Genre

Genre refers to a category into which creative works are grouped based on similarities in style, purpose, structure and function. This includes categorisations of music based on formal and cultural criteria. Examples of genres include jazz, western art music and electronic music.

Style

Style refers to related creative works and/or practices that share distinctive conventions and/or characteristics. This includes the characteristic manner in which music is composed, performed or understood. For example, within the genre of jazz, there are styles such as bebop and swing.

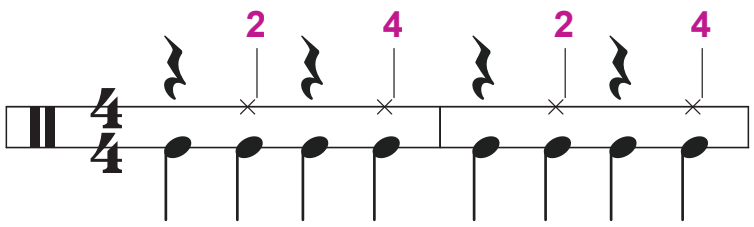
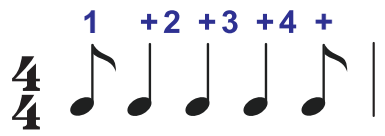
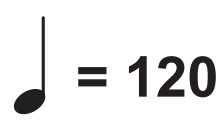
Musical conventions

Musical conventions include the established practices, norms and rules that govern the composition, performance and interpretation of music within specific genres, cultures or historical periods. For example, the use of certain chord progressions in contemporary popular music, or specific structures and ornamentation used in Baroque music.

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Music Life Skills | Duration

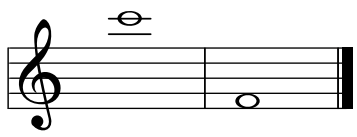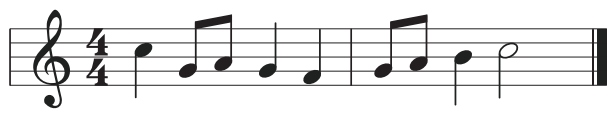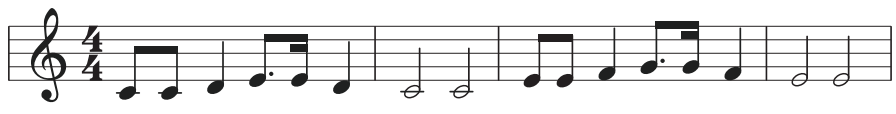
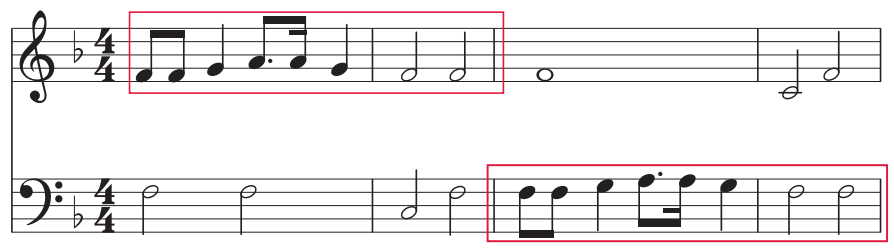
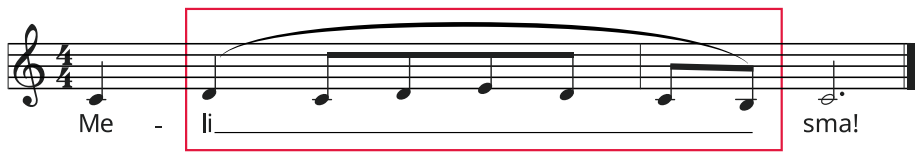
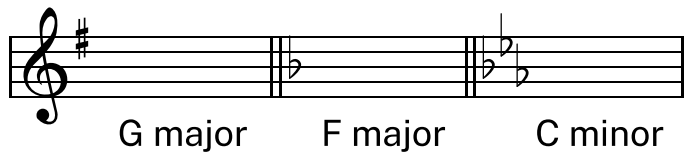
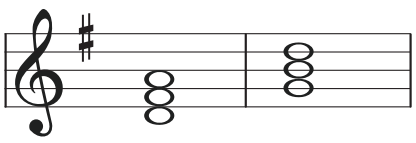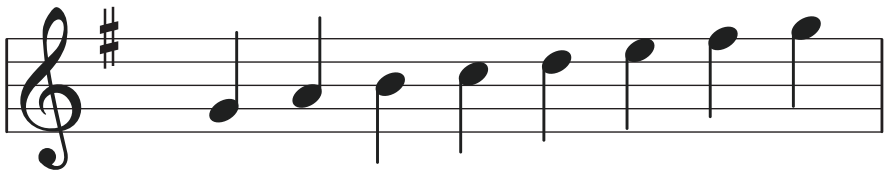
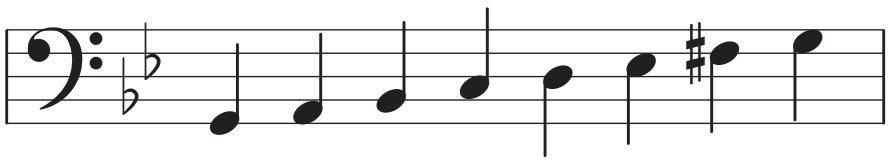
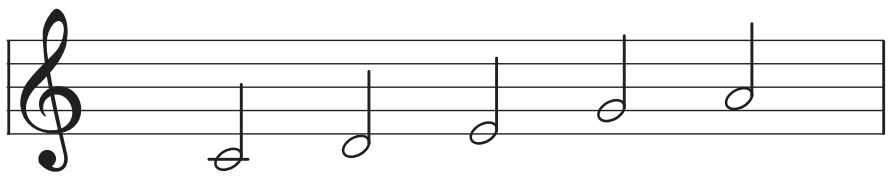
Music Life Skills 11–12

