

Composition Compendium

A Collection of Composition Ideas for Primary Students from
EYFS to Year 6

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Composition Compendium



Welcome to the Composition Compendium

The Composition Compendium is a collection of ideas for Composing and Creative music work from EYFS to upper KS2.

It is designed to illustrate how many different approaches there can be to this aspect of the music curriculum, from a short warm up activity to an extended project.

It is not a scheme of work in itself but is a collection you can dip into when designing a scheme of work that best suits the needs of your school. As long as you are in the correct age-band of ideas, they can be taken in any order.

You could also use different ideas in different years to fulfil the same objectives; having choices helps to 'keep it fresh'. You may also like to adapt the ideas, for instance, taking a story-based idea and choosing a different book. Each idea has a guide to how long it will take, and if it is a one-off or an extended activity.

Unlike Singing, there are few published resources for Composition, but it remains an especially important element of musical learning. What children put into their compositions comes from what they have previously learned - their own personal bank of resources, so it is also a particularly good way of assessing what understanding they have to draw on.

Composition can be done individually, in pairs, in groups and as a guided whole class activity, and can be inspired by a whole range of stimuli. It needs both the freedom to create and use imagination, and the structure and scaffolding to work within, much like writing activities.

As in many other things, less is more when working on composition. Children need space to explore and experiment with ideas, to draft and re-draft, create a score, improve, and eventually fix the ideas and save. When doing longer composition projects it can be particularly useful to **record or film aspects of both the process and finished product** as evidence of musical learning and progress over time.

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Composition Compendium



Welcome to this collection of composition ideas for all Primary children – from EYFS to Year 6.

You can either read the document as a whole, or search for the age group you would like to focus on [by clicking on the icons:](#)

EYFS Composition



Year 1 - 2 Composition



Year 3 - 4 Composition



Year 5 - 6 Composition



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EYFS Composition Ideas – Ctrl+Click on the Icons



**Introductory Notes for
EYFS Composition**

**Based on Language –
Stories, Poems, Letters
and Sounds**



**Based on Numbers –
Sequences, Patterns and
Body Percussion**



Based on Pictures




**Based on Music as a
Stimulus**



Based on Improvisation



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Introductory Notes for EYFS Composition

This pack is designed to support teachers and other adults working with children in early years settings in primary schools – nursery and reception-aged children and classes.

Encouraging creativity can take many different approaches. The following are some to consider (Dr. Susan Young, 'Music with the Under 4s'):

- Observe and listen ('fly on the wall' approach)
- Respond 'non-verbally' by getting down to their level. Show genuine interest so you can give support without saying anything.
- Respond verbally by making positive comments about their ideas. Introduce appropriate vocabulary through what they are doing. Resist telling them what to do!
- Child-led play - allow the child to lead and you follow
- Contributory play – where an adult extends by scaffolding children's ideas, either verbally or non-verbally
- Semi-structured play – ideas provided by one (child or adult) and copied by others
- Open ended lead play – adult sets up a provocation to play, with plenty of time and space for child's ideas
- Modelling – adult shows an idea
- Performing

[Return to EYFS Homepage](#)



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Due to the spontaneous nature of much music making at this age, this composition pack hopes to help you create, facilitate, and capture opportunities for musical composition in your setting environment both inside and out. Many of the activities are adaptable and easily changed to suit your children's interests throughout the year.




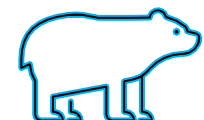

At this age, much musical learning is 'caught not taught' (Linda Bance).


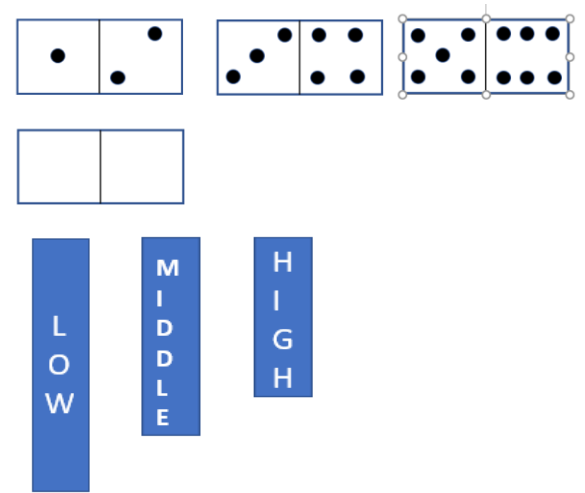
Resources for EYFS Composition/Musical Exploration:

- An enticing environment offering opportunities for music making, singing, dancing & listening
- Different sound sources (provocations) – instruments, found sounds, world music, props – displayed and accessible in different ways (music baskets/washing lines/on the railings, to name a few)
- Recorded music for mark-making (very basic graphic scores), listening, dancing to, playing with, singing along
- Dressing up & role play resources
- Toys/objects for playing with
- A recording microphone
- Electronic devices for manipulating & changing sound (e.g. an electric keyboard)

[Return to EYFS Homepage](#)






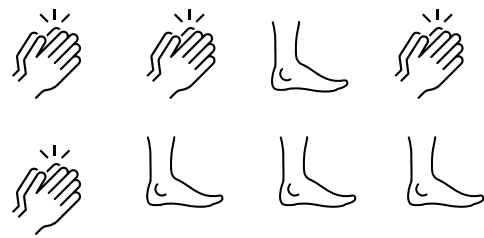



	22-36 months (1.8–3 years)	30-50 months (2.5-4 years)	40 – 60 months+ (3.5-5 years+)
<p>Based on Language – Stories, Poems, Letters and Sounds EYFS</p> <p>Return to EYFS Homepage</p> 	<p>The Very Hungry Caterpillar Place laminated copies from the story out, and a selection of found sounds/instruments, and let the children explore and create sounds to go with sections of the story. There are no right/wrong answers, just lots of amazing creative possibilities. They may try to tell the story at the same time, or even ‘sing’ along as they shake, tap, scrape, count, crawl, have belly ache and shimmer like the moon. (1-2 lessons)</p> <p>‘The Man from the Land of Fandango’ Read through the first few pages of the story. Which ‘magical’ instruments would be appropriate to accompany this story, including the ‘Dancing and Dreams’ section? (Bells, triangles, egg shakers, cymbals, gliss. on xylophones?) Allocate different instruments to different lines of the story. Follow directions from conductor – start/stop/get louder/get quieter. Coloured scarves could be added too, for effect (1-2 lessons).</p>	<p>Where the Wild Things Are This story is full of contrasts: Big and small, fear and security, wildness and control. Explore TIMBRE and DYNAMICS in this wonderful story – how will the children create the rumpus of the wild things, Max feeling lonely, or Max travelling in his boat? How will the forest grow, and Max feeling safe in his room with his dinner still hot? Discuss, experiment and perform! (1 lesson)</p> <p>Picture/word cards Individually or in pairs, children organise word rhythm picture cards into a chosen sequence/pattern to clap & say the rhythms. From L to R. You will need to have multiple copies of each card. Choose word rhythms connected to your learning focus to reinforce key words e.g. ant, spider, butt-er-fly, grass-hopp-er, cat-er-pill-ar. Encourage children to tap the word rhythm as you would naturally speak it. Start with two different word rhythms and gradually increase the difficulty by adding more to create longer sequences and patterns.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Butt-er-fly</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Grass-hop-per</p> </div> </div>	<p>We’re going on a Bear Hunt Read the story many times so children are familiar with it. Encourage joining in, especially on the ‘chorus’ (We’re going on a Bear Hunt...) & unison (Oh no! We’ve got to...) sections. Look at how the text has been organised on each page – chorus, pace, unison, sound effects. Why are there different sizes of text? (DYNAMICS – they get louder as the text gets bigger). Allocate different groups of children a different page (grass, river, mud, forest, snowstorm, cave). They will need to explore sound sources to create the soundscape of the place. For the end of the story, use vocal sounds & body percussion in unison – footsteps to front door, opening the door, up the stairs, etc. Decide how to finish the story together! You could also create a simple way to sing the chorus using only 2 or 3 different pitches of notes (We’re going on a bear hunt...)? (1-2 lessons)</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>



