

A Level Music

Summer Independent Learning - Year 11-12

Task 1 - Performance

- Polish up a piece you are already working on and video it. You might find a recorded accompaniment on YouTube for pieces that are very regularly played for grades.
- Resurrect an older piece that you really enjoyed. You will be able to play it better now you are a bit more advanced. Listen to some performances of the piece on Apple Music/Spotify/YouTube. What do you like about these performances? Is there anything you can incorporate. Again, video or record your performance.
- Look at the graded lists for the level at which you are currently playing. Listen to the pieces and choose one to learn from scratch. You can use recorded performances to help you learn the piece and decide how to play it. This piece must be of grade 5 standard or more.
- The important thing to remember is that it is better to play an easier piece well than a more difficult piece poorly. Make sure you perform it musically, paying attention to dynamics, tempo markings, and phrasing.

You must perform this piece in front of your teacher during the first two weeks of college. You can use a backing track if you wish.

Task 2 - Music Theory

When we start the A level course, we begin reviewing basic theory through some simple composition tasks. We will go over all concepts, but we do presume some basic knowledge. On the following (external) page you should be familiar and confident with the topics in the following sections:

[Musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net)

- *The Basics* – all sections
- *Rhythm and Metre* – all sections
- *Scales and Key Signatures* – all sections
- *Intervals* – all sections
- The first two lessons from *Chords*, *Diatonic Chords* and the first from *Chord Progressions* would be a bonus

Please make sure you have written comprehensive notes about all of these areas. You can download manuscript paper from here:

http://www.musictheory.org.uk/manuscript_paper.php

You will be tested on these areas of music theory when you come to college, so it is vital that you fully understand and learn this material. You must know all of your key signatures.

Task 3 - The Symphony

Watch the following video and make detailed notes.

- Good basic introduction to [the symphony by Howard Goodall](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLIz6m-9uHo) from the BBC <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLIz6m-9uHo>

Now research more into the symphony. Answer the following in detail:

1. What is a symphony?
2. How many movements does it generally have?
3. Describe the typical features of each movement and explain the typical structures they use. Diagrams may help.

Task 4 - Haydn's Symphony 104 "London"

Follow the score and listen to the music using the link below. This is one of the set works, and you must know it well.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kg6Q9tkHOw0>

Task 5 - Music History

Read through and listen to the material on the 'Short History of Music' pages on <https://alevelmusic.com/4-short-history-of-music/>

Now complete the following questions:

1. What was your favourite piece and why?
2. Choose something about one of the other tracks that interests you (e.g. instrumentation, harmony, rhythm) and describe the aspect that you find interesting.
3. What is your least favourite track? Describe two aspects of this track that you think contribute to your opinion.
4. Identify THREE features of music that are different at the beginning of the Classical era compared to the Baroque.
5. Having read about the Romantic period, now do some of your own research on a Romantic composer of your choice. Write a short biographical paragraph about the composer, explaining how they are typically Romantic.