Term	Definition	Example
note value	How long a note lasts including long and short sounds	
beat	The sound that keeps time in music	Regular (steady)  Irregular (changing) 
rhythm	The patterns of sounds and silences in a piece of music	
ostinato	Repeated patterns	
backbeat	Emphasis on beats 2 and 4	
syncopation	Playing notes off the main beat	
swing	Lively and uneven beats	
metre	Groupings of the beat in a piece of music	Simple time signatures can be divided into groups of 2  Compound time signatures can be divided into groups of 3 
tempo	The speed of the music	*adagio* – slow *moderato* – moderately *allegro* – fast
tempo gradations	Changes in the speed of the music	*accelerando* – getting faster *rallentando* – getting slower
metronome markings	Indicates the tempo of a piece of music in beats per minute	
expressive indications	Indicates to the performer where they move away from a strict tempo to express emotion or show personal interpretation	*rubato* – freely *fermata* – pause

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Music Life Skills | Pitch
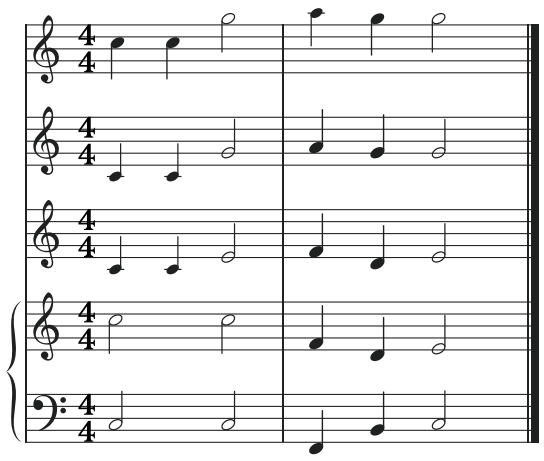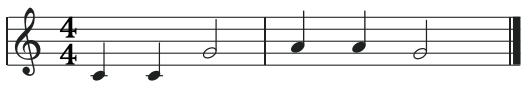
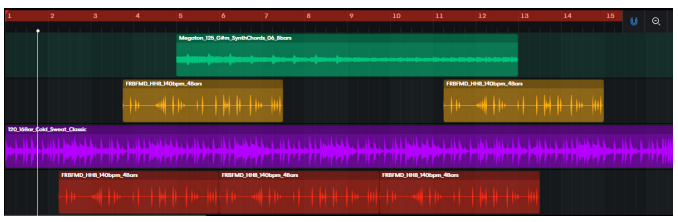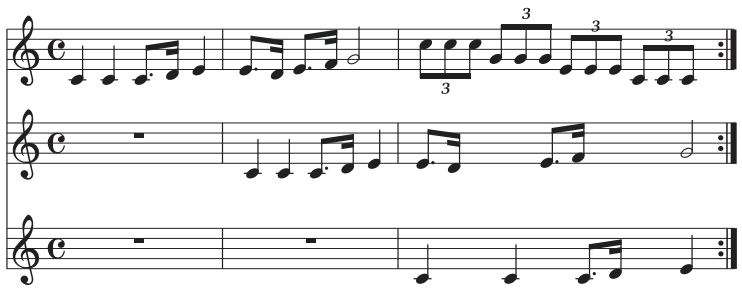