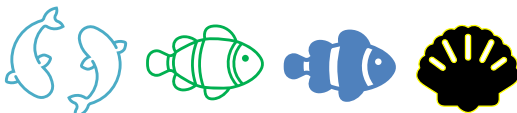


	22-36 months (1.8–3 years)	30-50 months (2.5-4 years)	40 – 60 months+ (3.5-5 years+)
<p>Based on Numbers – Sequences, Patterns and Body Percussion EYFS</p> <p>Idea 1: Left and Right Child selects 2 or 3 different instruments and lays them in an order (e.g. drum, tambourine, drum, tambourine). The child then picks them up in turn to play, reinforcing reading from L to R.</p> <p>Idea 2: Number 1 and Number 2 Have separate cards that have the number 1 or 2 on them. Children can decide how to use them: -One person plays on a 1, Two people play on a 2 -Play with one hand, play with both hands -Play one instrument or play with two instruments -Play one pitched note or play a different note for two.</p> <p>Children can order the cards on the floor/ hold the cards up like a conductor... <i>(10 min activity over a few lessons)</i></p> <p>Return to EYFS Homepage</p> 	<p>Idea 1: Left and Right Child selects 2 or 3 different instruments and lays them in an order (e.g. drum, tambourine, drum, tambourine). The child then picks them up in turn to play, reinforcing reading from L to R.</p> <p>Idea 2: Number 1 and Number 2 Have separate cards that have the number 1 or 2 on them. Children can decide how to use them: -One person plays on a 1, Two people play on a 2 -Play with one hand, play with both hands -Play one instrument or play with two instruments -Play one pitched note or play a different note for two.</p> <p>Children can order the cards on the floor/ hold the cards up like a conductor... <i>(10 min activity over a few lessons)</i></p>	<p>Coloured dots. Stick small, coloured dots in a line on a piece of paper. Each colour represents the same coloured boom whacker/coloured xylophone note. If necessary, stick stickers on the xylophone/glockenspiel keys too. Play each dot on the appropriate coloured instrument from L to R. Can children stick their dots in patterns and sequences? Can these sequences/patterns be extended to become more complicated? E.g. you could add dynamics? <i>(1 lesson)</i></p> <p>Shape cards. Each shape to represent a different sound source. Children create patterns or sequences to play or be played by others. <i>(1 lesson)</i></p> <p>Recomposing Number Songs <i>Ten Green Bottles; Five Little Speckled Frogs; Five Currant Buns.</i> Using one of these songs which involve counting, recompose the lyrics with the class. “Ten Green Bottles” might become “Ten Red Puddings”, for example. Everyone sings the new versions. Add actions and props to demonstrate the subtraction. <i>(Could be developed over a couple of lessons)</i></p>	<p>Domino dots Explore how dominoes set out their dots. Notice how they are showing 3 pitches - low, middle, high. Some only have a single pitch to play, whilst for some you need to play 2 pitches at the same time. Have fun using multiple dominoes to create tunes to play on 3 chime bars –</p>  <p>There is even a blank one which can be used for a silence or creating a domino card of their own choice (keep to numbers 1-6). Extend the complexity by joining more dominoes together, writing own number combinations. <i>(1-2 lessons)</i></p>




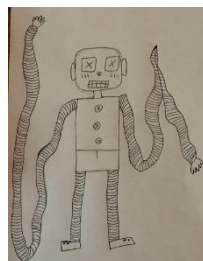

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<p>Based on Pictures EYFS</p> <p>Picture composition Choose a simple picture. Use a combination of sounds & voices to create sound effects for the picture. <i>(Short activity over a couple of lessons).</i></p> <p>Graphic Scores What will they draw for a friend to vocalise? This could link nicely to any vocal doodling that is naturally happening in the setting. You may need to help them put it down on paper to start with, or by leaving out examples as a starting point. Alternatively, they could mark make whilst they vocalise. <i>(Short activity over a couple of lessons).</i></p> <p>Return to EYFS Homepage</p> 	 	<p>Graphic Scores Create a graphic score on a long strip of paper by dipping a hand/foot into paint. The child decides on order of hand & footprint. Then perform it (clap/stamp). <i>(1 lesson)</i> E.g.,</p>  	 <p>Is the painting calm, gentle, busy, loud....? Select groups of children to represent different parts of the picture and create the mood using different sound sources. <i>(Short activity within 1-2 lessons)</i></p> <p>Graphic Scores - Weather symbols</p>  <p>Talk about each weather picture, what the weather sounds like & explore sound sources to find suitable ones. In groups, select and create appropriate sounds to represent each symbol. Decide together how to order your weather music (you might want more than 1 of each card, and not use them all). Play each card in turn to create a weather scene. Individual children can alter the order to change the composition and be the conductor. They might also want to use hand signals to control the sounds e.g. hands wide apart=loud, hands close together=quiet, wiggly fingertips=crackly sounds. <i>(2-3 lessons).</i></p>

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<p>Based on Music as a Stimulus EYFS</p> <p>Return to EYFS Homepage</p> 	<p>‘Flight of the Bumble bee’ by Rimsky-Korsakov: Can they use their voice to buzz like a bee? Can they make their bee buzz in different ways? (getting higher/lower/ long sounds/ short sounds)? Can they create a buzzy sound story of a bee flying around in the garden and landing on flowers? (encourage the buzz to stop when they land on a flower). <i>(1 lesson)</i></p>  <p>Dynamics (volume) Haydn’s ‘Surprise’ Symphony movement number 2 has noticeably quiet passages of music, punctuated by loud chords. Can the children create their own quiet and loud ‘surprise’ music? <i>(1 lesson)</i></p>	<p>‘The Aquarium’ from ‘Carnival of the Animals’ by Sains-Saens: Can children pretend to be the fish in the aquarium and swim like the music? Do all the fish swim in the same way or are some fast and some slow, do some dart and some glide? Do bubbles gurggle their way to the top? What sounds would you use to create your own version of fish in an aquarium? (If you have an aquarium in school, go and watch it for a while, and listen carefully to any sounds that might be present). Think about different instruments and sound sources for different types of fish, the water and the bubbles. <i>(1 lesson)</i></p>  	<p>Pitch (high/low) Bring your characters from stories to life using your voices, such as The Three Bears (high voice for baby, medium voice for mummy, low voice for daddy)... or a tuned percussion instrument for a Fireman Sam figure to climb by step, leap or slide up/down his ladder</p> <p>Tempo (speed) Footsteps – explore different speeds of moving – walking, running, jogging, walking slowly if you are old, striding – and create footstep music for the different people in their lives (use tappers/drums). <i>(Short activities over a couple of lessons)</i></p> 

