



MUSIC VOCABULARY PROGRESSION

Developing the language to listen, understand,
create and communicate



HEAR IT



NAME IT



DESCRIBE IT



EXPLAIN IT



APPLY IT



EVERY CHILD ★ EVERY VOICE ★ EVERY MUSICIAN

Listen • Understand • Create • Communicate

DEVELOPING MUSICAL VOCABULARY

★ *≡ From experiencing music to speaking like a musician ≡* ★

Musical vocabulary is developed through a spiral approach. Children encounter key terminology through practical musical experiences, revisit it regularly and apply it with increasing precision as their musical knowledge and understanding deepen.



≡ VOCABULARY LIVES ACROSS MUSIC ≡



Vocabulary connects musical knowledge, thinking and practice.

INCREASING
SOPHISTICATION



Same musical concept
→ increasingly precise musical language

EXPERIENCE → NAME → REVISIT → DEEPEN → APPLY

We don't just learn musical words – we use them to think, create and communicate as musicians.

MUSICAL VOCABULARY PROGRESSION

Building our musical language - EYFS to Year 3

Vocabulary is introduced, revisited and deepened, enabling children to listen, create, perform and communicate as confident musicians.

The more words we know, the more music we understand and can create!



EYFS

FOUNDATIONAL MUSICAL LANGUAGE

Children encounter musical language naturally through listening, singing, movement, playing, creating and performing.

sound • music • song • rhyme
voice • instrument • beat • rhythm
high • low • loud • quiet • fast
slow • start • stop • perform



KEY DEVELOPMENT:
I experience musical language in meaningful contexts.



YEAR 1

INTRODUCE & RECOGNISE



MUSICAL ELEMENTS

beat • pulse • steady beat • rhythm • pitch • melody • tempo • dynamics • texture



SINGING & PERFORMANCE

vocalise • vocal warm-up • body warm-up • expression • articulation • diction • chanting • chorus • rehearsal • performance



MUSICAL RESPONSE

movement • narrative • emotion • interpret • call and response



NOTATION & SOUND

graphic score • musical symbols • rhythmic patterns • staccato



KEY DEVELOPMENT:

I begin to name and recognise musical features.



YEAR 2

DESCRIBE & USE



MUSICAL ELEMENTS

beat • pulse • rhythm • pitch • tempo • dynamics • timbre • texture • structure



INSTRUMENTS & ENSEMBLE

percussion • tuned percussion • untuned percussion • ensemble • solo • group singing



SINGING

posture • breath control • articulation • diction • expression • phrasing • consonant • vowel



NOTATION

note • rest • stave • minim • crotchet • ascending • descending



CREATING MUSIC

improvisation • call and response • question and answer • crescendo



KEY DEVELOPMENT:

I use musical vocabulary to describe what I hear and do.



YEAR 3

EXPLAIN & CONNECT



MUSICAL ELEMENTS

beat/pulse • rhythm • pitch • tempo • dynamics • timbre • texture • melody



NOTATION & THEORY

notation • bar • crotchet • quaver • scale • home note • chord • major chord • chromatic



PERFORMANCE

conductor • expression • posture • performance • ensemble • audience • feedback • crescendo



INSTRUMENTS & SOUND

recorder technique • glockenspiel technique • lute • clavichord • harpsichord • clarinet • cello



CREATING & RESPONDING

compose • programme music • syncopation • modulation • layer • mood • reflection • composer



KEY DEVELOPMENT:

I use increasingly precise vocabulary to explain and connect musical ideas.

EYFS

EXPERIENCE



YEAR 1

NAME



YEAR 2

DESCRIBE



YEAR 3

EXPLAIN

Musical vocabulary is cumulative – familiar words remain important as new terminology is introduced and understanding deepens.



MUSICAL VOCABULARY PROGRESSION

Developing sophisticated musical language – Year 4 to Year 6

As musical understanding develops, children use increasingly precise vocabulary to analyse, perform, create, refine and evaluate music.

YEAR 4

APPLY & COMPARE

MUSICAL ELEMENTS

pulse • rhythm • pitch • tempo • dynamics • timbre • texture • melody • contrast

NOTATION & STRUCTURE

bar • stave • scale • minor scale • pentatonic scale • phrase • structure • verse • chorus • repetition

SINGING & ENSEMBLE

call and response • echoing • two-part harmony • round • articulation • diction • ensemble • balance • blend

CREATING & PERFORMING

composition • improvisation • drone • harmony • arrangement • performance technique • evaluation • refinement

SOUND & TECHNOLOGY

sound effect / FX • layering • soundscape • foreground • background • recording

KEY DEVELOPMENT:

I apply musical vocabulary when comparing, creating and performing music.

YEAR 5

ANALYSE & REFINE

MUSICAL ELEMENTS & THEORY

pulse • rhythm • pitch • tempo • dynamics • timbre • melody • major scale • minor scale • chord • chord progression

NOTATION & STRUCTURE

stave • treble clef • notation • contour • pentatonic scale • ternary form (ABA) • phrase • ascending • descending

PERFORMANCE

harmony • unison • articulation • staccato • legato • crescendo • decrescendo • ensemble • cue • leader

CREATING MUSIC

improvisation • compose • drone • syncopation • layering • arrangement • groove • hook

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

DAW • track • loop • SoundBank • bassline • synthesiser • audio track • mixing • reverb • delay • producer • piano roll

KEY DEVELOPMENT:

I use precise musical language to analyse, create, refine and evaluate.

YEAR 6

ARTICULATE & EVALUATE

MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING

pulse • pitch • melody • tempo • dynamics • timbre • texture • syncopation • musical key • scale

STRUCTURE & ARRANGEMENT

4/4 time • strong beat • chorus • verse • structure • arrangement • variation • phrasing • partner song • round

PERFORMANCE & INTERPRETATION

ensemble • expression • diction • blend • projection • stage presence • interpretation • rehearsal • audience engagement

CREATING & PRODUCING

composition • improvisation • remix • layering • refinement • balance • production • mix • producer

DIGITAL MUSIC

DAW • loop • piano roll • audio • clip • bassline • drum pattern • synthesiser • playback • mixing

KEY DEVELOPMENT:

I confidently select and use musical vocabulary to articulate, interpret and evaluate musical ideas.

YEAR 4

APPLY & COMPARE

YEAR 5

ANALYSE & REFINE

YEAR 6

ARTICULATE & EVALUATE

THINK & TALK LIKE A MUSICIAN

Musical vocabulary is not replaced as children progress – it is revisited, connected and used with increasing precision and sophistication.

