







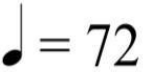
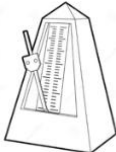










Common Musical Terms and Signs – A Pedantic Guide

Alex Aitken

Below are my definitions for the most common musical terms. Most are Italian, since instructions were first put in music by the Italian composers of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Use this as a reference guide, rather than memorise this list. Being pedantic makes you a better musician! Many definitions online are inaccurate; this document relies on literal translations, and corrects numerous misconceptions. Any text in blue is a hyperlink connecting to an example – click on them!

	<p><i>Ottava alta</i> in Italian (hence 8va even though octave ends with an e). Play the notes below the bracket an octave above written. This saves writing the music on many ledger lines and makes it easier to read. Two octaves above what is written is 15ma (<i>quindicesima alta</i>). The dotted line indicates how long it lasts for; it's cancelled out by the word <i>loco</i> ('in place').</p>
	<p><i>Ottava bassa</i> in Italian. 8vb was invented by those that made Sibelius music software. It should officially be 8va again, but with the lower dotted line (as in the picture). Both this and the inaccurate 8vb mean to play the notes below the bracket an octave below written. This saves writing the music on many ledger lines and makes it easier to read. Two octaves below is written 15ma (<i>quindicesima basso</i>). The dotted line indicates how long it lasts for; it's cancelled out by the word <i>loco</i> ('in place').</p>
	<p>A fermata – from 'stop' in Italian. A pause (either on a note, chord, rest or bar). In orchestral music it could be accompanied by the letters G.P. (General Pause) above the fermata, showing that every instrument stops. Fermatas often double the length of the note they are attached to, but this is not a strict principle, and it should always be guided by what feels right. 20th and 21st century music uses five types of fermata:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Very short.</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Short</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Normal</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Long</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Very Long</p>  </div> </div>
	<p>A metronome mark; in this case 72 crotchet pulses per minute ('beat' is inaccurate – see beat and pulse definitions – but, even so, many musicians will say 72 beats per minute). Digital metronomes now mean it can be any note value and any number but, until the mid-20th century, metronome marks followed a pattern of numbers on the original mechanical metronome. The name metronome comes from the Greek <i>métron</i> 'measure' (as in the length of time) and <i>némo</i> 'I lead'. Beethoven was one of the first composers to use metronome markings from around 1815 (although his metronome was found to be inaccurate and fast). Metronome marks are used for tempo references – although what feels right may be slightly faster or slower, and this can be affected by the size of the space you are performing in (slower in a bigger space may be better). Mechanical metronomes produce an audible click at regular intervals, with the pulse rate set by the position of a moveable weight on the arm.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>72 is roughly your resting heart rate, so is used here. Metronome numbers traditionally ascend in 2s, 3s, 4s, 6s and then 8s. Bracketed numbers are common pop music metronome markings and are not on mechanical metronomes.</p> <p>2s: 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60 (stops at 1 per second)</p> <p>3s: 63, 66, 69, 72 (stops at resting heart rate), (74)</p> <p>4s: 76, 80, 84, 88, 92, 96, 100, 104, 108, (110), 112, 116, (118), 120 (stops at 2 per second)</p> <p>6s: 126, (128), 132, 138, 144 (stops at twice resting heart rate), (150)</p> <p>8s: 152, 160, (166), 168, 176, 184, 192, 200, 208</p> <p>Popular music talks of BPM (beats per minute), even though this is inaccurate (see beat vs. pulse definitions).</p>




	<p>An accent, which is placed opposite to the stem direction, makes the onset (start) of the note stronger than any notes around it. Its full name is a dynamic accent, but musicians just say 'accent'. There are three different types of accents in music (see next).</p>
<p>Accent</p>	<p>An accented note will stand out compared to the music around it. There are three different types of accents in music:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dynamic accent (see above) is the most common type of accent, and makes the onset (start) of the note stronger than the notes around it. Physically it becomes louder. This is only possible when the instrument responds to touch or breath (e.g. a trumpet, piano, violin, etc.). It's not possible on an organ or harpsichord. • A tonic accent is created when a note is higher than the notes around, making the note stand out. Higher pitched sounds have greater amplitude (energy), so are louder. • An agogic accent occurs when a note is longer than the notes around it, making it stand out, and therefore accented. A minim amongst loads of semiquavers would stand out because it's longer and so attracts our ear's attention. Organists and harpsichordists rely on varying length of notes for articulation, since dynamic accents are not possible.
	<p>A slur – two or more notes of different pitches are to be performed with no gap of sound between them. The slur is always placed opposite to the stem direction or, if the stem direction varies, in the opposite direction to the majority of stems. Singers and instrumentalists using breath often breathe at the end of slurs, and string players would play the notes with one bow movement/stroke. It also indicates when two or more notes are sung to one syllable. Slurs are crucial for indicating the musical grammar (i.e. the length of musical sentences and any internal phrases).</p>
	<p>A wedge (<i>staccatissimo</i> or 'very detached' in Italian). These are to be performed very detached from any neighbouring notes (roughly a quarter of the length of the note). In early Classical and Romantic music, the wedge was used instead of the staccato dot, which was hard to print. In more modern music it means <i>staccatissimo</i> – very detached. You should always be careful that the note following a <i>staccatissimo</i> note does not arrive early; the wedge only affects the note it is over, and does not cause the next note to be played earlier than written.</p>
	<p>Portato (from the Italian verb <i>portare</i> – 'to carry'). These notes are to be thought of as having a slight weight to them, which allows the sound to be 'carried' from one note to the next. The result sounds halfway between staccato and legato, so the notes are semi-detached from each other (hence the two different articulations of the staccato dot and the legato slur). The slur over the top indicates that they are still to be thought of as a musical phrase or unit.</p>
	<p>Marcato (from the Italian for 'marked'). This note is to be played with great importance, and much effort, thereby marking it out. The marcato is placed opposite the stem direction.</p>
	<p>Tenuto (from the Latin for 'held'). This note is held for its absolute full length, almost running it into the next note, rest, or bar line. Normally notes are played with a very slight natural separation between them; the tenuto shrinks that gap so that it can hardly be heard. Many musicians like to think of tenuto notes having a little extra weight, so they are 'heavier' to move from. Be careful that the next note is not late as a result though!</p>

<i>fff</i>	<i>Fortississimo</i> ('very very strong' in Italian). -issimo means 'very' in Italian. This note or chord has an immense amount of energy and strength – it is not simply as loud as you can play.
<i>ff</i>	<i>Fortissimo</i> ('very strong' in Italian). Note that very strong does not simply mean really loud; the note or chord should be played with great strength. The byproduct is likely to be some volume, but <i>fortissimo</i> should not create an ugly and uncontrolled tone.
<i>f</i>	<i>Forte</i> ('strong' in Italian). It does not mean loud.
<i>mf</i>	<i>Mezzo forte</i> ('half strong' in Italian).
<i>mp</i>	<i>Mezzo piano</i> ('half soft' in Italian).
<i>p</i>	<i>Piano</i> ('soft' in Italian). This does not mean quiet! The piano was originally called <i>gravicembalo col piano e forte</i> – 'harpsichord with strong and soft'. Over time this was shortened to <i>pianoforte</i> and then to piano. So technically a pianist plays the soft...
<i>pp</i>	<i>Pianissimo</i> ('very soft' in Italian). Notes or chords with this dynamic should be played delicately and beautifully – it does not simply mean really quiet.
<i>ppp</i>	<i>Pianississimo</i> ('very very soft' in Italian).
<i>fp</i>	<i>Fortepiano</i> ('strong-soft' in Italian). The note or chord is played with initial strength but is then immediately soft. This was also used in the Classical period to indicate a dynamic accent (>). The fortepiano instrument was so named because it could play at different dynamics, unlike the harpsichord before it.
<i>sf</i> or <i>sfz</i>	<i>Sforzato</i> ('forced' or 'strained' in Italian) is <i>sf</i> ; <i>sfz</i> stands for <i>sforzando</i> ('forcing'). Notes or chords marked with this are very similar to an accent but with more emotion and intent behind them. In the Classical era they were often used instead of the > dynamic accent sign; by the Romantic period they are thought of as a more extreme version of an accent.
<i>smorzando</i> or <i>smorz.</i>	'Extinguishing' or 'smothering' in Italian. The music, having grown, has to have the energy taken out of it quickly to return it to a soft state. Originally this term came from the Italian verb <i>morzare</i> 'to die'.
	Start repeat (top) or end repeat (bottom) bar lines. At the second sign go back to the first sign and repeat the music from there (if the first sign is missed out, repeat from the beginning). The thick black line is used to make the bar lines stand out to your eye.
<u><i>A capella</i></u>	Italian for 'in chapel [style]'. Sacred music of the Renaissance was usually unaccompanied (the purest instrument was thought to be the one you are born with – your voice). Music that had no instrumental accompaniment, regardless of whether it was sacred or secular, was therefore termed <i>a capella</i> to show that it was to be thought of in the same way.
<u><i>accelerando (accel.)</i></u>	Italian for 'accelerating'. The pulse gets quicker at an exponential rate, and the music accelerates with it.
<u><i>acciaccatura</i></u> 	Pronounced 'a-cha-ka-tura' not 'akky-aka-tura' – think of focaccia bread, which has a 'cha' before the 'ia'. From the Italian verb meaning 'to crush'. A short note, given no time, that is crushed against the next fully notated note or chord. Acciaccaturas are notated as small cue-sized notes, with a diagonal strike through their stem. <i>Kangaroos</i> from <i>Carnival of the Animals</i> by Saint Saëns is full of them – have a listen.
<u><i>ad libitum, ad lib.</i></u>	Latin for 'at pleasure'. Played freely, so that it sounds improvised. Like the opening of Gershwin's <i>Rhapsody in Blue</i> .




