vi or VI

syncopation: emphasizing a weak beat

opus: a work of music or art, often
chronologically ordered

 double flat: a note that sounds two half steps
lower

✕ double sharp: a note that sounds two half steps
higher

fp forte piano: play the note or chord *forte*, the
next note *piano*

Historical eras in order: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th-21st Centuries,
and name at least two composers from each era.

Level 7

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols through Level 6.

allargando: broadening, slower with *cresc.*

con fuoco: with fire, excitement

meno: less

meno mosso: less motion (slower)

più: more

più mosso: more motion (faster)

pesante: heavily

rallentando (rall.): gradually slower

ritenuto (riten.): suddenly slower

senza: without

sempre: always, continue the same way

giocoso: joking, humorous

grazioso: gracefully

lento: slow tempo

canon: strict contrapuntal form with each voice

imitating the first voice exactly

whole tone scale: a scale using only whole steps (M2)

Alberti bass: accompaniment figure using a 3-note chord



trill with prefix from above: 

trill with prefix from below: 

Sonata Form (Sonata Allegro Form): Exposition: containing two contrasting themes, usually modulating to the dominant or relative Major; Development: free section usually moving through several keys, using sequences, to arrive back at the tonic at the beginning of the Recapitulation: restatement of the Exposition themes, all in the tonic key.

Historical eras in order: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th-21st Centuries, and name at least three composers from each era.

Level 8

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols through Level 7.

rhythmic augmentation: a theme or motive in which the note values are doubled (e.g., ♩ becomes ♩)

rhythmic diminution: a theme or motive in which the note values are halved (e.g., ♩ becomes ♩)

homophonic texture: a melody in one voice with accompaniment

polyphonic texture: two or more independent melodic lines

pedal point: a repeated or sustained note, usually in the bass, occurring together with a succession of other harmonies

pivot chord: a chord before a modulation, which is common to the original key and to the key of the modulation

m.d. (mano destra): right hand

m.s. (mano sinistra): left hand

Historical eras in order: Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th-21st Centuries, and name at least three composers from each era. Characteristics of each era:

Baroque: Polyphonic texture, dance suites, terraced dynamics, ornamentation, rise of opera and oratorio

Classical: Homophonic texture, sonata form develops with multi-movements, Alberti bass, obvious cadence points

Romantic: Program music with descriptive titles and expanded forms, character pieces, colorful harmonies with much chromaticism, lyrical melodies

20th-21st Centuries: Styles that can include atonality, bitonality and polytonality, irregular and changing time signatures, experimental harmonies and textures.

Level 9

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols through Level 8.

counterpoint/contrapuntal: music with two or more independent lines sounding simultaneously (polyphonic texture)

fugue: a contrapuntal form where the theme (subject) is presented alone, then successively imitated by other voices

hemiola: a shift in the rhythmic pulse from a division of 2 to a division of 3: ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ |

rubato: flexible tempo through a phrase, by slightly changing the duration of notes

smorzando (smorz.), morendo: dying away

sotto voce: very softly or subdued

toccata: a virtuosic keyboard composition in free form

Dances of a Baroque suite: allemande: binary form, in simple meter, beginning with an upbeat;

courante: usually quick, with a triple meter; sarabande: slow, dignified dance, usually with

ornamentation; gigue, giga: quick dance in compound time, usually beginning with a single melody,

then successively imitated by other voices; bourée: quick dance in duple meter, beginning with an

upbeat; gavotte: duple meter, with the rhythmic emphasis occurring in the middle of the measure;

minuet: ternary form in simple triple meter, moderate tempo, in two-bar phrases; polonaise: triple

meter, moderate march-like tempo

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Impressionism: 19th-20th century style originating in France, using unresolved dissonances, non-functional harmony, parallelism, whole-tone scales and irregular phrasing.

Level 10

Students must be able to identify all terms & symbols through Level 9.

Non-harmonic tones

passing tone: A note that passes stepwise between two chords but does not belong to either chord.

upper and lower neighbor tone (sometimes called auxiliary tones): Notes which are a step above or below a chord tone, then returning to the chord.

suspension: A note that is held beyond the next chord change, resolving after the new chord occurs.

anticipation: A chord tone that happens before the chord occurs.

appoggiatura: A non-harmonic tone that is played on the beat, then resolves (usually downward).

Fugues

subject: Fugue theme is presented in a single voice at the beginning, then appears in alternating voices.

answer: Subject which repeats in a dominant key; a real answer has an exact intervallic equivalent to the subject; a tonal answer has slightly different intervals to maintain the tonality.

countersubject: A melody that plays along with the subject in subsequent repetitions.

exposition: A section where all voices state the subject, then concludes with an obvious cadence.

episode: A section which serves to modulate from one key to another, using material from the subject or counter-subject, usually using sequences.

stretto: The overlapping of subjects in different voices.

Forms

Classical sonata structure (multiple movements): A typical sonata consists of three movements. The first movement is usually in Sonata (Sonata Allegro) Form; the second movement is usually slower and is usually in ternary form; the third movement may be a Rondo, Theme and Variations or Sonata form. Occasionally a fourth movement is before or after a slow movement and may be in Minuet or Scherzo (ABA) form.

rondo: A form that has a recurring theme (A) that returns between contrasting sections (B, C), usually following a pattern such as ABACA, ABACABA, ABACBA.

theme and variations: A form consisting of a theme and a series of different versions of the theme.

Variations may differ in harmony, melody, rhythm, form, texture, meter, key or tempo.

Harmony and Tonality

tertian harmony: Harmony based on combinations of the interval of a 3rd; most traditional Western music is based on this tonality.

quartal harmony: Harmony based on the interval of a 4th.

bitonality: The use of two keys or tonalities simultaneously.

polytonality: The use of two or more keys at the same time.

atonality: The absence of a tonal center or key.

Tone Rows

twelve-tone row: Compositional method in which all twelve tones of the chromatic scale are organized in a certain order before repeating any tone; the row is used over and over to provide the structure of the composition.

retrograde: A technique where the melody or tone row is reversed.

melodic inversion: A technique where the intervals of a melody or tone row are inverted, e.g. if an interval goes up a 3rd, the inversion will go down a 3rd, etc.

retrograde inversion: Combination of retrograde and melodic inversion.