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<div>Based on Improvisation EYFS</div> <div><div>Return to EYFS Homepage</div><div></div></div>	<p>Play along to a piece of recorded music with a sound source of their own choice. Free play exploration of instruments and other sound sources – ‘catch’ your children creating rhythms as they explore sound sources with their friends.</p> <p>Night-time – use a black-out tent, twinkly lights & soft toys to create a night-time scenario – children can add voices & instruments as appropriate to create a soundscape when they enter and play in the tent.... Children create independently and collaboratively. <i>(1-2 lessons)</i></p> <div></div> <div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Free play – inside, outside, music baskets, dressing-up costumes, role play – any way they can explore sounds <p>Musical conversations - In pairs, children take turns to play to each other – having a musical conversation. Encourage them to explore different ways of playing the instrument (dynamics, tempo, timbre...) <i>(Short activity which can be repeated over a number of lessons)</i></p> <p>At the seaside – create an outside play area with sand, water, shells, and seaside toys. In a small group, explore all the sounds that can be created. Select favourite sounds. Decide how to start/stop – are you leading? Perform. <i>(1-2 lessons)</i></p> <p>Movement Select an instrument(s) and create music to represent how something moves – a robot, machine, vehicles etc. <i>(Short activity within 1-2 lessons)</i></p> <div></div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Free play – inside, outside, music baskets, dressing-up costumes, role play – any way they can explore sounds <div></div> <p>Pirates – have a role play area with props and costumes, pirate songs playing, and maybe even a ship’s wheel to steer. Encourage children to think about what pirates do on their ship sailing across the ocean, what the sea might sound like, and what else they might be able to hear.... Groups of children to play different parts (sea, sunshine, spoken instructions (e.g. “hoist the sail!”) and pirates doing what pirates do (scrubbing the deck – maybe use a scraper?). Decide how to order the sounds, and perform. <i>(1-2 lessons)</i></p> <p>Vocal Rhythms Sitting in a circle, explore using vocal rhythms by chanting simple sentences. Can children find an interesting way to say their phrase? Loud/quiet/high/low/smooth/jumpy – explore different ways to use your voice.</p>



Year 1 - 2 Composition Ideas— Ctrl+Click on the Icons

Based on Language – Stories,
Poems, Letters and Sounds



Based on Numbers –
Sequences, Patterns and
Body Percussion



Based on Pictures



Based on Music as a
Stimulus






Based on Improvisation



































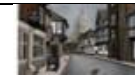



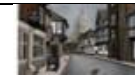


















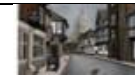





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Composition Compendium







	Introductory task for Year 1-2	Average difficulty task for Year 1-2	Higher difficulty task for Year 1-2
<p>Based on Language – Stories, Poems, Letters and Sounds Year 1-2</p> <p>Return to Year 1-2 Homepage</p> 	<p>“Mortimer” by Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko. This story lends itself well to a class composition. First, as a class, read through the story and then discuss the different Inter-Related Dimensions of Music (Elements of Music). For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Fast and slow</i> - <i>Loud and quiet</i> - <i>High and low</i> <p>The class can then use pitched and unpitched percussion to show different parts of the story. For example:</p> <p>PITCH (up and down the stairs on the xylophone?)</p> <p>TIMBRE (different instruments representing different characters?)</p> <p>TEMPO (speed - some run upstairs, others walk slowly?)</p> <p>DYNAMICS (Mortimer sings his song “really loud,” “in the loudest possible voice,” or “very softly.”)</p> <p>Alternatively, you could use the books ‘Peace at Last’, ‘Owl Babies’ or ‘Not Now, Bernard’. (1-2 lessons)</p>	<p>Animal names</p> <p>Ask the children to think about syllables in animal names e.g., Tiger (2), Bear (1), Elephant (3), Snake (1). Can they clap the different sounds?</p> <p>Can they begin to put four animals into a pattern? E.g.</p> <p>Snake, Elephant, Panda, Tiger.</p>  <p>Using flash-cards of animals, work towards creating a whole class composition. You could add untuned percussion, and perhaps some animals could have short melodic themes using 3 notes, e.g., Elephant = C D E.</p> <p>Extra task – can children use a rhythm grid to perform this? Can they then make their own version on a very simple rhythm grid? (Year 2).</p> <p>Perform own versions in pairs or individually. (2-3 lessons)</p>	<p>Composing music based on a Chant</p> <p>Use a well-known chant, e.g., ‘Remember, Remember, the Fifth of November’.</p> <p>As a whole class, transform the chant into a musical version.</p> <p>Ideas to try:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Add a pulse played on an instrument 2) Create a simple melody using 2 or 3 pitches 3) Add simple word rhythms taken from the chant as an accompaniment 4) Explore the use of texture (unison/more than one sound at the same time) 5) Use different timbres to accent words <p>Then, bring it all together into a newly composed performance. (2 lessons)</p> 

	Introductory task for Year 1-2	Average difficulty task for Year 1-2	Higher difficulty task for Year 1-2																								
<div>Based on Numbers – Sequences and Patterns Year 1-2</div> <div><div>Return to Year 1-2 Homepage</div><div></div></div>	<p>Children can use basic graphic scores to read and play long and short sounds in sequence, individually, with just one vocal sound or instrument. Their partner can point to the score and be “the conductor.”</p> <p>They can then compose their own versions. They can draw the instrument (or vocal sound) at the beginning of the line and use various marks/pictures/lines/squiggles to show when to play long sounds and when to play short sounds.</p> <p>E.g. / / /~~~~~</p> <p>Perform these to the class.</p> <p>Extension: The same can be done with two different instruments being played in pairs:</p> <p>Tambourine / / /~~~~~</p> <p>Drum </p> <p><i>Can children use a simple Music Tech rhythm program like ‘Chrome Music Lab - Rhythm’ to compose more rhythmic patterns?</i></p> <p><i>(30 min lesson)</i></p>	<p>Children use graphic scores in a grid:</p> <div><table><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></div> <p>Each instrument is represented by a coloured symbol and a shape.</p> <p>E.g. Tambourine has a blue circle, Woodblock has a green rectangle, Drum has a red zigzag splat, Triangle has a yellow triangle. Play these together as a class, building up the ability to play accurately to the beat (1 beat per box). Scores given can become more difficult such as adding 2 symbols to a box (same symbol) or 2 symbols to a box (different symbols) or no one plays at all on a certain beat (blank box).</p> <p>Children are then given a blank grid and can compose a rhythm piece by selecting & ordering their own colours/shapes/sounds to show when an instrument should play (or use prepared shapes that they can stick onto the grid) <i>(2 x 30 min lessons)</i></p>																	<p>Great Fire of London</p> <p>Create a rhythmic composition using symbols as notation – each symbol has a specific word rhythm associated with it. Learn each word rhythm in turn, keeping to a steady beat: say first, then clap & say simultaneously, and finally take away the saying and just clap the rhythms (encourage the use of ‘thinking voice’).</p> <p>Create the composition by selecting a rhythm for each square of the grid – children decide how to order the symbols. Can they say it? Can they clap it and say it? Can they play it on claves or other untuned percussion instruments?</p> <div><table><tr><th>Wat-er</th><th>Fire</th><th>Wat-er</th><th>Pud-ding Lane</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></div> <p>For those needing an extra level of challenge, can they leave a square on the grid empty (a rest), and still perform the whole grid accurately?</p> <p><i>(Short activity within 1-2 lessons)</i></p>	Wat-er	Fire	Wat-er	Pud-ding Lane				
																											