adagio	Italian for 'at ease' (originally it was <i>adagio</i>). It does not mean slow. <i>Adagietto</i> is therefore 'a little at ease' (i.e. not quite as slow as <i>adagio</i>).
added 9 th /11 th /13 th chord	A chord where an additional scale degree is added to the more basic triad and its seventh. Named after the degree of the scale that is added to the chord when it is stacked in thirds. A C9 chord would therefore be CEG (the triad) + Bb (the seventh) + D (a ninth from where we started on the C). A D9 chord would be DF#ACE. It is sometimes easier to think of a 9 th as being a 2 nd up an octave, a 11 th being a 4 th up an octave, and a 13 th being a 6 th up an octave (check these at the keyboard). Each 9 th , 11 th or 13 th above the triad is called an extension, and so chords like this are called extended chords in general, but added 9 th etc. when being specific. Extended chords were first used in the Classical period, and are a core ingredient of music from the Romantic period onwards.
Aeolian mode	Named after the Ancient Greek region of Aeolis, this is one of the oldest modes in Western music, and is now equivalent to the pattern of semitones and tones on the white notes of the piano between A and A. It became known as the natural minor, since it was the first set of notes to be described as minor. It has a flattened third, sixth and seventh degrees, compared to the major scale.
<i>allargando</i>	Italian for 'broadening' or 'widening' – the music gets gradually slightly slower and grander.
<i>allegretto</i>	Italian for 'a little cheerful'. Quite bright.
allegro	Italian for 'cheerful'. Bright.
altered chords	Chords where any triad notes, or extensions (7ths, 9ths, 11ths, or 13ths), have been chromatically altered from the key.
alto	From the Latin word for 'high' (originally this was the high part above the tune that was held (<i>tenore</i>) by the tenors. Now it refers to the mid-high range, roughly from bottom G on the treble clef upwards. The alto clef (which looks like a K and folds in on the middle stave line) is now only used for the viola, since this has the equivalent range of an alto voice.
andante	Italian for 'sauntering/meandering/ambly'. Think of the rate you browse shops. It is NOT walking speed, as often defined online. Think about it – everyone walks at different rates, but everyone browses or wanders around at the same rate. <i>Andantino</i> is 'a little sauntering', so not as slow as <i>andante</i> .
<i>animando</i>	Italian for 'animating'. The music becomes more energetic; usually heading towards a goal.
anticipatory note / anticipation	A non-harmony note, usually the tonic or the mediant, that appears either a semiquaver or quaver ahead of the chord to which it belongs, and normally at the end of the bar. Baroque composers used them frequently as they create a brief dissonance against the previous chord. E.g. a melody line that goes A- G G, where the highlighted G belongs to the chord after the bar line. Listen for many of them in Handel's <i>Ombra Mai Fù</i> .
<i>appoggiatura</i>	Pronounced 'a-podgy-a-tura'. From the Italian verb 'to lean'; an appoggiatura is a non-harmony played at the same time as a chord to which it does not belong. It is approached by a leap, then 'leans against' the harmony for expressive effect, and drops by step into a note that does belong to the chord. It is very similar to a suspension, but is approached by leap instead of being prepared (see suspension). Mozart was a big fan of them. Listen to Dance of the Hours from Ponchielli's opera <i>La Gioconda</i> – you'll hear the 'leaning' notes.
Aria	'Air' in Italian; a piece of music, usually for a singer, or with a singing quality. Commonly part of operas, where the drama is suspended for a singer to sing about their emotional state at that point. Arias therefore have a static quality to them – like air.
arpeggio	'Harp-like' in Italian; a pattern of notes consisting of the first, third and fifth note of a chord, played individually in either an ascending or descending pattern, originally mimicking the staggered pattern of notes heard when a harp player plucks individual strings in turn when playing a chord. Listen to the harp in the video.








<i>assai</i>	Italian for 'very'. Usually found as <i>allegro assai</i> – 'very cheerful' or very bright.
<i>attacca</i>	Italian for 'attack' (the next section of music).
atonal	Music where there is a lack of recognisable tonality (major, minor or modal). Usually associated with music of the early 20 th century onwards, and usually the result of clever underlying compositional processes, rather than the apparently random sounds being heard. Listen to some Schoenberg!
augmented chord	A chord in which the fifth of the triad has been raised by a semitone, resulting in an augmented fifth between the root (fundamental note) of the chord and the top note.
augmentation	The stretching of note values by an exact multiple (e.g. exactly doubling the value of every note). Usually used when composers want to combine themes, or bring back a main theme at the end of a long work.
auxiliary note	Literally an 'extra' note; these non-harmony notes go between to notes of identical pitch. An upper auxiliary note would be C <u>D</u> C ; a lower auxiliary note would be C <u>B</u> C . A chromatic auxiliary note would 'colour' this away from the key: C <u>C#</u> C or E <u>D#</u> E in C major for instance.
basso continuo	Italian for 'continuous bass'. The constant accompaniment and bass line provided by the harpsichord (or organ) and the 'cello in Baroque music. The continuo part filled out the texture with chords, but also played the bassline which, by the Baroque period, was the foundation of the harmony.
beat	Beats divide up a pulse by making some pulses stronger than others. Instead of hearing an infinite line of identical pulses, accenting some pulses to create a beat means that we hear the music in cycles of beats. A pulse might be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, etc., but a beat every three pulses makes us hear the same pulse as 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, etc.
blue note	In the blues, blue notes are the flattened 3 rd , 5 th and 7 th of the scale. D major (DEF#GABC#D) becomes DFGABACD as a blues scale (note the lack of a second degree of the scale in the blues).
bridge	A transition section designed to move from two larger sections in any form. It usually prepares for the return of the main melodic material. In sonata form, the bridge usually separates the first and second subject groups. In pop music, the bridge usually occurs after the first sequence of verse-chorus-verse-chorus, or verse-verse-chorus-verse in order to provide variety.
cadenza	From the Latin for 'falling', a cadenza is a section of music occurring after the rest of the orchestra have 'fallen' away, leaving only the soloist. A florid, virtuosic passage performed by the soloist (unaccompanied) before the final coda in a concerto. The idea of falling also applies to the soloist passage, which traditionally goes to the highest extremes of the instrument's range, before falling back down for the final orchestral coda.
<i>calando</i>	Italian for 'falling' (away). Usually used at the end of a phrase.
canon	Named after the Latin word for 'law', a canon is a melody that is repeated several beats later against another repetition of itself. Think of how <i>Frère Jacques</i> goes with itself on repeat (as a round). Canons create an element of counterpoint – musical lines acting against each other. The earliest canon is thought to be from 1250 – have a listen to <i>Sumer is icumen in</i> which depicts the arrival of Summer in old English.
cantabile	'Singing' or 'singable' in Italian. Play the melody as if someone was singing it, without gaps in the sound.
Cantata	'Sung' in Latin – a piece for orchestra and choir and/or vocal soloists.
<i>cédez</i>	French for 'yield'; the tempo should relax at that point until the next performance direction, or a new section.
chorus	The main repeated section in a pop song, identified by the catchy melody, stronger dynamic, higher range and, usually, fuller accompaniment. Also the name given to the group of non-principal singers in an opera or musical.

chromatic	Greek for 'coloured'; any note that is not present in the normal set of notes used in the major or minor scale of that key. E.g. a G# is not found in the scale of D major, so is a chromatic note. A chromatic matches to every semitone on the piano, therefore exploring all of the 'colours' of the instrument as it ascends or descends. Most famous example is Rimsky Korsakov's <i>Flight of the Bumblebee</i> .
<i>Coda</i>	Latin for 'tail'. The final section of a piece or song, usually there to confirm the final key and finish the piece or song. Opposite of <i>capo</i> or 'head'. [Hence why the clip on a guitar is called a capo – it clamps the head/neck of the guitar].
Colla voce	Italian for 'with the voice'; i.e. follow the singer and their choices. Originally used in opera, but also regularly used in musical theatre .
<i>con</i>	Italian for 'with' (<i>chile con carne</i> is 'chilli with meat'). Musically this can most often be found as part of <i>con anima</i> ('with animation') or <i>con moto</i> ('with movement').
Concerto	From the Italian <i>concertare</i> meaning 'get-together for a friendly debate'. A multi-movement piece for soloist and orchestra; named after the instrument concerned (e.g. Violin concerto = violin soloist + orchestra). The debate is between both the orchestra and soloist, but also between various instruments in the orchestra. Listen to some of the piano concerto in the video.
Concerto Grosso	'big get together for a friendly debate' in Italian. This is an earlier Baroque form of the concerto, with a smaller group of instruments (the <i>concertino</i> or 'little get together') that can be extracted for certain passages to provide textural contrast against the full ensemble. Instruments not in the concertino are the <i>ripieno</i> – 'stuffing' in Italian!
con sordino / con sordini	From the Italian word <i>sordo</i> meaning 'deaf', so <i>sordino</i> means 'a little deaf'. A direction for string and brass players to play with a mute in/on their instrument (so they cannot be heard as much). Cancelled by <i>senza sordino</i> or <i>senza sordini</i> ('without deafness', i.e. can be heard in full). Look closely and you will see the tiny black mutes near the bridges of the string instruments in the video.
conjunct	From the Latin for 'with joins', a conjunct melody is entirely scalar. The opposite term is disjunct (Latin for 'against joining'), which refers to a melody that contains many leaps.
contrary motion	When two independent musical lines move in opposite directions, i.e. if the melody goes up, the bass line should go down, and vice versa. Contrary motion is the basic principle of counterpoint.
countermelody	Literally 'against-melody'; a secondary melody that goes against the first to provide added musical interest.
counterpoint	Originally from the Latin phrase <i>punctum contra punctum</i> or 'point against point', which then became <i>contrapunctum</i> and then counterpoint. The points are the note heads in the music. Counterpoint refers to music that has been composed according to an established set of principles, based upon the fundamental idea that any two lines must retain their own character, interact by being different, and always move in opposite directions ('contra'). If one line goes up, the other line should go down, and vice versa. If they had to move in the same direction then it had to be using the consonant interval of a third, or its inversion, the sixth. Counterpoint was first theorised in the Renaissance (by the theorist-composers Zarlino and Fux), and is still an important part of composition today. It was most strictly adhered to in the Renaissance (listen to anything by Palestrina, Lassus or John Sheppard), reached its peak in the Baroque (listen to anything by JS Bach), and then gradually became freer over the course of the Classical and Romantic periods (compare the opening of Haydn's <i>Creation</i> with the final five minutes of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony). Your composition will be infinitely better if your melody and bass line follow the same basic principle of always moving in opposite directions, or together in thirds and sixths.
countersubject	Literally 'against-subject'; the secondary melody in a fugue that goes against the first melody, which is called the subject. It must be of a sufficiently different character, both rhythmically and melodically.

