

MUSIC GCSE

How will GCSE Music help me in the future?

In the future Creativity is going to be one of the most important and in-demand skills at work (World Economic Forum.) When business leaders across the world were surveyed, they voted Creativity as the most important workplace capability to help their businesses survive and grow. This means that the study of creative subjects, like Music, is becoming even more important and relevant to young people to give you the chance to succeed – whatever your ambitions! At the same time, you will find many opportunities to develop and improve your personal wellbeing both independently and as part of a wider community.

What skills will I gain?

Your practical skills of composing music and performing will be refined and will demonstrate creativity, reflection and resilience, as well as developing confidence and presentation skills.

Studying music will give you opportunities for higher order thinking, by considering ideas which go beyond language. This is great brain-training which will help you in other areas too.

You will gain a deep learning of transferable abilities and practice applying these to new situations, developing analytical and problem-solving skills.

Through studying music, you will be equipped with the skills to succeed in your next steps.

What could I do next?

The possibilities are endless. Music will enable you to demonstrate many skills which employers, colleges and universities will be looking for. It can also give you opportunities to travel, meet people and get the most out of life.

WJEC Music teachers were recently asked to give details of the next steps of former students.

It was not a surprise to hear that many had continued to study Music at Music College, or Universities including Cambridge, Cardiff, Derby, Durham, Huddersfield, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, Oxford, Sheffield, Surrey and York.

Others had gone on to various Universities (including Russell Group) to read Acting, Art, Arts Journalism, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Classics, Computer Science, English and Drama, English Literature, French, Geography, Japanese, Liberal Arts, Marine Biology, Maths, Medicine, Midwifery, Modern Languages, Journalism, Occupational Therapy, Physics, Politics, Primary Education, Psychology, Sports Science, and Veterinary Medicine.

Others had started Apprenticeships in Accountancy, joined the Royal Marines or other Armed Forces.

At least one is starring in the West End, and others have started (or continued) careers in performance and tuition.



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What will I do?

Your teachers will decide how best to cover all that you need to do, but typical classroom activities could be:

Performing (playing music) on your own and in a group. This could be in any style, on any instrument or voice, including DJ skills, rapping, singing, band and orchestral instruments.

Exploring how great pieces of music were put together, then when you have learnt some of the techniques, composing your own music. This could involve using computer software, writing for a specific purpose, writing songs etc.

Listening to a variety of music and learning how to identify the facts about what you hear. You will already have heard about the elements of music in your Key Stage 3 lessons. At GCSE you focus on how these are used for different purposes.

The WJEC GCSE Music course has three units: Performing, Composing and Appraising (Listening.) The following chart shows you a summary of what you will complete.

Unit 1 Performing	35%	Teacher assessed
A minimum of two pieces, lasting a total of 4 minutes, recorded in the year of assessment (Usually Year 11.) One piece must be an ensemble (group piece) lasting at least one minute One piece linked to an Area of Study (see below) Grade 3 is the standard level and can score full marks if played perfectly You can use any instrument or voice, or choose a technology option. You will write a programme note on one of the pieces you perform.		
Unit 2 Composing	35%	Teacher assessed
Two pieces: One in response to a brief set by WJEC – there are 4 to choose from each year. You will also write an evaluation of this piece. One free composition – ANY style you want to write in.		
Unit 3 Appraising	30%	Externally assessed examination
Listening examination: 8 questions, 2 on each area of study: AoS 1 Musical Forms and Devices (including a set work*) AoS 2 Music for Ensemble AoS 3 Film Music AoS 4 Popular Music (including a set work*)		

* A set work is a piece of music which everybody has to learn about. There is one short classical piece and one Rock/pop song. You can learn to play/sing parts of them to help you learn the details.

Reasons to choose Music

If you already play an instrument or sing, you can develop your skills and get a GCSE out of it!

If you don't already play an instrument or sing, you can take the opportunity to learn new skills which could stay with you for life. If you already enjoy writing your own music or songs, you can use this ability and experience towards your GCSE.

If you are a creative person who wants to learn to make music this course will give you that chance. If you love listening to music, and can spot all the details, sing every riff and “air-drum” every beat you have already developed some of the abilities you need. OK, so you can't mime playing it in the assessment, but if you can already think that rhythm or sing that tune in your head, you have some skills!