																											
																											
																											
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<p>Based on Pictures Year 1-2</p> <p>Return to Year 1-2 Homepage</p> 	<p>Dinosaurs Start by exploring 5 different dinosaurs through movement, sound and printed pictures. Discuss carnivore/herbivore, leg size, head size etc. For example: T-Rex: fast, scary, loud (drums & vocals) Brachiosaurus: slow, steady, gentle (scrapers) Styracosaurus: fast charging and crashes into things (cymbals) Allosaurus: bouncy, strong, fast (mixed wooden tappers) Pterodactyl: flying, swooping, wings go up and down (bells, finger cymbals, tuned bells, chime bars).</p> <p>Allocate different groups to represent each dinosaur through sound. Explore sound sources and create a semi improvised, semi structured sound representation. Place the dinosaur figures on a dinosaur 3D landscape (or a landscape projected on the wall). As each dinosaur moves, children play their music (led by teacher first, then individual children). <i>(2-3 lessons)</i></p>	<p>The Hike Children use a picture of a hiking journey (A3 picture with a windy path showing different scenes on the hike – mountains, hills, rivers, waterfalls, lakes, sheep, woodland etc) to create a whole class composition.</p> <p>Talk about what sounds you would hear on your journey through the picture – dog barking, woodpecker pecking, birds singing, river rushing, animal sounds. Can the children create the appropriate sounds using tuned and untuned percussion?</p> <p>In groups, children choose a new place to visit on their hike – draw on A3 paper. Discuss their sounds for that place. Create a new class composition. <i>(2 x 30mins)</i></p>  	<p>Sequencing sounds – Caterpillar’s Hungry Find some illustrations of bugs, caterpillars or creatures which have many joining sections. Make a musical ‘score’ by creating a bug picture of green oval shapes, beanbags or paper plates. Tell the children you are going to make some music in sections and join them together. Ask the children to say some favourite foods, which they can all practise saying to a rhythm, e.g. A lovely slice of cake; A big crunchy carrot; Peanut butter toast. Now decide on a small piece of joining music which everyone can say and play. Help them to say it, and then play an instrument, or clap at the same time. E.g., ‘Caterpillar’s hungry, munch munch munch, cheese and raisins for my lunch’. Allowing for preparation and practice time, build them up into a sequence: Idea 1; joining music; Idea 2; joining music etc. Aim to perform it without stopping (guided). Place written or drawn representations of the children’s choices on the caterpillar score and display it so they can try it out again later. <i>(2 lessons)</i></p>

	Introductory task for Year 1-2	Average difficulty task for Year 1-2
<p>Based on Music as a Stimulus Year 1-2</p> <p>Return to Year 1-2 Homepage</p> 	<p>Adapting a Song Take a well-known children's song. Choose from: London's Burning, London Bridge is Falling Down, Hot Cross Buns.</p> <p>Select, as a class, their favourite 3 or 4 words or phrases. E.g. 'Fire, Fire!', 'Pour on Water', 'Fetch the engines', etc.</p> <p>Give each phrase a number, e.g.: - Fire, Fire = 1 - Pour on Water = 2 - Fetch the Engines = 3.</p> <p>Practice saying & clapping each word rhythm/phrase.</p> <p>When fluent and accurate, allow children to muddle up the order and create a new version e.g. 2, 3, 1, 1, 3, 2, 1.</p> <p>Can they perform it to a steady beat? Take it in turns to change the order around. Do they have any favourites? <i>(1 lesson)</i></p> 	<p>Clog Dance A large space is needed to allow for movement. Without letting the children see the video, listen to "The Clog Dance" from the ballet "La fille mal gardée". Can they hear the wooden tapping noise, every so often?</p> <p>Next, ask them to dance around the room in their own way whilst listening again. However, they must stop and freeze every time they hear the wooden tapping noise. (5 mins)</p> <p>Small groups of children can then compose some similar music with a repeating wooden rhythm section (perhaps played on the claves or woodblocks).</p> <p>They could then make this into a simple structure. Each section could have a dance to accompany it:</p> <p>Section A: Untuned percussion such as bells, triangles, drums.</p> <p>Section B: Untuned wooden percussion playing a repeated tapping rhythm (tappers, woodblocks, claves).</p>  <p>Section A: Untuned percussion such as bells, triangles, drums.</p> <p>Section B: Untuned wooden percussion playing a repeated tapping rhythm (tappers, woodblocks, claves).</p> <p>They could perform their music to the class, and they could then watch the video of the ballet dancing too. <i>(1 lesson)</i></p>

	Introductory task for Year 1-2	Higher difficulty task for Year 1-2
<p>Based on Improvisation Year 1-2</p> <p>Return to Year 1-2 Homepage</p> 	<p>Informal Improvisation You can improvise in a very informal way, by singing just 3 different pitches, for instance the notes A, G, E. E.g., G E A G E.</p>  <p>For example, the teacher could make up a tune for a simple phrase e.g., “See you after half term,”. The children could then improvise a response e.g. “Yes, yes, Mrs Smith” using the same 3 pitches, but in their own way (perhaps a different order of notes, or different note lengths). This will take patience, time, and developing confidence to ‘give it a go’!</p> <p>Question and Answer Create a question-and-answer conversation with your children. You clap a rhythm as a question, and individual pupils clap their own made-up rhythm as an answer. It might be that you need to start by actually using words – clap and say a simple question, a child then claps and says their answer. Eventually, as they grow in confidence, take away the words and free-style! (<i>Regular, short activities within lessons</i>)</p> 	<p>Children can improvise a tune by using just 2-3 chime bars. Place 2 or 3 chime bars in the centre of the circle. When it is a pupil’s turn to improvise, they will come into the centre and sit at the chime bars. (You may wish, in preparation for this activity, to have the percussion instruments placed in the centre of the circle and get children into the habit of being able to come in at the right time for their go).</p>  <p>As before, the teacher maintains a steady beat on an untuned percussion instrument. Pupils, in the 4 beats of their turn, are encouraged to make up a pattern on the chime bars. To start with, they might just play very randomly and forget to consider fitting to the beat. Build this skill up over time until children can create a structured pattern/melody that fits into the 4 beats.</p> <p>They may need a little thinking/experimental time in advance to prepare for this activity.</p> <p>For a further level of challenge, the teacher only plays the beat between each child’s turn. For this to be successful, children must have developed the ability to internalise the beat (feel the beat for themselves without any help). (<i>Regular, short activities within lessons</i>)</p>