<p><i>crescendo</i> /</p> <p><i>cresc.</i></p> 	<p>From the Italian verb <i>crescere</i> meaning 'to grow'. The music gradually grows, getting stronger all the time. This could be written as the word <i>crescendo</i>, its abbreviation <i>cresc.</i>, or graphically as a hairpin (shown on the left). Hairpins are usually used for dynamic shaping within phrases, so you often see < >, with > being decrescendo (see below). The word <i>crescendo</i> is normally used when the music grows to a new dynamic (e.g. going from <i>mf</i> to <i>f</i>). More modern music usually forgets this principle... Haydn first began using hairpins consistently in his piano sonatas (see No.48); he and Beethoven used them to indicate agogic accents (see earlier) within the phrase. A < marking indicated that the pulse broadened a little and slowed down slightly at the mouth of the marking; a > marking indicated that the pulse started slightly slower or broader and returned to the normal tempo by the end of the marking. Chopin used hairpins to indicate rubato.</p>
<p>cross-rhythm</p>	<p>Two rhythms that go against each other; e.g. two quavers against a triplet, or four semiquavers against a triplet. Named because of the aural effect of hearing the rhythm go 'across' the two parts and conflict against each other.</p>
<p>cycle of fifths progression</p>	<p>A chord progression created by reordering the chords in a key (I, II, III, IV, V, VI and VII) so that their roots each lie a fifth apart (or a fourth if the interval is upside-down). The result (I, IV, VII, III, VI, II, V, I) creates an infinitely cyclical progression, which can be thought of as the musical equivalent of the M25 – you keep going round it until a convenient place to turn off. It's incredibly useful to composers. Unaltered, the cycle of fifths progression contains roots that are all perfect 5ths or 4ths apart, with one diminished fifth/augmented 4th. The progression is bounded, since it returns to the initial starting point. Composers can introduce a second or third diminished 5th/augmented 4th if they want to use the cycle to modulate to a new key. Composers regularly combine the cycle of fifths with a sequence, since a repeating melodic pattern will fit with a repeating harmonic pattern.</p>
<p><i>da capo</i> / D.C.</p>	<p>Italian for 'from the head' (top of the music). Fun fact: this is also where we get decapitate from, since <i>capo</i> is 'head' in Latin. Compare the top of the music being called the head, with the final section (coda) meaning the 'tail'. A da capo aria features a return to the 'head' or beginning of the piece.</p>
<p><i>dal segno</i> / D.S.</p>	<p>Italian for 'from the sign'  (go back to this sign in the music). Originally used in the Baroque period, it was a genius direction that saved rewriting out a section of music. The sign is usually used when a simple repeat mark could not be used (e.g. when the composer wanted you to go back to a particular point, halfway through a section).</p>
<p><i>decrescendo</i> / <i>decresc.</i></p> 	<p>Literally 'shrinking' in Italian (compare to <i>crescendo</i>). The music gradually gets softer. Composers either write the full word, its abbreviation, or a hairpin. Hairpins are usually used for dynamic shaping within phrases, so you often see < >, which returns to the same dynamic after growing and shrinking. The word <i>decrescendo</i> is normally used when the music shrinks to a new dynamic (e.g. going from <i>mf</i> to <i>p</i>). More modern music usually forgets this principle...</p>
<p>decuplet</p>	<p>A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat). Rhythmic notation divides by two each time (e.g. 1 semibreve, 2 minims, 4 crotchets, 8 quavers, 16 semiquavers, etc.). A decuplet contains ten notes, so squeezes ten notes into the time that eight of those notes would normally take (the closest number of 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16).</p>
<p>development</p>	<p>The section in sonata form following the exposition. It takes the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic material of the two subject groups (first heard in two different keys in the exposition) and, like a food blender, churns everything up for dramatic effect. It is the central and pivotal section in any sonata form piece or movement. It features rapid modulations, through both related and unrelated keys (the later the music, the more unrelated), and reaches the furthest point away from the original tonic key (the FOP or 'far-out point') before the two subject groups in the exposition are again reassembled in the recapitulation, but this time in the same key. The development is there to resolve through musical debate the conflict between the two keys first heard in each subject group in the exposition, so that the recapitulation can bring back both subject groups in the same key. It may introduce new material, but generally breaks up the music of the exposition (a technique called fragmentation). It evolved out of the contrasting B section in ABA ternary form in the Baroque era; by the Romantic period the development section could be so large that the overall form was not perceptible to the ear.</p>

diatonic	From the Greek <i>dia-</i> meaning ‘across’ (hence diameter of a circle is the ‘across-measurement’) and <i>tonikos</i> meaning ‘able to be stretched’. The notes that could be achieved in a scale by successive stretches of a single string were therefore labelled diatonic. Once the musical key system was established, the term diatonic was used to refer to any pitches that were in the scale of the key. Anything that was not found in the scale was therefore ‘coloured’ and labelled ‘chromatic’. Diatonic harmony means that the harmony is derived solely from the notes of the major or minor scale of the key.
diminished seventh	<p>A type of chord named after the interval between the outermost notes when the chord is stacked in thirds. A diminished seventh chord is a diminished triad (where the perfect fifth between the bottom and top notes of the triad has been shrunk by a semitone to make a diminished fifth, and the third has also been shrunk by a semitone), plus an additional minor third on top of the triad, which forms the interval of a diminished seventh from the bottom note of the triad. The four note chord that results consists solely of minor thirds, so is symmetrical. It therefore acts like a roundabout, allowing composers to quickly change route and modulate. The diminished seventh chord creates tension, and is regularly used by composers to generate a heightened emotional effect.</p> <p>Major triad = DF#A Minor triad = DFA Diminished triad = DFAb Diminished seventh = DFAbCb (D major should have C#, so C natural makes a minor 7th and Cb makes a diminished 7th)</p>
<i>diminuendo</i> / <i>dim.</i>	Italian for ‘dimming’ or dwindling. The music gradually gets dimmer, having ‘shined’ in the previous bars. Italian composers originally thought of this separately to <i>decrescendo</i> , but the two quickly conflated, and are now interchangeable (although I still prefer to think of them as separate). Composers either write the word or its abbreviation.
diminution	The opposite of augmentation; all notes in a melody or theme have their length shortened by the same ratio (e.g. all notes half their original length).
disjunct	From the Latin for ‘against joining’, a disjunct melody contains many leaps. The opposite term is conjunct (Latin for ‘with joins’), which refers to a scalar melody.
dodecuplet	A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat). Rhythmic notation divides by two each time (e.g. 1 semibreve, 2 minims, 4 crotchets, 8 quavers, 16 semiquavers, etc.). A dodecuplet contains twelve notes, so squeezes twelve notes into the time that eight of those notes would normally take (the closest number of 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16).
<i>dolce</i>	Italian for ‘sweet’. Think of the dessert course in Italian restaurants – <i>dolce</i> !
dominant	The fifth degree of a scale, so named because it has the greatest power over the first note in the scale, the tonic. (Think of someone dominating a conversation as being the one with the most power.) The strongest chord progression in music is achieved by placing two chords as far apart as they can be. In music this is a tritone (exactly half of the circle of fifths, so the key at 12 o’clock and the key at 6 o’clock are a tritone apart). The problem is that a tritone sounds terrible (the Renaissance theorists called it ‘the devil in music’. The two chords either side of this are chord IV and chord V; chord V sounds stronger when going to chord I, hence has the greatest power, and is called the dominant, which could be a chord or key. Modulations to the dominant are common.
dominant pedal	A pedal is a long sustained note, usually found in the bass part, with the harmony changing above it. Named after the pedals on the organ that can be held down with the foot to achieve the same effect whilst the organist changes harmonies with their hands. A dominant pedal specifically refers to the pedal note being on the dominant degree of the scale or key (see above). Usually found towards the end of fugues as a device for heightening tension, since the final ‘release’ to the tonic generates a much anticipated dissipation of tension.
dominant seventh chord	A triadic chord built upon the dominant degree of the scale, with an additional minor third added on top, which creates an interval of a minor seventh between the outer notes. The seventh chord built on the dominant is therefore a dominant seventh chord!

Dorian mode	Named after the Ancient Greek people of the Doric islands (the Dorians), this is one of the oldest modes in Western music, and is now equivalent to the pattern of semitones and tones on the white notes of the piano between D and D. It has a flattened third and seventh degrees, compared to the major scale, and is most associated with church music (listen to the Dies Irae chant) and folk music .
double flat 	Just as it sounds; an accidental that lowers a note by two semitones / a tone. Used in order to keep to one version of each letter in the scale (an A, a B, a C, etc.) to make it easier to read, and avoid the musician having to keep track of two versions of the same note. It's also used to simplify the music: if a composer wants to write the equivalent pitch to a A natural, but the key signature indicates the A is already a flat, they can use one marking of a Bbb to avoid having to write an A natural and then an A flat to return to the key signature (two markings). Used in more extreme keys.
double sharp 	Opposite operation to a double flat; an accidental that raises a note by two semitones / a tone. Used in order to keep to one version of each letter in the scale (an A, a B, a C, etc.) to make it easier to read, and avoid the musician having to keep track of two versions of the same note. It's also used to simplify the music: if a composer wants to write the equivalent pitch to a D natural, but the key signature indicates the D is already a sharp, they can use one marking of a Cx to avoid having to write an D natural and then a D sharp to return to the key signature (two markings). Used in more extreme keys, and handwritten as an 'x'.
duplet 	Opposite of a triplet; if a triplet is three notes played over the same duration as two notes; a duplet is two notes played over the same duration as three notes. A triplet appears in simple meters; a duplet appears in compound meters. Duplet quavers (shown) therefore indicate two quavers to be played in the time of three quavers (or a dotted crotchet).
dyad	Any two-note chord. Just as a three-note chord is a triad.
échappée note	Named after the French verb for 'escape', an échappée note briefly escapes in the opposite direction to the melody. Think of the opening of the tune ' Oliver ' where two escape notes in quick session jump up, even though the melody is descending overall. Technically the échappée notes should not belong to the chord, but this rule has been relaxed over time, so is now more of a guiding principle.
en dehors	French for 'outside'. Used when a composer wants an individual melodic line to be brought out of the texture. Most often used orchestrally, to ask players to 'play up', but can be found in piano music when an internal melodic voice is to be brought out.
exposition	The opening repeated section of a piece that is in sonata form, or the opening section of a fugue. In sonatas the exposition is complete once both subject groups (collections of melodic and rhythmic ideas, or each a single melody) have been 'exposed' to the ear and heard. In a fugue the exposition is complete once every voice has sounded the subject, alternating between sounding it in the tonic and sounding it in the dominant. It is therefore the section that presents the full musical material that is about to varied and developed in the next section (the development). The function of the exposition in a sonata is to set up the two keys that will be debated in the development (usually the tonic and dominant).
espressivo / express. / espr.	Italian for 'expressively'. Self-explanatory.
extended chords	Chords with have been 'extended' from the basic triad. E.g. C13 which is a chord of (CEG) + Bb, D, F, A (the A being the 13 th). The extensions continue in thirds, so 7 th s, 9 th s, 11 th s, and 13 th s are triadic extensions. They must stay diatonic (within the notes of the key); if they are chromatically altered the extensions are termed 'alterations'. Any chord symbols involving the numbers 7, 9, 11 or 13 are therefore extended chords, provided they have no accidentals; D ^(#11) is an altered chord because the 11 th has been sharpened. Used from the Classical period onwards (although not as chord symbols...).



