

EXAM GUIDANCE: MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE (Initial-Grade 5 only)

This test encourages learners to understand the wider musical context of the pieces they play, as well as to develop their knowledge of notation and the piano. Examiners ask carefully graded questions based on candidates' chosen pieces.

In the exam, candidates choose which piece they would like to be asked about first. Examiners then chooses a second piece for the remaining questions. Candidates' musical scores should be free of annotations that

might aid their responses. Examiners usually point to the relevant part of the score when asking questions. Candidates can use American terms (eighth note, half note, etc) as an alternative to English terms (quaver, minim, etc).

The following table gives example questions and responses for Piano exams. Please check the relevant syllabus for specific requirements for your instrument.

	Parameters*	Sample question	Sample answer
Initial	Pitch names	What is the pitch name of this note?	G
	Note durations	How many beats are there for this note?	Two
	Clefs, stave, barlines	What is this sign?	A treble clef
	Identify key/time signatures	What is this called?	A time signature
	Basic musical terms and signs	What is this called?	A pause mark
Grade 1	Note values	What is this note value?	A quaver
	Explain key/time signatures	What does $\frac{4}{4}$ mean?	Four crotchet beats in a bar
	Notes on ledger lines	What is the name of this note?	B \flat
	Musical terms and signs	What is the meaning of <i>da capo</i> ?	Go back to the start
	Parts of the instrument	What are these called?	Pedals

* Cumulative – tests may also include requirements from preceding grade(s)

Grade 2	Metronome marks, grace notes and ornaments	Explain the sign ♩ = 72	72 crotchet beats per minute
	Intervals (numerical only)	What is the interval between these notes?	A 3rd
	Basic posture	Show me a good hand position	<i>Candidate demonstrates</i>
Grade 3	Relative major/minor	What is the relative major/minor of this piece?	D minor
	Scale/arpeggio pattern	What pattern of notes do you see here?	A scale
	Warm up	How might you warm up in preparation for playing this piece?	By playing a selection of scales and arpeggios in related keys
Grade 4	Modulation to closely related keys	What key does this music change to?	A minor
	Tonic/dominant triads	Name the notes of the tonic triad	C, E, G
	Intervals (full names)	What is the interval between these notes?	Perfect 5th
	Technical challenges	Show me the most challenging part of this piece and tell me why	Here [<i>candidate indicates</i>], because of the awkward leaps
Grade 5	Musical style	Comment on the style of this piece	<i>Candidate identifies style of piece and gives examples of stylistic features</i>
	Musical period	How does this piece reflect the period in which it was written?	<i>Candidate suggests a musical period and gives examples of how the music reflects this</i>
	Musical structures	Describe the form of this piece	<i>Candidate describes form of piece and identifies relevant sections</i>
	Subdominant triads	Name the notes of the subdominant triad	F, A, C