 Year 3 - 4 Composition Ideas — Ctrl+Click on the Icons

Based on Language –
Stories, Poems, Letters
and Sounds



Based on Numbers –
Sequences, Patterns and
Body Percussion



Based on Pictures



Based on Music as a
Stimulus






Based on Improvisation


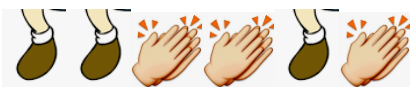




Hertfordshire Music Service

Composition Compendium






	Introductory task for Year 3-4	Average difficulty task for Year 3-4	Higher difficulty task for Year 3-4
<p>Based on Language – Stories, Poems, Letters and Sounds Year 3-4</p> <p>Return to Year 3-4 Homepage</p> 	<p>Compose a sound sequence for ‘The Gruffalo’ by Julia Donaldson.</p> <p>Read the story. Explore how different characters look and move – look at the pictures, move around the room in the same way, and create sound effects using voices. Allocate a creature to each group (a laminated picture of the animal). Decide on the order of events for the sound sequence (STRUCTURE). They will need to consider the TEMPO, PITCH, DYNAMICS & DURATION as each animal has different characteristics (snake slides and slithers, whilst the fox walks slowly and confidently until he rushes off extremely fast). Allow each group time to explore and select the most appropriate sound sources (TIMBRE). (2 -3 weeks)</p> 	<p>Use the book ‘Hairy Maclary from Donaldson’s Dairy’ by Lynley Dodd. Read the story to the class.</p> <p>Divide the class into five groups. Allocate a character to each group. Each group will need to perform the rhythm phrase for their character using untuned percussion instruments – help them practise this until it is correct. ALL children will perform the rhythm phrase “Hairy Maclary from Donaldson’s Dairy”.</p> <p><i>Group 1 (drums): “Hercules Morse as big as a horse”</i></p> <p><i>Group 2 (tambourines): “Bottomley Potts covered in spots”</i></p> <p><i>Group 3 (scrapers): “Muffin McLay like a bundle of hay”</i></p> <p><i>Group 4 (triangles): “Bitzer Maloney all skinny and bony”</i></p> <p><i>Group 5 (woodblocks): “Schnitzel von Krumm with a very low tum”</i></p> <p>Once groups are confident, re-read the story. Everyone should play the rhythm each time ‘Hairy Maclary’ is mentioned, and each group should play in time with the words of their own character (teacher to bring groups in whilst reading the story). (1 lesson).</p>	<p>Composing a Soundscape</p> <p>Select a poem, such as: ‘Last Night I saw the City Breathing’ by Andrew Fussek Peters.</p> <p>Once the poem has been read, invite the children to brainstorm all the sounds they can imagine in the poem. These can be real (i.e. mentioned in the poem), or imagined as a direct result of the language. From this list, invite suggestions for these sounds – consider a wide variety of sound sources at your disposal whether this be instruments, found sounds, body percussion or vocal - and select which sounds to use (TIMBRES). Decide how to use these sounds to create a representation of the poem. Allocate sections of the poem to different composition groups.</p> <p>Allow time for each group to decide how to combine the words and the sounds. Each group performs in turn, so that the finished composition is a longer soundscape accompaniment to the poem. For fun, you could then remove the words and perform again. How does this alter the final soundscape? (2-3 weeks)</p> 

	Introductory task for Year 3-4	Average difficulty task for Year 3-4	Higher difficulty task for Year 3-4
<p>Based on Numbers – Sequences, Patterns and Body Percussion Year 3-4</p> <p>Return to Year 3-4 Homepage</p> 	<p>Composing using Body Percussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a song or rhyme with a clear beat. Learn the song thoroughly first. Add body percussion sequences as a rhythmic accompaniment to the song. E.g., Line 1: Knee knee, clap, click Line 2: Knee knee, clap, click Line 3: Knee knee knee knee, stamp stamp, stamp. Line 4: Knee knee knee, clap clap clap, click. <p>Make sure your sequences fit your music!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In pairs, children can make up their own body percussion. They can 'notate' these if required, for example like this:  <p>(1 lesson per song)</p>	<p>Using number or colour patterns</p> <p>As a class count up to 8 (several times in a row, without stopping.) Decide which number you are all going to clap on (i.e., 4.) Count again and clap on that number every time. E.g., 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8; 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8... Continue in the same way but clapping on another number. Can you now clap on more than one number? I.e., 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8... Say the number pattern more quickly to make up a little repeating groove! (10 mins)</p> <p>Children can then create their own pattern and perform them to the class (20 mins)</p> <p>Extension: How about making different body percussion or instrumental sounds on different numbers? Perhaps, a drum hit on 1 and a wooden tap on claves on number 6? Build this up so that several sounds or instruments are being played. Children can then create their own.</p> <p>Variations: You could use the first 8 numbers in a times table to help practice them too, i.e., 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 Or - speak a colour pattern: red, blue, yellow; red, blue, yellow - and let each colour mean a particular sound or instrument. (30 min lesson)</p>	<p>'Announcement' Jingle Composition</p> <p>Using notes 1, 3 & 5 (i.e. C, E & G).</p> <p>Discuss the kinds of announcements that can be made i.e. at a train station or an airport or in a shop. A good example might be the 3-note pattern on chime bars that was played before each tannoy announcement on the TV series 'Hi-de-Hi'!</p> <p>Consider what are the important features of an 'announcement jingle' (clarity, easy to recognise, catches attention quickly). With a partner, write the announcement and create the announcement jingle: perform the music and make the announcement.</p> <p>Can the children make a jingle out of other notes, for example, A C E, or D F A?</p> <p>(1 lesson)</p> 

	Average difficulty task for Year 3-4	Higher difficulty task for Year 3-4
<p>Based on Pictures Year 3-4</p> <p>Return to Year 3-4 Homepage</p> 	<p>Soundscape composition Select pictures, paintings or postcards connected to a topic or theme being studied, which can evoke a strong sense of mood/emotion/movement.</p> <p>Use these as a starting point for group compositions that focus on using the Inter-Related Dimensions of Music of TEXTURE, TIMBRE, DYNAMICS, PITCH & DURATION. Each group will 'paint the picture' through sound. Start by identifying the main features in the painting & what is happening (e.g. a Mountain Scene – vast areas of green trees and forests, huge mountainous hills, birds of prey swooping across the sky, etc).</p> <p>Children then select appropriate sound sources (thinking carefully about TIMBRES) to represent these features. How are they going to paint the mood of the painting? Use layers of sound (TEXTURE) to build up the picture, (e.g. Start with the mountains, add the forests, add the wind in the trees, add the birds). Consider DYNAMICS & DURATION to help create the 'feel' for the picture. (2-3 lessons)</p>	<p>Exploring sounds with graphic symbols - 'Swinging' by Kandinsky</p> <p>Session 1 - Show the painting and ask the children to find as many shapes as they can. You could look at it both ways round. Some shapes are individual, some sit together, and others are part of a 'texture' e.g. the wavy lines and the block of stripes. Tell the children that they will explore sounds made by instruments and that they could find ways to represent them in the painting, e.g. the triangles could represent pitch getting higher then lower; the lines could be long sounds; the circles short ones. Let them suggest things first then scaffold their ideas, using musical vocabulary (like long, short, layer, pitch).</p> <p>Ask some questions: "If this were a piece of music, where would it start? How many players would it need?", etc. Play a game of 'guess which' with all of the children, so they 'play' one of the shapes and the others have to say which it was and why.</p> <p>Session 2 – tell the children they are going to make their own musical scores based on the painting. Leave it on display while they use instruments and drawing materials to create a sequence score (all their sounds in a line), then practise playing it ready to perform to the class. Music tech extension task – use Chrome Music Lab "Kandinsky" program to experiment further with lines, shapes, colours and sounds. (2 lessons)</p>