Fantasia	'Fantasy' in Italian; a piece created by improvisation, or written to sound like it is being improvised when played. Typically appear from the Baroque period onwards. Features rapid changes of ideas and moods, and usually a lot of scalic passages. Can be really interesting!
fermata 	<p>A fermata – from 'stop' in Italian. A pause (either on a note, chord, rest or bar). In orchestral music it could be accompanied by the letters G.P. (General Pause) above the fermata, showing that every instrument stops. Fermatas often double the length of the note they are attached to, but but this is not a strict principle, and it should always be guided by what feels right.</p> <p>20th and 21st century music uses five types of fermata:</p> <p>Very short. Short Normal Long Very Long</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">      </div>
figurations	Repeated patterns of (usually) semiquavers that provide an ornate and energetic top layer to the music. The patterns usually maintain the same sort of shape, whilst being bent through the harmonic progression. Listen to Widor's Toccata, which features constant figurations in the right hand (and later left).
<i>fine</i>	Italian for 'end' [here]; it's from this that we get the word finish. Used when the composer wants you to repeat a section of music from the final bar, and then end at a point before you reach the final bar again. Usually found within the instruction <i>D.C. (or da capo) al fine</i> – 'from the head until the end [point]'.
first inversion	A chord where the root of the triad, which usually lies at the bottom, is placed in the opposite position at the top of the triad. D \sharp A becomes F \sharp AD, with the root at the top. Invert refers to the idea of putting something in the opposite position – we talk of inverting being synonymous with upside-down, and in music invert refers to the bottom note of the chord (or new bottom note of the chord) being put in the opposite position at the top. A second inversion would then turn F \sharp AD into ADF \sharp , with the F \sharp that was at the bottom in the first inversion chord now appearing in the opposite position at the top.
flat 	<p>Lowens the note by a semitone. Renaissance music was constructed from hexachords (six-note scales). There were three hexachords: the hard hexachord, which started on G (GABCDE), the soft hexachord that started on F, and the natural hexachord that started on C (CDEFGA). The problem with the soft hexachord was that the B had to be a different version of the note to make the soft hexachord sound the same as a hard hexachord. They notated the 'soft' version of the B with round edges: <i>b</i> and the 'hard' version of the B with square edges, since it was the only letter that had to be different across the three hexachords. The soft version of the B became, through mistranslation, called a 'flat' instead of a 'soft'. (The soft hexachord's notes are FGAB\flatCD). So the flat should actually be called a 'soft', but oh well. The hard edged 'b' became the natural.</p>
flattened 9 th /10 th /11 th /13 th	When the extension to the triad (9 th , 11 th , 13 th and interestingly also the 10 th) is flattened. We usually do not talk of the flattened seventh, because by convention the 7 th is minor in music, so is already flattened (lowered from the key, rather than always a flat, so it could be an F natural instead of an F \sharp). The tenth is also included because it creates an interesting dissonance with the major third of a major chord, which composers from the Romantic period onwards liked and used.

fugue	From the Latin verb <i>fugare</i> meaning ‘to flee’ (hence a fugitive), fugues originated in the Baroque period, and are polyphonic and contrapuntal compositions featuring two themes; the first, called the subject, is the most important. Each voice (soprano, alto, tenor and bass, even if instrumental) enters in turn starting with the subject, which is accompanied by a second theme (which the first voice to enter starts with after it has completed the subject). The second theme, or countersubject, is of less importance but of equal interest. Each statement of the subject alternates between the tonic and the dominant (the subject in the dominant is called the answer), so subjects and answers are usually a perfect 5 th apart, although sometimes notes are altered slightly to maintain the correct key. Essentially like a round, but with two themes and two keys at once, the opening section (called the exposition) ends once all voices have stated the subject. Thereafter follows a free section (called an episode), which employs imitation and sequence. The subject returns in the middle of the fugue (called the middle entry) and, towards the end, composers often begin overlapping the entries of the subject (called stretto) to build tension. The fugue’s final section is the coda, and usually features a dominant pedal before the final perfect cadence. To understand how fugues work, listen to the ‘ Lady Gaga fugue ’, which is a fugue composed on the theme of Lady’s Gaga’s song <i>Bad Romance</i> . Then listen to this and trace the subject that opens the fugue.
functional harmony	Harmony that has a function; to define a sense of key. Musicians really are simple sometimes. Inventively, harmony that is freed from any obligation to imply a sense of key is called ‘non-functional harmony’. What fun.
<i>giocoso</i>	Italian for ‘playful’.
<i>giusto</i>	Italian for ‘correct’ or ‘right’. Usually found as <i>tempo giusto</i> – in strict time – after a passage where either <i>rubato</i> or <i>colla voce</i> was used.
<i>Glissando</i>	‘Sliding’ in Italian. A continuous sweep across pitches between two fixed points. Different from <i>portamento</i> as that means ‘carrying’ in Italian, i.e. carrying the music from one note to another via the other pitches. A glissando tends to be reserved for keyboard instruments, which have fixed pitches that you slide across, whereas a portamento is used for instruments that can slide between the pitches (e.g. string instruments, timpani and the trombone). A glissando begins immediately after the note has started.
<i>grave</i>	Italian for ‘solemn’ or ‘serious’. Listen to the opening of Beethoven’s Pathétique sonata, which has this direction.
<i>grazioso</i>	Italian for ‘graceful’.
half-diminished chord	A chord that is not fully diminished, and so is ‘half-diminished’. D diminished (DFAbCb) has a diminished 7 th between its outer notes, D and Cb. D half-diminished would be DFAbC, so is a diminished triad with a minor 7 th between its outer notes (D and C), rather than a diminished seventh. Remember that most chords are named by convention from the interval formed between the outer notes when the chord is placed so that its notes are all a third apart. In chord notation, a half-diminished chord is m7b5; they are used all over the place in pop and musical theatre music.
hemiola	Named after the Greek for ‘in the ratio of three to two’ (hemi is Greek for ‘half’, hence Northern and Southern hemispheres cut the globe in half). Hemiolas are used frequently in the Baroque period as the musical brake at the end of a section when the music is spinning along in 3. They turn 2 bars of 3 into 3 bars of 2: 123 123 becomes 12 31 23. Hence the music is split into three groups where it used to be two groups, so is shortened by the ratio of 3:2. Commonly found at the ends of sections in Baroque dances to bring the section (or piece) to a close. Listen to this , and look at how bb.6-7 accent 12, 31, 23.

hendecuplet	A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat). Rhythmic notation divides by two each time (e.g. 1 semibreve, 2 minims, 4 crotchets, 8 quavers, 16 semiquavers, etc.). A hendecuplet contains eleven notes, so squeezes eleven notes into the time that eight of those notes would normally take (the closest number of 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16).
harmonic rhythm	The rhythm of the harmony! So if chords change once each bar in 4/4, the harmonic rhythm is in semibreves. Harmonic rhythm is really useful for analysis, particularly because composers often use augmentation or diminution of harmonic rhythm at key moments in music (see augmentation and diminution). Hemiolas alter harmonic rhythm.
harmonic sequence	Where a unit of chords (e.g. I, vi, IV, V) is then repeated immediately in either another key, or at a particular interval. So I, vi, IV in C then in G would be a harmonic sequence. The cycle of fifths progression is a harmonic sequence, because it keeps repeating V-I in keys that are each a fifth apart. Harmonic sequences are very useful to composers for building and maintaining momentum.
heterophonic	Literally ‘other-sounding’ in Greek. When two versions of a melody are simultaneously sounding, but one version (usually the highest one) is a varied decorated version. Can be thought of as simultaneous variation.
hexachord	A six note scale, or six-note chord. Hexachords first appeared in Renaissance music theory as six note scales (see definition of ‘flat’). Hexachords later became verticalised and defined collections of six notes. Schoenberg uses hexachords extensively as a composition tool in the early 20 th century. Any six notes can create a verticalised hexachord; this leaves six remaining pitches in the chromatic scale. The hexachord created by the other six notes left is called the ‘complement’, for obvious reasons.
homophonic	Literally ‘same-sounding’ in Greek; all parts sound at the same time, even if they are playing or singing different notes. Hymns are usually homophonic, since they are mostly block chords.
homorhythmic	Where all parts are playing or singing the same rhythm. Note that all parts could also be playing or singing the same pitches, so homorhythmic music could also be monophonic. If everyone is playing different notes then the music would be both homorhythmic and homophonic.
imitation	The copying of a musical idea across two or more instrumental or vocal parts. Imitation can be exact (faithfully recreate the intervals of the first statement) or inexact (alter some intervals slightly to keep the music in the key needed). Imitation was one of the main compositional principles of Renaissance music, and continues to this day. Listen to the example; each voice begins with the same outline of the initial idea.
<i>intermezzo</i> (plural: intermezzi)	Italian for ‘between half’. Originally this was the music performed during an interval of an opera or ballet. Later on in the Romantic period the term was also used for an orchestral movement between two others in a larger work, or a solo character piece with lyrical melodies and a wide emotional range. Listen to some intermezzi by Brahms or Mendelssohn.
interrupted cadence	A cadence (point of musical punctuation) created by chord V being followed by chord vi. The expected progression to the tonic, as in a perfect cadence, is ‘interrupted’ by the substitution of chord vi. Listen to the end of the first phrase of this , where an interrupted cadence occurs with the words ‘things above’. You will hear the music go from major to minor, interrupting the tonality briefly.

