

Selected Musical Vocabulary (from the California Standards for the Arts)

Hint: As a class exercise, why not encourage your students to create their own 'guides', including terms and concepts relevant to music in their lives?

An **ACCOMPANIMENT** is vocal or instrumental part/s that accompanies a melody.

ATONAL music is a type of music in which tones and chords are not related to a central keynote.

The **BASS LINE** is the low-pitched register of a piece of music. It is usually a simpler, more repetitive version of the melody.

A **BEAT** is a unit of measure of rhythmic time.

CHAMBER MUSIC is defined as one player per part- in other words, one first violin, one second violin, one viola, one cello, etc., in any number of combinations, such as duos, trios, quartets, quintets, etc.

Occasionally chamber music ensembles are conducted, but most ensembles do not use a conductor.

A **CHORD** is three or more tones sound simultaneously.

CLEF, BASS, OR TREBLE symbols are written at the beginning of a musical staff indicating which notes are represented by which lines and spaces.

A **COMPOSITION** is a creation of original music by organizing sound. Usually written for others to perform.

A **CONCERTO** is a composition for orchestra and soloist.

A **DIATONIC SCALE** is a scale with all the notes found within a major or minor scale.

A **DIMINISHED INTERVAL** is a minor or perfect interval lowered by a half step.

DYNAMICS are various degrees of volume in the performance of music, such as loud and soft.

The **ELEMENTS OF MUSIC** are melody, harmony, rhythm, and form and the expressive elements of dynamics, tempo, and timbre (tone color).

EMBELLISHMENTS: MELODIC and RHYTHMIC are notes added to ornament a melody or rhythmic pattern.

A **HARMONIC PROGRESSION** is a succession of individual chords or harmonies that form larger units of phrases, sections, or compositions.

HARMONY is the simultaneous combination of tones.

IMPROVISATION is the spontaneous creation of music.

An **INTERVAL** is the distance in pitch between two tones.

A **MAJOR KEY** tonally, is a key based on a major scale; a scale that contains the following step pattern: whole, whole, half, whole, whole, whole, half; or uses the sol-fa tones of *do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do*.

A **MELODY** is an organized sequence of single notes.

The **METER** is the grouping of beats by which a piece of music is measured.

A **MINOR KEY** tonally, is a key based on a minor scale; a scale that contains the following step pattern: whole, half, whole, whole, half, whole, whole; or uses the sol-fa tones of *la, ti, do, re, me, fa, so, la*.

A **MODE** is a type of scale with a specific arrangement of intervals (e.g., Aeolian, Dorian, Ionian, Locrian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Phrygian).

NOTATION is written music indicating pitch and rhythm for performance.

A **PENTATONIC SCALE** is a scale having five tones to the octave and containing no half steps: *do, re, mi, so, la*.

A **PHRASE** is a musical idea comparable to a sentence or a clause in language.

PITCH is the location of a note related to its highness or lowness.

RHYTHM is the combination of long and short, even and uneven sounds that convey a sense of movement in time.

A **SCALE** is the arrangement of notes in a specific order of whole and half steps.

A **SOLO** is a part for one instrument.

A **SCORE** is the written form of the entire composition. All players have a part of the score for their instrument, unless they have memorized the notes.

SOLFEGE is a system of designating verbal syllables for the degrees of the scale.

SONG FORMS are the organization of sections of a song, represented by letters that depict similar and contrasting sections: AB, ABA, AABA, ABC, verse/refrain, and so forth.

SOUND PERCEPTION is how you interpret what you hear and where you hear it.

STAFF (STAVES) are the horizontal lines on and between which notes are written.

A **SUITE** is a musical composition consisting of a succession of short pieces.

SYNCOPIATION is the placement of rhythmic accents on weak beats or weak portions of beats.

The **TEMPO** is the pace at which music moves according to the speed of the underlying beat; fast and slow.

A **THEME and VARIATION** is a compositional form in which a theme is clearly stated and is followed by a number of variations.

The **TIMBRE** is the tone color or quality of sound heard.

A **TIME SIGNATURE** is a sign used in music to indicate meter, usually written as a fraction with the bottom number indicating the kind of note to be played as a unit of time and the top number indicating the number of units in each measure.

The **TONALITY (KEY)** is the tonal center of a composition.

A **TRIAD** is a three-note chord consisting of root, third, and fifth.

TUNING is to adjust a music instrument to the desired frequency or pitch.