	Introductory task for Year 3-4	Average difficulty task for Year 3-4	Higher difficulty task for Year 3-4
<p>Based on Music as a Stimulus Year 3-4</p> <p>Return to Year 3-4 Homepage</p> 	<p>Forest Sounds Composition: Listen to the piece 'Morning' from the 'Peer Gynt Suite' by Grieg, and 'Pines of the Appian Way' by Respighi. What does it make you think of?  Ask focussed questions on instruments/families of the orchestra. How does the music create the impression of sunrise turning into day? What sounds might you hear in a forest at around 5.00 am? Wind, leaves rustling, scurrying of small animals etc. How will sounds change as dawn approaches? Birds begin to sing, more creatures start moving and the forest comes to life. Discuss different sounds as the forest wakes up - DYNAMICS, PITCH, TEMPO. The piece could begin quietly with lots of gaps between sounds, then get louder with more frequent sounds. Then some higher pitches could be introduced as birds sing, and a crescendo as the sun rises.</p> <hr/> <p>You could provide an initial graphic score, with some children eventually being able to draw a graphic score representing their own soundscape forest composition. <i>(2-3 lessons)</i></p>	<p>'In The Hall of the Mountain King' by Grieg (link to BBC Ten Pieces).</p> <p>What changes in the music? <i>The tempo gets faster and faster, and the dynamics get louder and louder!</i></p> <p>Whole class performance – Version of 'In the Hall of the Mountain King':</p> <p>Part One - Melody: D E F G A F A</p> <p>Part Two - Drone: D A</p> <p>Part Three - Percussion: Use the rhythms of the words 'gnomes, fairies, trolls', played on untuned percussion such as triangles, bells and finger cymbals.</p> <p>Can we also create increasing tempo and dynamics, like 'In the Hall of the Mountain King'?</p> 	<p>Song Lyric Composition: Composing a layered ostinato accompaniment. Select song-words/lyrics. For example 'Frere Jacques', or 'This Old Man'.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All chant – find the natural metre of the text and keep a steady beat. 2. Choose a favourite phrase from the song. Ask a small group to chant the chosen phrase over and over to create an ostinato (a repeating pattern), whilst others chant the whole song above it. 3. Add another ostinato in the same way, using one of the other phrases (how can you ensure both ostinati can be heard clearly and are musically interesting? Dynamics, pitch of voices, use of accents on syllables). 4. Look at other phrases in the song that could be used as ostinati. Decide how many different patterns you want (3-4 patterns work well). 5. Use the song itself and the chosen ostinato phrases to build a whole composition. Consider how you will organise your ideas to create a whole performance (STRUCTURE) – will all the ostinati happen together right from the beginning, or will you phase them in one at a time, build up layers, remove layers? How will you keep together (will you have a conductor)? <i>(2-3 weeks)</i>

	Average difficulty task for Year 3-4	Higher difficulty task for Year 3-4
<p>Based on Improvisation Year 3-4</p> <p>Return to Year 3-4 Homepage</p>	<p>Body Percussion to an upbeat song</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Together with the children, create a body percussion pattern to fit the Chorus of a song (for example, 'Brave' by Sara Bareilles or 'Sing' by Pentatonix). Children can then improvise their own body percussion patterns for each Verse (or phrase) of the song. (Just check that the ideas fit the pulse of the music – sometimes you may need to slightly adapt their ideas to fit). Everyone could then copy this child's ideas, keeping in time with the beat of the song. Some children will be reticent about offering ideas to start with, but the more this song/activity is done, the more ideas children will have and the more their confidence will grow to lead and share. <p><i>(15 mins of 1 lesson, per song)</i></p>	<p>Improvising Over a Backing Track</p> <p>You will need to find a rhythmic backing track. Set up 3 chime bars and a beater in the middle of the classroom:</p> <p>Listen to the backing track and tap/clap to the beat until everyone can maintain it confidently. Encourage the beat to be counted into groups (8 normally works well: 12345678, 12345678 etc). From this, invite the children to take it in turns to come and play the chime bars – play for 8 beats, have a gap of 8 beats for next child to come in, play for 8 beats, another gap for 8 beats, etc. As children grow in confidence, their improvisations will become more creative and musical. This activity works best if you revisit it on a regular basis, over a period of time. Extension: If they become really confident, they could improvise using all 5 notes of a pentatonic scale:</p> <p><i>(Regular, short activities within lessons)</i></p>



Year 5 - 6 Composition Ideas — Ctrl+Click on the Icons

Introductory Notes for
Year 5/6 Composition



Based on Language –
Stories, Poems, Letters and
Sounds



Based on Numbers –
Sequences, Patterns and
Body Percussion



Based on Pictures




Based on Music as a
Stimulus



Based on Improvisation



Hertfordshire Music Service

Composition Compendium






Introductory Notes for Composition in Year 5-6

- The following composition ideas can be used as stand-alone lessons or a series of lessons, but ideally composition should fit within a unit of work which also includes other Performing, Listening/Appraising and General Musicianship Activities. By firstly listening to and performing pieces from a genre of music, children should then be able to apply these musical features in their own compositions.
- Students could also sometimes complete brief End of Unit evaluations; evaluating their own and others' compositions for effectiveness of outcome based on the task, using a specific composition technique correctly, and so on. As the year progresses, they will be expected to refer to more complex keywords and musical terms (refer to the HMS 'Progression in Musical Skills, Knowledge and Understanding' document).
- Children in Upper KS2 should be able to notate compositions either graphically, in grid notation or using basic traditional notation. Some may be able to notate quite simple rhythms, whilst others may be able to combine pitch and rhythm to convey their compositions. Children should also be able to add some performance details i.e., dynamics, using correct musical symbols.
- Some composition activities may take 3 – 4 sessions for children to create and then refine their pieces, although some of the suggested composition tasks also work well as 'stand-alone' tasks. Performance, be it during the creative process or as a final finished piece, with focussed, constructive peer and teacher feedback on musical ways to improve their pieces, are a valuable and highly worthwhile part of the creative process. Try to include this at regular intervals throughout the work.
- Some types of composition can be notated and re-drafted several times - just like improving a piece of writing. However – other types of composition like improvisation, or shorter one-off activities, will only be performed a couple of times 'live' and will not need to be notated.