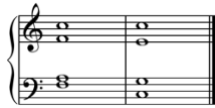

interval	<p>The gap between any two notes in music. Always counted from the bottom note (which is 1), there are two types of intervals in music:</p> <p>Perfect Intervals: 4ths, 5ths and 8^{ve}s, which only have one version that sounds nice; Imperfect Intervals: 2nds, 3rds, 6ths and 7ths, which have two versions that sound nice;</p> <p>Any interval where the top note of the two has been raised by a semitone out of its consonant state is termed augmented; any interval where the top note of the two has been lowered by a semitone out of its consonant state is termed diminished.</p> <p>The consonant state for perfect intervals is just called perfect. The consonant states for imperfect intervals are called major (for the wider consonant interval) and minor (for the narrower consonant interval).</p> <p>4ths, 5ths and 8^{ve}s can therefore be diminished, perfect, or augmented. 2nds, 3rds, 6ths and 7ths are either diminished, minor, major, or augmented.</p> <p>To work out the interval, first work out if it is a perfect or imperfect interval by counting the distance between the letters (ignore any accidentals). Then ask: ‘what version of the top note should be in the major scale that begins on the bottom note?’ Ignore any accidental attached to the upper note (as you first need to find out what it should be), but take account of any accidental attached to the lower note, since this is the major scale you need to use.</p> <p>If the top note has been raised by a semitone from what it should be in the major scale that begins on the bottom note, the interval is augmented. If it has been raised by two semitones, the interval is doubly-augmented.</p> <p>If the top note is exactly what it should be in the major scale that begins on the bottom note, the interval is perfect (if it is a 4th, 5th or 8^{ve}), or major if the interval is imperfect (a 2nd, 3rd, 6th or 7th).</p> <p>If the top note has been lowered by a semitone, then it is a diminished interval (for 4ths, 5ths and 8^{ve}s), or a minor interval (if an imperfect interval of a 2nd, 3rd, 6th or 7th).</p> <p>If the top note has been lowered by two semitones, then it is a doubly-diminished interval (for perfect intervals of 4ths, 5ths and 8^{ve}s), or a diminished interval (for imperfect intervals of 2nds, 3rds, 6ths and 7ths).</p> <p>Intervals over an octave can either be counted as a 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, etc., or can be called ‘compound’ (where compound means ‘more than one’; in this case more than one octave). The shortcut for switching between the larger numbers and compound is to take away 7; so a major 13th is also a compound major 6th, etc.</p> <p>Example 1: bottom note D, top note Ab:</p> <p>D-A is a 5th, so this is some sort of perfect interval. What version of A should be in the scale of D major? Answer: A natural. This is Ab, so it has been lowered by a semitone. A perfect interval lowered by a semitone is diminished, so this is a diminished 5th.</p> <p>Example 2: bottom note F, top note Db:</p> <p>F-D is a 6th, so this is some sort of imperfect interval. What version of D should be in the scale of F major? Answer: D natural. This is Db, so it has been lowered by a semitone. An imperfect interval lowered by a semitone is minor, so this is a minor 6th.</p> <p>Example 3: bottom note G, top note Fb:</p> <p>G-F is a 7th, so this is some sort of imperfect interval. What version of F should be in the scale of G major? Answer F# This is Fb, so it has been lowered by two semitones. An imperfect interval lowered by two semitones is diminished, so this is a diminished 7th.</p>
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irregular phrasing	Where the phrasing of the melody (indicated by slurs) is of irregular length. Sing through Happy Birthday and you can predict where the next phrase ends; a piece with irregular phrasing is more unpredictable. Used by composers in the late Romantic period onwards.
leading note	The seventh degree of the scale, so named because it 'leads' back to the tonic (first note). Play seven notes of any major or minor scale and you will hear that stopping on the seventh note is unnatural, and everyone usually sings the first note again up an octave.
<i>l'istesso</i>	Italian for 'the same'. Often found as <i>l'istesso tempo</i> – the same tempo – when either a change of time signature or a new musical idea is used that might otherwise visually imply a different mood.
<i>langsam</i>	German for 'slow'.
<i>largamente</i>	Italian for 'widely' or 'broadly'. But in Italian it is also associated with generosity (i.e. with the tempo).
<i>larghetto</i>	Italian for 'a tiny bit wide' or 'a tiny bit broad'. -etto is the suffix for 'smallness', 'tininess' or 'cuteness' in Italian.
<i>largo</i>	Italian for 'wide' or 'broad'. Expansive.
<i>legato</i>	Italian for 'joined', from the Latin verb <i>ligare</i> – to join. (Hence ligaments join muscles to bones.) The passage is to be played with no gap of sound between the notes; usually indicated by a slur or, if impractical, the word <i>legato</i> when following a <i>staccato</i> passage.
<i>leggiero</i>	Italian for 'light'. (Leggiero pizzas have fewer calories at Italian restaurants!)
<i>lento</i>	Italian for 'slow' or 'sluggish'.
<i>loco</i>	Latin for 'in place'; hence the words 'location', 'locomotive', etc. <i>Loco</i> is used after 8va or 8vb passages to indicate that the notes being read are now as written, rather than displaced by an octave.
Locrian mode	Named after the Ancient Greek people of the region of Locris, this is now equivalent to the pattern of semitones and tones on the white notes of the piano between B and B. It has a flattened second, third, fifth, sixth and seventh degrees, compared to the major scale, and is thought of as the darkest mode (since it has the most chromatic alterations from the major scale). Long associated with the devil, because of its tonic triad being a diminished chord, composers usually use it for anything to do with the devil, hell, or sin . Some pop songs use it as well, and it's a favourite mode of heavy metal bands . In jazz they will frequently also flatten the fourth degree as well, meaning every degree apart from the tonic is flattened compared to the major scale, creating the super-locrian mode.
Lydian mode	Named after the Ancient Greek kingdom of Lydia, this is now equivalent to the pattern of semitones and tones on the white notes of the piano between F and F. It has a sharpened fourth compared to the major scale, and is thought of as the lightest or brightest mode (since it sharpens a degree of the major scale, which is already light). Rarely used by composers until the 20 th century, with some exceptions from earlier , it is sometimes now used by film and TV composers for anything mystical or quirky .
maestoso	Italian for 'majestic' or 'magnificent'.
<i>marcato</i> / <i>marc.</i> / \wedge	Italian for 'marked' (i.e. out of the texture as a dynamic accent). Usually thought of as a stronger version of the $>$ accent, making the onset of a note much stronger and more energetic than its neighbours. This score is full of marcato accents, especially in the brass.
mediant	From the Latin for 'in the middle', the mediant is the third degree of the scale, which lies in the middle of the two most important degrees – the tonic and the dominant. It is the degree of the scale 'in the middle' of the tonic triad.
melodic minor	The minor scale used for horizontal melodies (hence its name), created by lowering the third of the major scale in its ascending form, and using Aeolian mode for the descending form (a flattened seventh, sixth and third). The ascending and descending versions of the scale derive from Renaissance composer's varied use of melodic shapes for modal counterpoint. It is used to avoid the melodic augmented second interval between the 6 th and 7 th degrees in the harmonic minor scale, but is rarely used for creating triads.


melody-dominated homophony	A texture involving a melody sung or played over the top of chords (hence, the texture is primary homophonic, but is dominated by the melody, which is heard over the top). A more basic version of the term is melody and accompaniment.
<i>meno</i>	Italian for 'less'. Usually seen as <i>meno mosso</i> – less movement (i.e. slightly less energy and slightly slower).
<i>messa di voce</i>	Italian for 'position the voice'. An instruction, originally for opera singers to grow and shrink on a held note; indicated by <> hairpins. Later transferred to instruments to show shaping within a phrase of the same dynamic level. Enjoy this rare clip which explains.
metre	<p>From the Greek 'metron' meaning 'measurement'. The measurement of how each beat is divided in music. A beat that can always be divided into twos (1, 2, 4, 8, etc.) is simple metre. A beat that first divides into threes and then twos (1, 3, 6, 12, etc.) is compound metre, since compound means 'more than one' and the beat is first divided into 3 (which is more than 1!).</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Simple Metre - 1, 2, 4, 8s</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Compound Metre - 1, 3, 6, 12s</p>  </div> </div> <p>Simple metre was originally <i>tempus imperfectum</i> or 'imperfect time' in medieval music. Compound metre was originally <i>tempus perfectum</i> or 'perfect time' in medieval music.</p> <p>Perfection was symbolised by 3, from the religious significance of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It was notated with the symbol of a circle at the beginning of the music: O. The circle was gradually replaced with the number system of time signatures.</p> <p><i>Tempus imperfectum</i> was symbolised therefore with an incomplete circle: C. Music kept the C as a time signature, indicating that the beat divides all the time into 2. Faster music that divided into 2 was given a C with a vertical strikethrough and was written with longer note values for ease of reading. A medieval musician could therefore get an idea of tempo just by looking at the note lengths – clever!</p> <p>Irregular metre mixes simple and compound metres between beats. Free metre contains no division of beat and, usually, sufficiently long notes to mask any sense of pulse or beat.</p>
metric modulation	<p>The changing of metre across a barline. Always requires a qualifying statement, e.g. that a crotchet becomes a dotted crotchet going forward.</p> <p>A typical example would be going from 4/4 to 6/8, where the crotchet in 4/4 now equals the dotted crotchet in 6/8. Used by composers from the early 20th century, where rhythm became a much more important element.</p>
mezzo	Italian for 'half'. Placed in front of dynamic terms to create more light and shade; so <i>mezzo forte</i> or 'half strong' and <i>mezzo piano</i> or 'half soft' created two extra levels of energy in the Classical period between the existing <i>piano</i> 'soft' and <i>forte</i> 'strong'. The term is also used when referring to a <i>mezzo soprano</i> (the 'half' not referring to their ability, but to the fact that their range lies half way between a soprano and an alto).
<i>misura</i>	Italian for 'measure'; usually found as <i>senza misura</i> ('without measure', i.e. in free time).
major	The scale with a set of notes formed from the TTS TTTS pattern of tones and semitones, or any chord where the interval between the bottom and middle note is a major 3 rd , and the interval between the bottom and top note is a perfect 5 th , when the chord is placed with its notes all a third apart. Originally named because it was the more common mode (in the same way as we talk about a 'major feature' or a 'major problem').

