GCSE MUSIC – Key Terminology

In this booklet are some of the main key terms you need to know and be able to apply appropriately in the Listening and Appraising Exam.

You may know some already and some will be new. Write a definition next to each word – you may have to look the words up if you’re not sure and please make sure you have the correct musical definition!

Extension activity: Find examples of the musical term in use and add it to the definition.

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| 20th Century  |  |
| Accidentals  |  |
| Alberti Bass  |  |
| Anacrusis  |  |
| Arpeggio  |  |
| Atonality  |  |
| Augmented  |  |
| Augmented 4th  |  |
| Baroque  |  |
| Basso Continuo  |  |
| Cadences  |  |
| Cadenza  |  |
| Canon  |  |
| Chaal (Fusion)  |  |
| Chorale  |  |
| Classical  |  |
| Colla voce  |  |
| Common time  |  |
| Conjunct Movement  |  |
| Contrapuntal  |  |
| Contrast  |  |
| Counterpoint  |  |
| Cross-rhythms  |  |
| Cut common  |  |
| Declamatory writing  |  |
| Delay (EDM)  |  |
| Dhol (Fusion)  |  |
| Diatonic  |  |
| Diminished  |  |
| Diminished 5th  |  |
| Disjunct Movement  |  |
| Dissonant  |  |
| Dominant  |  |
| Ensemble  |  |
| Falsetto  |  |
| Front line (Jazz)  |  |
| Giddha (Fusion)  |  |
| Harmonic Minor  |  |
| Head (Jazz)  |  |
| Hemiola  |  |
| Homophonic  |  |
| Imitation  |  |
| Improvisation  |  |
| Instrumentation  |  |
| Interval  |  |
| Inversion  |  |
| Kicks and Licks (Jazz)  |  |
| Lead sheet (Jazz)  |  |
| Leitmotif  |  |
| Looping (EDM)  |  |
| Lower auxiliary note  |  |
| Melodic Minor  |  |
| MIDI  |  |
| Modulation  |  |
| Monophonic  |  |
| Neapolitan chord  |  |
| Nickelodeon  |  |
| Ornamentation  |  |
| Panning (EDM)  |  |
| Parallel Movement  |  |
| Pedal note  |  |
| Pentatonic  |  |
| Phasing (EDM)  |  |
| Pivot chord  |  |
| Polyphonic  |  |
| Power chords  |  |
| Range  |  |
| Recitative  |  |
| Remixing (EDM)  |  |
| Renaissance  |  |
| Repetition  |  |
| Reverb (EDM)  |  |
| Romantic  |  |
| Sequence  |  |
| Sforzando  |  |
| Shout chorus (Jazz)  |  |
| Skiffle  |  |
| Sonata Form  |  |
| Song Cycle  |  |
| Staccato  |  |
| Standard (Jazz)  |  |
| Stop time (Jazz)  |  |
| Storyboard  |  |
| Suspension  |  |
| Swing style  |  |
| Syncopation  |  |
| Texture  |  |
| Timpani  |  |
| Tonic  |  |
| Transposition  |  |
| Transverse Flute  |  |
| Trill  |  |
| Tritone  |  |
| Tumbi (Fusion)  |  |
| Turnaround (Jazz)  |  |
| Unison  |  |
| Variation  |  |
| Virtuoso  |  |
| Walking Bass  |  |