Hertfordshire Music Service

Composition Compendium






	Introductory task for Year 5-6	Average difficulty task for Year 5-6	Higher difficulty task for Year 5-6
<p>Based on Language – Stories, Poems, Letters and Sounds Year 5-6</p> <p>Return to Year 5-6 Homepage</p> 	<p>Take the poem “Jabberwocky” from Lewis Carroll’s “Through the Looking Glass” and make an atmospheric soundscape linking the verses, using one, two or three layers of sound. <i>(2 or 3 lessons)</i></p> <p>“Twas brillig, and the slithy toves Did gyre and gimble in the wabe: All mimsy were the borogoves, And the mome raths outgrabe.”</p>  	<p>Children compose a piece based on the rhythm of a Haiku (with three textural layers relating to each line)</p> <p>Click Here Haiku</p> <p><i>(2 or 3 lessons to compose, practise and perform their pieces)</i></p>	<p>Limerick composition</p> <p>Click Here Limerick</p> <p><i>(2 or 3 lessons to compose, practise and perform their pieces)</i></p>


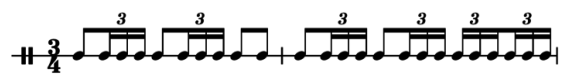
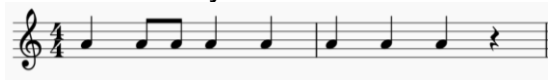
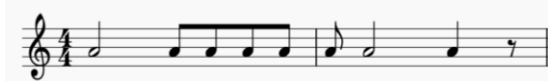


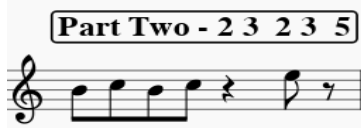
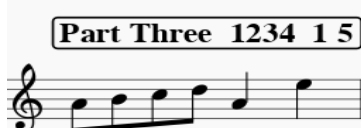
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Composition Compendium



	Introductory task for Year 5-6	Average difficulty task for Year 5-6	Higher difficulty task for Year 5-6
<p>Based on Numbers – Sequences, Patterns and Body Percussion Year 5-6</p> <p>Return to Year 5-6 Homepage</p> 	<p>Fanfare Composition: Use notes 1, 3, 5 & 8 (notes used in a major chord: i.e. C, E, G & high C). Listen to the brass section play at the beginning of ‘Fanfare for the Common Man’ by Aaron Copland, and Gordon Jacob’s fanfare version of the National Anthem. Discuss the main features of a fanfare: slow, stately, unison brass, broadening out into harmony, repetition of an idea, a drumroll to add punctuation. Children could then play their fanfare pattern/rhythm on a different chord such as G Maj (G B D high G) or F Maj (F A C high F). The children are to imagine the entry of a VIP, or the opening to an important and spectacular event. Compose a fanfare on tuned instruments (children who learn an instrument may well want to bring their own instruments for this task). The children can then perform their final ideas, and if they are really good, use them to signal the arrival of an event such as a celebration assembly... (2 lessons)</p>	<p>Compose a piece using irregular or syncopated rhythms e.g. ‘Count to 5’. This rhythm is derived by saying the following pattern to a steady pulse: 1 12 123 1234 12345 1234 123 12 1. This could then extend into a more complex piece. (This concept is deceptively simple, but it sounds complicated, so get comfortable with the pattern before</p>  <p>Audio clip - double click to hear</p> <p>demonstrating it). <i>It is worth learning how to tap out a steady pulse whilst counting, as this will help everyone to stay in time.</i> Start slowly and make sure they feel confident with one stage at a time:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Count the pattern 2. Clap the pulse whilst counting 3. Add body percussion sounds; a different sound to be ‘set’ for each number (they will need to pay attention to what is physically possible within the pace of the tempo). 4. Untuned percussion (using different instrument sounds for each number) 5. Tuned instruments (using a pentatonic scale i.e., D E G A B). Once the initial passage is formed, it is time to start thinking about STRUCTURE and TEXTURE to turn it into a coherent composition. (6 lessons/half a term unit of work) 	<p>Polyrhythmic Grid USA Composition</p> <p>Click Here USA</p> <p>(2 or 3 lessons to compose, practise and perform their pieces)</p> <p>This composition task could work with any topic – the words could be changed to match a topic theme, or keywords from a current topic could also be used.</p>


	Average difficulty task for Year 5-6	Higher difficulty task for Year 5-6
<p>Based on Pictures Year 5-6</p> <p>Return to Year 5-6 Homepage</p> 	<p>Composing a character study. Listen to ‘Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle’ from ‘Pictures at an Exhibition’ by Mussorgsky. Tell the children it is about two contrasting characters but <i>do not tell them the title</i>, which suggests gender and human people. Leave them to decide who/what the characters are and if they are fact or fantasy.</p> <p>The whole suite of pieces this belongs to was supposed to reflect a walk around an art gallery, but sadly the pictures have been lost, so we are going to recreate this picture of two characters and find out all about them. Listen several times while the children make notes/form pictures in their minds. Talk about how the music contrasts for the two characters: how instruments, and musical elements like duration and pitch, create the mood and set the scene.</p> <p>The task is to create a scenario and brainstorm ideas. These can then be turned into a piece of writing (prose, poetry or script), a piece of drama acted out in pairs, and finally, a picture of the two characters, with names and context. An important part of this project will be working independently with their ideas and refining them, practising their performance work in the different media, and performing to an audience. <i>(6-week unit of work)</i></p>	<p>Extended ‘Pictures at an Exhibition’ project. First, complete the ‘character study’ project. Then, listen to the Main Theme (walking/Promenade theme) from ‘Pictures at an Exhibition’. This represents walking around the art gallery in Rondo form (walking; approaching Picture 1; walking; approaching Picture 2, etc).</p> <p>Once you have done this, listen to some of the other pieces from the suite.</p> <p>-The first task is to create artworks/collages based on the other pieces in the suite.</p> <p>-The second task is to create new pieces of music based on the artworks.</p> <p>-Each small group could be given a picture/piece each to base their composition on. As a whole class, you could also compose a new piece of ‘walking/Promenade music’. You could base your compositions around ostinati (repeating rhythmic or melodic patterns) of differing lengths and metres (different note lengths/time signatures).</p> <p>You could then do a whole class performance (this may need to be rehearsed and refined over a number of weeks):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promenade theme (whole class composition/performance) - Picture 1 (composed by Group 1) - Promenade theme (whole class) - Picture 2 (composed by Group 2), etc. <i>(6-week unit of work combining composing, performing, and appraising tasks)</i>

	Introductory task for Year 5-6	Average difficulty task for Year 5-6	Higher difficulty task for Year 5-6
<p>Based on Music as a Stimulus Year 5-6</p> <p>Return to Year 5-6 Homepage</p> 	<p>Compose an Ostinato composition using repeating rhythmic patterns. Listen to the piece 'Bolero' by Ravel. Learn to (slowly) clap the main rhythmic theme:</p>  <p>In small groups, children will now compose their own rhythmic ostinato piece. Children could use words or phrases to help them compose the rhythms – e.g., “I like the rhy-thm and the beat”:</p>  <p>“Play.... the pattern of the rhythm now”:</p>  <p>They could then layer these rhythms up – perhaps coming in one at a time, to gradually build up the texture (layers of sound); all stopping except for one part (solo improvisation); all playing the same rhythm for effect, etc. (2-3 weeks)</p>	<p>Composition based on Minimalism Listen to 'Nagoya Marimbas' by Steve Reich.</p> <p>As a class, first perform the Minimalist style piece below (by dividing the class into 3 large groups, playing xylophones and glockenspiels). Children can learn the piece using the 'codes' below:</p> <p>A B C D E 1 2 3 4 5</p>  <p>Audio clip - double click to hear</p>  <p>Part One - 1 5 3 2</p>  <p>Part Two - 2 3 2 3 5</p>  <p>Part Three 1 2 3 4 1 5</p> <p>It may take a few lessons to practise/refine this. In the next lesson, children can compose their own version – guide them to ensure that the Bassline (part one) starts on note 1, and that the ideas are not too complex – simple layers work best. Can they experiment with dynamics, and layers fading in and out? (2 or 3 lessons)</p>	<p>Elgar's Enigma Variations Elgar described how on the evening of 21 October 1898, after a tiring day's teaching, he sat down at the piano.</p> <p>A melody he played caught the attention of his wife, and he began to improvise variations on it in styles which reflected the character of some of his friends. These improvisations, expanded and orchestrated, became the 'Enigma Variations'. Play excerpts of some of these to the children.</p> <p>Can pupils create their own simple variations based on characters from a book or film? They would have to compose a simple theme first, from which groups could break away to create the individual characters.</p> <p>Think about how to adapt the following Inter-Related Dimensions of Music to suit the characters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -TIMBRE (instrumentation) -TEMPO (speed) -DYNAMICS (volume) -MELODY/PITCH <p>(6-week project)</p>