minor	<p>The set of notes achieved by modifying notes of the major scale. Originally named because it was the second most common mode, used in a smaller number of instances (in the same way as we talk of a 'minor problem' being less than a 'major problem'). There are now four minor scales:</p> <p>Ascending melodic minor: achieved by flattening the third degree of the major scale;</p> <p>Descending melodic minor: achieved by flattening the seventh, sixth and third degrees of the major scale; this was originally the Aeolian mode, and is also called the natural minor.</p> <p>Harmonic minor: achieved by flattening the third and sixth degrees of the major scale;</p> <p>Hungarian minor: rarer, and often associated with Hungarian music, this scale sharpens the fourth degree of the harmonic minor scale.</p> <p>Minor also refers to any triadic chord where the interval between the bottom and middle note is a minor 3rd, and the interval between the bottom and top note is a perfect 5th, when the notes of the chord are arranged in thirds.</p>
minor-major chord	A minor triad with an additional major third added above, making an interval of a major 7 th between the bottom and top notes.
Mixolydian mode	Originally a Greek mode, but went through numerous mistranslations, and then was reassigned in the 9 th century to the mode of church music that is now equivalent to the pattern of semitones and tones on the white notes of the piano between G and G. It has a flattened seventh compared to the major scale, and was used for church music and folk music. It is now used in jazz, folk, blues and film music.
<i>moderato</i>	Italian for 'moderately'.
modulation	The changing of key, by altering the set of notes used through the use of accidentals. Modulation is officially only achieved when the music stays in the new key. Music that briefly arrives in another key before moving on is said to have 'passing modulations'.
<i>molto</i>	Italian for 'very'; usually found as <i>molto legato</i> 'very joined' or <i>molto espressivo</i> 'very expressive'.
<i>morendo</i>	Italian for 'dying' [away]. The music evaporates, sometimes becoming slightly slower, or abandoning a sense of pulse; sound disappears into silence. Used by composers writing the most profound moments in music.
<i>mosso, moto</i>	Italian for 'movement' or agitation. Usually found as <i>meno mosso</i> ('less movement') or <i>poco più mosso</i> ('a little more movement'), or <i>con moto</i> ('with movement').
movement	A large and self-contained structural movement of a usually instrumental work, defined by either the same tempo or mood (Baroque and Classical periods), or the logical working out and development of musical ideas until a satisfying conclusion (Classical period onwards). Sometimes movements are short (as found in sonatinas, Baroque suites, and instrumental miniatures), and sometimes they are vast in length (late-Romantic symphonies). A small pause in between movements is usual in performance, although composers do sometimes link together movements for dramatic effect. Audiences usually clap at the end of the entire work, rather than the end of the movement. Concertos usually have three movements (fast-slow-fast); piano sonatas usually have four (thanks to Beethoven, who inserted an extra dance in the sequence), and symphonies can have three or four movements. Movements are usually labelled by their opening tempo.
<i>nicht</i>	German for 'not'. Usually found as <i>nicht schnell</i> ('not fast').
<i>niente</i>	Italian for 'nothing'; usually indicates that the composer wants the sound to evaporate to nothing. Sometimes seen as <i>al niente</i> ('to nothing'). Also indicated by a small circle at the end of a decrescendo hairpin.

nonuplet	A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat). Rhythmic notation divides by two each time (e.g. 1 semibreve, 2 minims, 4 crotchets, 8 quavers, 16 semiquavers, etc.). A nonuplet contains nine notes, so squeezes nine notes into the time that eight of those notes would normally take (the closest number of 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16).
octatonic scale	<p>A scale with eight notes (think of octagons, octave, etc.), formed by alternating semitones and tones. Jazz musicians call this scale a diminished scale, because of the number of diminished intervals and chords it contains. There are three octatonic scale sets in music, which can be spelt in different ways (e.g. sometimes a C#, sometimes as a Db):</p> <p>C C# D# E F# G A Bb C C# D E F G Ab Bb B C# D D# E# F# G# A B C D</p> <p>Used by Russian composers in the 19th century to sound sufficiently ‘different’ from the Western music that they insisted on not emulating in order to build a distinct Russian national identity in music.</p>
offbeat	The pulse in-between the main perceived beats. A piece in 4 would have strong beats on 1 and 3, and offbeats on 2 and 4. Musicians always clap on offbeats, which are also useful to tap to check that you are not rushing!
open fifth chord	A chord with no third. The third is important because it makes the chord either major (with a major 3 rd) or minor (with a minor 3 rd). An open fifth chord has no tonality. Used often in folk music as a drone (think of the noise bagpipes make), or by film composers when they want to build suspense.
opera	A ‘work’ in Italian. A drama set to music for singers and instrumentalists. An <i>opera buffa</i> is a comic opera; an <i>opera seria</i> is a ‘serious opera’. Operettas or ‘little work’ are a more light hearted or shorter drama set to music for singers and instrumentalists.
oratorio	From the Latin ‘oratorium’ meaning oratory or telling of a story; a large composition for orchestra, choir and soloists telling one story over the course of the work. E.g. Mendelssohn’s Elijah or Handel’s Messiah .
ossia	Combined from two Italian words: o (‘or’) and sia (‘that it be’). Ossia staves are smaller with cue-sized notes, and usually above the treble stave or below the bass stave. They indicate alternative options, which either might be more playable, better for smaller hands, another version that the composer once wrote, or some other option. Occasionally a single note or chord is indicated with the word <i>ossia</i> rather than a full stave.
ostinato	From the Latin for ‘stubborn’ or ‘persistent’, hence the word obstinate in English. A repeating short rhythmic motif, often in the accompaniment.
pentachord	Any chord with five notes – e.g. a D9 chord, which has DF#AC and E.
<i>perdendosi</i>	Italian for ‘getting lost’. The music disappears, losing its way and fading into silence. A direction that is usually found at the end of pieces.
perfect cadence	A cadence (musical punctuation mark) equivalent to a full stop which, for strength, has to be created by two chords that are the furthest apart they can be – almost! The furthest apart that two chords can be in music is the interval of a tritone – exactly half of the circle of fifths, e.g. from 12 o’clock to 6 o’clock. But a tritone sounds horrible (Renaissance theorists called it ‘the devil in music’). The two chords that are either side of this tritone are the alternatives – chord IV and chord V. Chord V sounds stronger going to chord I than Chord IV, so a perfect cadence is created by the progression V-I.
Phrygian cadence	A type of imperfect cadence (the musical equivalent to a comma), created by the progression of chords ivb-V, or first inversion of chord iv, moving to chord V. Usually found in minor keys, and so named because the bassline falls a semitone, mimicking the first two degrees of the Phrygian mode (see next). It is the only cadence where the bassline falls a semitone.

Phrygian mode	<p>Named after the Ancient Greek kingdom of Phrygia, this is now equivalent to the pattern of semitones and tones on the white notes of the piano between E and E. It has flattened second, third, sixth and seventh degrees compared to the major scale, and is used extensively in Spanish music.</p> <p>A second version of the Phrygian scale exists – the Phrygian dominant scale, which has flattened second, sixth and seventh degrees compared to the major scale (so does not flatten the third, unlike the Phrygian mode). This means that chord V (the dominant) is kept intact compared to the major scale (because its middle note is the third degree of the scale), hence the scale allows for the dominant chord to be unaltered.</p>
<i>pesante</i>	Italian for 'heavy' or 'weighty'.
<i>più</i>	Italian for 'more'. Usually found as <i>più mosso</i> – 'more movement' (i.e. a little faster with a little more energy.)
pivot chord	Just as the tarmac in the middle of a crossroads is technically on both roads at the same time, a pivot chord is a chord present in two different keys, that allows a composer to change key/direction, the equivalent to driving up to the crossroads and going left instead of straight on. E.g. DF#A is both chord I in D major and chord IV in the dominant key of A major, so is useful when modulating to the dominant.
<i>pizzicato</i>	Italian for 'pinched', from the verb <i>pizzicare</i> 'to pinch or pluck'.
plagal cadence	<p>From the Greek word <i>plagos</i> meaning sideways (hence why 'beach' in French is <i>plage</i>, and <i>playa</i> in Spanish because, as you look out to see, it stretches sideways).</p> <p>The sideways motion comes because the two chords involved, chords IV and I, share a note. In C major, chord IV and chord I would be FAC and CEG:</p>  <p>When one part stays the same (the top part in the example above), the other inner parts must move sideways, hence the cadence name. A plagal cadence is the equivalent of an ellipsis in musical punctuation... a softer version of a full stop. Much like the sentence 'he fell asleep...'</p>
<i>pochissimo, poch.</i>	Italian for 'a tiny bit'.
<i>poco</i>	Italian for 'a little'. Usually found as <i>crescendo poco a poco</i> ('grow little by little') or <i>poco più mosso</i> ('a little more movement').
polyphonic	From the Greek <i>poly</i> meaning 'many' and <i>phonos</i> meaning 'sound'. A texture where more than three layers are independently moving.
polyrhythm	From the Greek <i>poly</i> meaning 'many'; the presence of multiple rhythms across multiple parts, which may or may not be fighting against each other.
<i>portamento</i>	From the Italian for 'carrying'. The pitch is carried from one note to the next, creating a sliding effect. Used for instruments that can generate any pitch, e.g. string instruments, timpani, and trombones. Portamento happens towards the end of a note, carrying that pitch to the next.
<i>portato</i> 	From the Italian verb <i>portare</i> meaning 'to carry'. An articulation (i.e. how the notes speak) that involves the idea of 'carrying' the sound from one note to the next. The result will sound slightly detached, but still with a sense of musical line. Hence the articulation is usually staccato dots within a slur. Listen to the opening of this to hear portato in the strings.
<i>presto</i>	Italian for 'quick'.

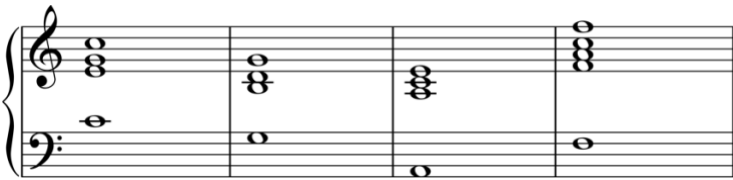
<i>prima / primo</i>	Italian for 'first'. In duets (especially piano duets) the first part is the <i>primo</i> and the second part <i>secondo</i> . Also found as <i>tempo primo</i> ('the first tempo'), when the composer wishes to return to the first tempo after numerous sections and/or tempo changes.
programmatic	Music that is designed to depict either a thought, image, scenario or idea, rather than music that exists for its own sake. Programmatic music depicts something non-musical (e.g. a storm, rushing wind, water, boats bobbing, etc.). Composers were doing this in the Renaissance , but it took off in the Baroque , and especially in the Romantic period.
pulse	A regular, unstressed, identical and repeating rhythmic event underlying almost all of music. A beat accents a pulse, turning it from an infinite line of pulses into a cycle of beats (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3), notated by bar lines.
quadruplet	A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat) used in compound metre. Compound rhythmic notation divides by three, then two each time (1 dotted crotchet, three quavers, six semiquavers, twelve demisemiquavers, etc.). A quadruplet contains four notes, so squeezes four notes into the time that three of those notes would normally take (the closest number of 1, 3, 6, 12).
quintuplet	A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat). Rhythmic notation divides by two each time (e.g. 1 semibreve, 2 minims, 4 crotchets, 8 quavers, 16 semiquavers, etc.). A quintuplet contains five notes, so squeezes five notes into the time that four of those notes would normally take (the closest number of 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16).
<i>rallentando / rall.</i>	Italian for 'slowing'. The pulse gradually slows; the music slows with it. Think of taking your foot off the accelerator in a car and letting it naturally slow. It should feel natural, rather than using up energy (as a <i>ritenuto</i> or 'holding back' would).
recapitulation	The penultimate section in a sonata form movement, where both subject groups are brought back intact (or almost intact) for the first time. In the exposition the first and second subject groups appeared in two different keys: the recapitulation, named from the Latin for 'state again from the head' brings back both subject groups in the same key, after the development section has ironed out the musical conflict between the two keys. It is normally also the first time that the tonic key is heard again after the turmoil of the development, so the beginning of the recapitulation is often called the 'double return' (i.e. of both the tonic key and the first and second subject groups intact).
retenu	French for 'hold back'. The musical momentum suddenly slows – think of running into a wall of marshmallow – you would still have forward momentum, but at a suddenly reduced rate!
rinforzando, rf, rfz	Italian for 'reinforcing'. A note, chord or musical line is given renewed emphasis, bringing it out of the texture to be easily heard. This is usually used for important motifs or chords that highlight a larger relationship across a section that would otherwise not be noticed.
<i>ritardando / rit.</i>	Italian for 'delaying' (against a pulse that doesn't really slow that much). This delays the arrival of the harmony or the melody that's about to happen (often against what is expected), before the music then goes back to tempo. Strictly a <i>ritardando</i> occurs over only a few beats; think of briefly tapping the brakes in a car, and then carrying on at a slower rate.
<i>ritenuto / rit.</i>	Italian for 'held back' (against a pulse that doesn't really slow that much). Like a smaller version of a <i>rallentando</i> . Think of sustained braking in a car; the friction involved slows the car down. In music that friction is between the music and the underlying pulse.
<i>ritornello</i>	Italian for 'little return'. A small section of music that is used as a framing device to maintain a sense of structure in the Baroque period. Ritornello form refers to any piece that uses the principle of the ritornello.
root position	The organisation of a chord so that its notes are all a third apart. This is the most stable version of any chord, and the bottom note will be the scale degree on which it is formed, so the chord can now be analysed in relation to the key. From this all other versions of the chord stem, hence it is called the root position.

<i>rubato</i>	Literally ‘stolen’ in Italian – where the pulse is flexible, getting faster and slower by equal proportions. Where you ‘steal’ time by rushing forward, you ‘give it back’ by slowing down somewhere else by the same amount. Most common from the Romantic period onwards, and especially used in opera and musical theatre. Highly expressive, but must always be connected to the pulse.
<i>scherzando</i>	Italian for ‘joking’, i.e. light-hearted and playful. A movement in a concerto or sonata is sometimes termed a Scherzo if that reflects its overall mood.
<i>schnell</i>	German for ‘quick’.
second inversion	Where a chord, originally in root position with all of its notes a third apart, has its bottom note inverted (i.e. put in the opposite position at the top of the chord). This process yields a first inversion chord. When the new bottom note is inverted (i.e. put at the top of the chord instead of the bottom) it is now a second inversion chord. E.g. DF#A is root position; F#AD is first inversion; ADF# is second inversion.
<i>seconda / secondo</i>	Italian for ‘second’. In duets (especially piano duets) the first part is the <i>primo</i> and the second part <i>secondo</i> .
secondary dominant	Chord V of either chord ii, iii, V or vi in a key. It is two layers ‘up’, so not just chord V of a key, but chord V of a chord that is already in a key. Notated as V of ii, V of iii, V of V, or V of vi. Useful as chromatic colour in chord progressions. E.g. in D major, chord ii is EGB. Chord V of ii uses ii as the new root, so is the same as chord V of E minor, which is BD#F#. BDF# is therefore V of ii, and is a secondary dominant chord.
<i>segue</i>	Italian for ‘it follows’ [on]. This appears at the end of a movement or song (especially in musical theatre), and indicates that the performer does not wait for applause, but instead goes straight through to the next movement or piece. In musical theatre an applause segue makes a small allowance for applause without interrupting the flow of the show.
<i>sempre</i>	Italian for ‘always’. Often found as <i>sempre staccato</i> ‘always detached’, which saves writing small dots underneath or over the top of all the noteheads.
<i>senza</i>	Italian for ‘without’. Often found as <i>senza rallentando</i> ‘without slowing’ or <i>senza rigore</i> ‘without strictness’ [of time].
septuplet	A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat). Rhythmic notation divides by two each time (e.g. 1 semibreve, 2 minims, 4 crotchets, 8 quavers, 16 semiquavers, etc.). A septuplet contains seven notes, so squeezes seven notes into the time that four of those notes would normally take (the closest in duration to 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16, since you cannot add time to get to 8).
sequence	A melodic idea repeated exactly, usually a step down each time. Think of the ‘Gloria’ chorus of <i>Ding Dong Merrily on High</i> . Composers usually use the ‘rule of three’, and vary the repetition on the third time. Although the composer of <i>Ding Dong Merrily</i> ignores this.
sextuplet	A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat). Rhythmic notation divides by two each time (e.g. 1 semibreve, 2 minims, 4 crotchets, 8 quavers, 16 semiquavers, etc.). A sextuplet contains six notes, so squeezes six notes into the time that four of those notes would normally take (the closest in duration to 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16).
sharp 	An accidental that raises a note by a semitone. Originally called a <i>diesis</i> in Ancient Greek music treatises, meaning ‘difference’, it was also the name arbitrarily chosen by early medieval scribes for the dagger mark † used as an early version of footnotes. Whilst we are not entirely sure, the English name ‘sharp’ is probably just the result of a quick-thinking English scribe who saw <i>diesis</i> when copying out some European music, thought that they could not possibly mean dagger but, since a dagger is sharp, it must mean ‘sharp’, so called it a sharp in English. What fun. In Europe a sharp is still called a <i>diesis</i> .

<i>simile / sim.</i>	Italian for 'similar'. Continue singing or playing in the same way. Often found after a few notes of staccato to indicate that the following notes should also be staccato. This saves writing small dots underneath or over the top of all the noteheads.
<i>smorzando, smorz.</i>	Literally 'smothering' in Italian, or 'extinguishing'. The idea that the music's energy is dissipated quickly, leaving a much softer and less energetic passage or chord.
sonata	Italian for 'sounded'; a multi-movement piece for solo instrument (or solo instrument accompanied by piano). Opposite of a cantata (Italian for 'sung'), which is a multi-movement work for a choir, orchestra and soloists.
sonata form	<p>A set of principles for composers writing anything with just sound and no voices (<i>sonare</i> in Italian, hence sonata). It was used not just in sonatas, but concertos and symphonies, and various other instrumental works as well. Evolving from combining the Baroque binary (AB) form with ternary form (ABA), the sonata form principles state that:</p> <p>The first main section, the exposition, must 'expose' two melodies or a set of melodic and rhythmic ideas, called the first and second subject groups. They must be in two different keys, linked by a transition section that modulates between the key of the first subject group and that of the second.</p> <p>The second section, the development, takes both subject groups and churns them together to resolve the conflict of the two different keys exposed in the exposition. Rapid modulations, fragmentation (chopping up of the themes), and dramatic rhythmic and melodic ideas characterise the development, which irons out the conflict.</p> <p>The third section, the recapitulation, brings back both the tonic key (also known as the home key) and the first and second subject groups, but now in the same key, with the tonal conflict resolved.</p> <p>The whole form is usually framed by an introduction and a final coda, which confirms the winning tonic key. Overall, it is an elaborate ABA form, but where the A section itself consists of AB, which is each subject group.</p>
sopra	Italian for 'above'. This is the origin of the soprano part, which sung above the tune which, in Renaissance times, was held (Latin <i>tenore</i>) by the tenors. Often found as <i>LH sopra</i> or 'left hand above' [right hand] for pianists.
<i>sostenuto</i>	Italian for 'sustained'. Implies there should be no gap of sound. Also the name given to the middle pedal on pianos which, when pressed, sustains only the notes played at that point by keeping the dampers raised. Any other notes not caught by the sostenuto pedal mute as normal when they are released.
<i>sotto</i>	Italian for 'below'. Usually found as <i>sotto voce</i> , meaning 'under the voice', i.e. in an undertone, hushed, or half-sung way. Used in opera, but also can be indicated in instrumental parts to remind the player to stay 'below' the singer in terms of dynamic.
<i>staccato / stacc.</i>	Italian for 'detached'; notated with either a dot on top or underneath the note (whichever is opposite the stem direction) or, in the Classical period, with a wedge mark.
stretto	Italian for 'closing in' or 'tight'. Found in fugues, stretto refers to the deliberate overlapping of subjects before they have finished (the entries are tighter and closer), like bricks in a wall. A device for both showing off the composer's ability at counterpoint, and for building tension, stretto entries are often found just before the coda.
stringendo	Literally 'tightening' or 'squeezing' in Italian. Indicates that the music gets tenser, faster, and more dramatic, probably accompanied by a crescendo.
subdominant	<p>Literally the 'under-dominant', this is the scale degree five notes under the tonic. It is not the note under the dominant (even though this is where it ends up when the degrees are put in order. E.g. in G major, the tonic is G, the dominant is D and the subdominant is C:</p> <p>C – G – D</p>