Hertfordshire Music Service

Composition Compendium



	Introductory task for Year 5-6	Average difficulty task for Year 5-6	Higher difficulty task for Year 5-6
<p>Based on Improvisation Year 5-6</p> <p>Return to Year 5-6 Homepage</p> 	<p>Vltava (by Smetana) Listen to the music and watch an orchestral performance. Discuss the main musical themes, and how the composer creates musical ideas to show different stages of the river's journey (springs of the river Moldau, the flowing river theme, a hunt, a wedding, nymphs dancing at moonlight, rapids). Children could create a piece of artwork on a large piece of paper as they are listening to the piece. Layout a selection of tuned and untuned instruments in a circle. Invite children to improvise ideas for each river section one after the other to create an 'in the moment' composition.</p> <p>In groups, children work on ideas for each section of the river's journey. Either each group can compose all sections to create a whole piece (<i>longer project – 6 week unit of work</i>) or the teacher can allocate different river sections to separate groups and then perform them together at end. (<i>2-3 weeks</i>)</p>	<p>Paper Plate Composition Paper plates with musical ideas need to be prepared in advance for this composition (either paper plates or circular papers). This composition could be done in a small group i.e. 4 – 6 children, or individually (more challenging).</p> <p>The first plate has ideas for sets of notes to use (e.g. full scale; three note sets like E G A; or a five note half scale; or a Pentatonic scale – C D E G A) – and <i>children choose 1 of these ideas</i>.</p> <p>The second plate has rhythmic ideas; notated and graphic. The ideas are just small motifs (short rhythmic ideas). <i>Children need to choose 3 of these ideas for their group</i>.</p> <p>The third plate includes lots of ideas for expression like accents, dynamics, tempo, structures and moods. <i>They can choose up to 5 of these ideas</i>. The third plate is highly differentiated to include more difficult musical vocabulary, as well as some easier ideas like 'sudden stop' or 'build up'.</p> <p>Detective work! When the pieces are finished and they perform them to the class, the other children should listen and look at the plates to try to work out what their ideas were. (<i>2 or 3 lessons</i>)</p>	<p>As part of a Class Rondo, improvise using a Blues scale. Children should use interesting rhythms in their response (swung quavers, semiquavers, triplets, etc), over a backing track, or a teacher piano accompaniment. Class Rondo = Teacher improvises a 'question', student improvises an 'answer' and so on, round the class. E.g.</p> <p>-Teacher improvises a 4-bar melody ('question') -Student A improvises a melody ('answer')</p> <p>-Teacher improvises a different 4-bar melody ('question') -Student B improvises a melody ('answer')</p> <p>-Whole class plays the 'Chorus' melody</p> <p>-Teacher improvises a different 4-bar melody ('question') -Student C improvises a melody ('answer'), and so on. (<i>1 or 2 lessons within a unit of work</i>)</p>

USA Polyrhythmic Grid Composition

Choose an 8 x 4 grid and words that have one, two, three & four syllables, eg, Maine, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Milwaukee, Florida, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Connecticut etc.

With the whole class, decide which boxes get which words, and leave one or two blank. Clap and say the words, being silent on the blank box (point to the boxes as you go). Transfer the clapping onto instruments. See *example* grid below:

New York		Texas	Texas	Florida			Maine
	Maryland	Maine	Texas		Maine	Maryland	Maine
Milwaukee				Milwaukee		Maryland	
	New York		New York		New Jersey		Connecticut

Children can then make up their own pieces in small groups.

Extension 1: Start layering the parts so that two children are on each part, and then perform it first as a two-part round, then as a four-part round.

Extension 2: See what effect it has if you change the tempo (faster/slower) or the dynamics (louder/softer).



Haiku Composition

The idea is to create a picture with three layers, the black night sky, the owls and the fireflies. It should be 30 - 45 seconds long. This will need either three or six groups; one to portray each line. If six groups are used there is an option to create two pieces which, in turn, could lead to interesting conversations about which groups' lines should be combined for the best or the most effective results. They will need to work out what kind of sounds will reflect their line.

The **owls** are the 'middle ground' and could focus on the call and response of the 'too whit' and the 'too whoo'. This group cannot play all the time but must decide where to play; will their sounds be continuous or intermittent? The **fireflies** are in the foreground and are fleeting; they can only dart into the soundscape occasionally, but when they do it is dramatic. How can they do this (e.g. use of DYNAMICS and TIMBRES)?

The '**background**' **night sky** will be represented by a continuous soundscape – the teacher can discuss how they will do this, e.g. using long notes, nothing, sudden or uneven.



*The owls are hooting
Come Come, to the fireflies
All is still and black*

The groups or individuals work on their own ideas, then spend time putting them together. The next step is to revise and refine their work until they are sure that their music represents the haiku as well as possible.

Maybe use a composing frame to show a form of notation, e.g., a three-part frame showing:

- The individual ideas being stated in some form of appropriate notation,
- How they blend together into the overall texture,
- How the layers of sound reduce until only the night is left.

They then perform, and the rest of the class identify who was what (owls/fireflies/night sky), and how they knew.

A nice follow-up task might be for the children to write their own haikus with a background, middle-ground and foreground elements, like a painting. (1-2 weeks)

Limerick Composition

Firstly, the class should practise saying the limerick to a steady beat. (They could clap the steady beat and then walk in time to the steady beat – both whilst saying the limerick). The steady beat could then be put onto a percussion instrument. Secondly, practise clapping the rhythm of the words of the limerick. This could then also be put onto another percussion instrument.



Children should then be placed in groups of 5:

- One person plays the steady beat whilst saying the limerick
- One person plays (and says) the rhythm of the words of the limerick (as you just practised as a whole class)
- The remaining three people choose a word (or two different words if a greater challenge is needed). They choose different instruments so that no instrument does two jobs – a timbre for every part. They play on the syllable or syllables of the words they have chosen

*A tutor who tooted the flute
Tried to tutor two tooters to toot
Said the two to the tutor, "Is it harder to toot
Or to tutor two tooters to toot?"*

It takes time to get it all rehearsed together and they can refine which words are used if needed. Tuned instruments can be used; but each word should stick to the same two notes every time - this choice can also be refined during the process.

Stage 1 Performance – Perform the limerick with all three parts in place.

Stage 2 Performance – Turn it into an ABA structure – play once as above, then play with just the steady beat and the ‘word’ parts (no whole rhythm), then play it all together again. It is an extra challenge to eventually leave the words behind or at least keep them internalised – this will require particularly good eye contact in the group.