subito	Italian for ‘suddenly’. Usually found accompanying dynamics: <i>subito piano</i> ‘suddenly soft’.										
submediant	<p>Literally the ‘under-mediante’. If the mediant divides the tonic and the dominant in two, the submediant divides the tonic and subdominant in two so, for G major:</p> <table><tr><td>C</td><td>E</td><td>G</td><td>B</td><td>D</td></tr><tr><td>Subdominant</td><td>Submediant</td><td>Tonic</td><td>Mediant</td><td>Dominant</td></tr></table>	C	E	G	B	D	Subdominant	Submediant	Tonic	Mediant	Dominant
C	E	G	B	D							
Subdominant	Submediant	Tonic	Mediant	Dominant							
subtonic	The name given to the flattened seventh degree in a scale. The subtonic is a tone below tonic, so is not present in a major scale, since that is a semitone below and therefore called the leading note. But in Mixolydian mode, the seventh degree is a tone below the tonic, so is called the subtonic.										
supertonic	The name given to the second note of the scale, immediately above the tonic. Super is Latin for ‘above’.										
suspension	<p>Named because the musical line is ‘temporarily stopped’ (think of being temporarily stopped from going to school if you are suspended). Having been stopped, the harmony changes around the suspended musical line, making a dissonant interval of either a 2nd, 4th, 7th or 9th (dissonant is Latin for ‘sound against’ or ‘sounding apart’). The suspended musical line is then ‘released’ again, where it drops by step into a note that is consonant (Latin for ‘sounding with’) the next chord – either a unison (rare), 3rd, 5th, 6th or 8^{ve}. The suspension type is named after the dissonant and consonant interval formed between the suspended musical line and the bass: 2-1, 4-3, 7-6, or 9-8. The three stages of the suspension are the preparation (the consonant interval on which the musical line is stopped), the suspension itself (the dissonant interval arising from the harmony changing around it), and the resolution (the ‘release’ point where the musical line falls by step to create another consonant interval). Suspensions arose in the sacred music of the Renaissance period when composing was an academic discipline honed over years of study. Dissonant intervals of 2nds, 4ths, 7ths and 9ths had to arise from suspensions to cushion their effect, but were loved by composers for their expressive effect. The easiest way to hear suspensions is to think of ‘clash-drop’; listen to the opening of Pergolesi’s Stabat Mater; a Baroque masterpiece that opens with a chain of suspensions in the soprano parts to represent Mary’s weeping at the cross after Jesus’s crucifixion.</p>										
syncopation	<p>Named after the poetry device called a syncope, which is where syllables are omitted from a word. Most people say ‘li-bry’ instead of ‘li-bra-ry’. The word has three syllables, yet most people say two. So syncope is the removal of part of a rhythmic unit, with the remaining rhythmic units shoved along to replace the gap.</p> <p>Syncopation in music is therefore where music has a rhythmic unit ‘chopped out’ (or never written in), causing the rest of the rhythmic unit to be shoved along to fill the gap, resulting in the music quite noticeably against the established pulse. Syncopation is not just an off-beat rhythm, since off beat rhythms are regular and fall between the pulses, rather than go against them. Here is one of the best examples of syncopation in music.</p>										
tempo	<p>Italian for ‘time’, derived originally from the equivalent word in Latin: <i>tempus</i>. Tempo is NOT how fast music is: The sense of ‘time’ is in the same sense as we refer to ‘worrying times’, ‘exciting times’, or having a ‘great time’. It is as much an expression of mood as it is an explanation of how quickly time is passing: just as we would say ‘that took no time at all’ (i.e. it was quick), or ‘I’m having a relaxing time’ (i.e. time is passing slowly).</p> <p>Italian composers first put tempo markings to indicate mood, rather than speed. Hence why the most basic tempo words (adagio for ‘at ease’, allegro for ‘bright’ or ‘cheerful’, etc.) do not give us any idea of beats per minute. Tempo is about character, and that character will sometimes also indicate speed, but not always. Don’t be that musician that thinks of tempo as speed!</p> <p>The Italian direction <i>a tempo</i> means ‘back to tempo’, and is usually found after a passage where the music has slowed, come to a close, or been flexible in some way (possibly using <i>rubato</i> or <i>colla voce</i>).</p>										

<i>tenuto</i>	From that Latin for ‘held’; the note value written gets its full value, almost running into the next note or rest. Usually four crotchets are played with a slight gap between them. Tenuto crotchets would push the length of the note as close to the next note as possible. Tenuto is one of the earliest articulation markings to exist (i.e. indicating how the note should speak). It is indicated with a – under or over the note (whichever is opposite the stem direction).
<i>tessitura</i>	Literally ‘texture’ in Italian (i.e. the layer at which the sound happens). Tessitura refers to the part of the range being used (e.g. a pianist playing low with both hands is using the low tessitura).
tetrachord / tetrad	Any four note chord, e.g. F, A, C, Eb. Tetrachord is more common. Can also refer to a four-note fragment of a scale.
third inversion	Only possible with four-note chords, e.g. F, A, C, Eb: F, A, C, Eb is root position, as all the notes are arranged so that they are a third apart; A, C, Eb, F is first inversion, because the original bottom note has been inverted (placed in the opposite position) so is now at the top of the chord; C, Eb, F, A is second inversion, because the bottom note of the first inversion chord has now been inverted (placed in the opposite position) so is now at the top of the chord; Eb, F, A, C is third inversion, because the bottom note of the second inversion chord has now been inverted (placed in the opposite position) so is now at the top of the chord. Third inversion seventh chords therefore have the seventh of the chord as the bass note.
through-composed	Where there is no discernible structure, or that the structure relies on procedures other than the standard forms (AB, ABA, etc.) that use repetition. Film soundtracks are through-composed, since they start and then end, but never repeat! Term applies to operas, films and musical theatre shows when looked at overall.
tonic	From the Greek <i>tonikos</i> meaning ‘able to be stretched’. Ancient Greek theorists discovered that a string could be stretched to get progressively higher pitches when plucked, because tension is related to frequency. The note achieved from the string in its initial tensed position was called the <i>tonikos</i> , since it was from this that the other stretches (and therefore notes) could be created. The first note of the scale was therefore labelled the <i>tonikos</i> which, over time, became the tonic. It is NOT tonic as in tonic water (which comes from the Latin word for ‘pure’).
transposition	‘Across-place’ in Latin. The idea of moving all the notes in a piece or song ‘across’ the keyboard so that the relationships between the notes stayed the same, but the music was overall higher or lower in pitch. Useful when moving vocal music around to suit the range of the singer. Now used in the sense of matching the key of particular instruments to the notes on the piano. Any instrument whose notes do not match to the equivalent note on the piano (e.g. the cor-anglais, clarinet, trumpet, trombone) is called a transposing instrument. These instruments have to transpose because they are made so that the laws of Physics behave enough to allow them to play the most common keys in music in tune with keyboard instruments, which are harder and slower to tune).
<i>tre corde</i>	Italian for ‘three strings’. The right pedal on the piano (sometimes called the damper pedal), which keeps the piano’s dampers raised, allowing the strings of the notes played to resonate freely, until they are again damped by the releasing of the pedal. Usually not indicated by composers, who expect pianists to do it anyway, but can be found as an instruction following either <i>senza pedale</i> (‘without pedal’) or <i>una corda</i> (‘one string’ when the left pedal is to be used).
<i>tremolo</i>	‘Trembling’ in Italian; rapid alternation between two or more notes; a trill is a type of tremolo, but involving two adjacent notes. Tremolo can either be measured (performed rhythmically) or unmeasured (performed arrhythmically with notes freely alternating).

triad	Any three-note chord, but usually describing a chord where the notes are all a third apart (e.g. FAC, or ACE).
triplet	A type of tuplet (an irregular number of notes squeezed into a beat). Rhythmic notation divides by two each time (e.g. 1 semibreve, 2 minims, 4 crotchets, 8 quavers, 16 semiquavers, etc.). A triplet contains three notes, so squeezes three notes into the time that two of those notes would normally take (the closest in duration to 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16).
tritone	<p>The interval created by two notes that are three tones apart. Long called ‘the devil in music’ (a phrase started by music theorists in the Renaissance), the tritone is exactly half an octave, and also divides the circle of fifths in half (so keys in opposite positions, e.g. at 12 o’clock and 6 o’clock, or 1 o’clock and 7 o’clock, are tritones apart. Generally avoided in any counterpoint and melody writing, unless the composer wants to write an <i>appoggiatura</i> that leans against the harmony and then resolves by step, the tritone is also more specifically known as either an augmented fourth or diminished fifth.</p> <p>Tritone substitution refers to a practice in jazz and musical theatre where an intended chord is replaced (‘substituted’) by a chord that is a tritone away from what was going to be there. This creates extra chromatic colour, but still allows voice leading to work. So, instead of Dm-G-C, a jazz musician might play Dm-C#7-C, where the C#7 is a tritone away from the G major chord that should have been there.</p>
<i>troppo</i>	Italian for ‘too much’. Often found accompanying tempo markings; <i>allegro non troppo</i> would be ‘cheerful/bright, but not too much’.
<i>una corda</i>	Italian for ‘one string’. The left pedal on the piano, which shifts the internal mechanism so that the hammers only hit one string out of either the two or three strings that make up the sound for that pitch. Bass notes are unaffected by the <i>una corda</i> , since they only have one string. Use of the <i>una corda</i> pedal reduces the sound power of the instrument, resulting in a softer, muted and more special sound. Cancelled by <i>tre corde</i> meaning [back to] ‘three strings’.
verse	The first section of a pop song, or the single section that is repeated to different words in a hymn. The label was just copied from poetry, where a single stanza or textural unit was called a verse.
<i>vivace, vivo</i>	Italian for ‘lively’ or ‘full of life’, hence the English word ‘vivacious’.
voicing	The way that notes in a chord are assigned, either to different instruments, or to different fingers on a keyboard instrument. So, the same chord of DF#A could be voiced on a keyboard as D octaves in the left hand, with D, F# and A in the right hand, or could be voiced in first inversion, with octave F#s in the left hand, and A, D, F# in the right. Voicing is really important when arranging and composing, as the same chord can sound magically different if written with good voicing.
voice leading	<p>The way that an individual musical line (called a ‘voice’) is ‘led’ through the harmony. Going from root position chords of C, G, Am, F can be jumpy:</p>  <p>or can use voice leading to create smoother individual musical lines:</p> 