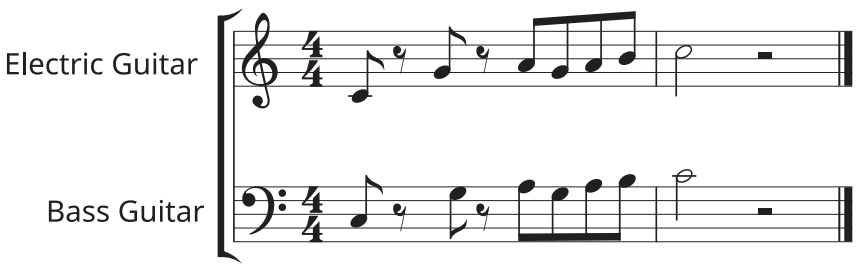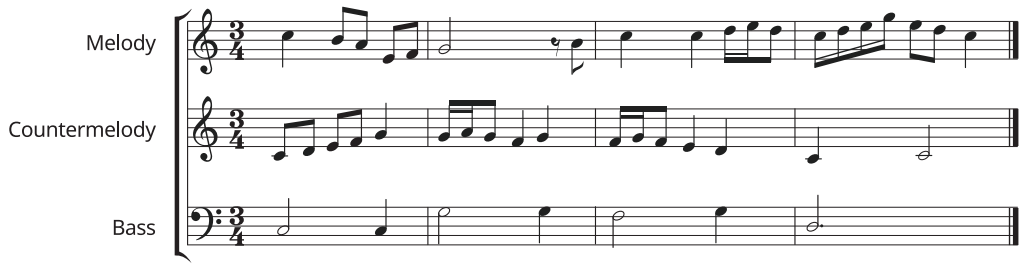
Music Life Skills 11–12

Term	Definition	Example
pitch	Making the note sound higher or lower	
melody	A sequence of notes in a piece of music	
sequence	A repeated idea or pattern that moves up or down in pitch	
imitation	A melody or motif presented in one part and then immediately repeated by another part	
melisma	Singing many notes on just one syllable of a word	
tonality	The notes that a piece of music is based on, including major and minor keys	
chords	Two or more notes played together, including progressions such as 12 bar blues and I-V-vi-IV	
harmony	The way chords and notes work together	*consonant* – pleasant and stable *dissonant* – harsh, clashing or tense harmonies *modulation* – changes in key *resolution* – the change from dissonant to consonant
scales and modes	A set of notes arranged in order that create a certain sound or mood	**major scale** – a pattern of notes that gives music a happy, bright or cheerful sound  **minor scale** – a pattern of notes that gives music a sad or emotional sound  **pentatonic scale** – a scale made of 5 notes 

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Music Life Skills | Texture

Music Life Skills 11–12

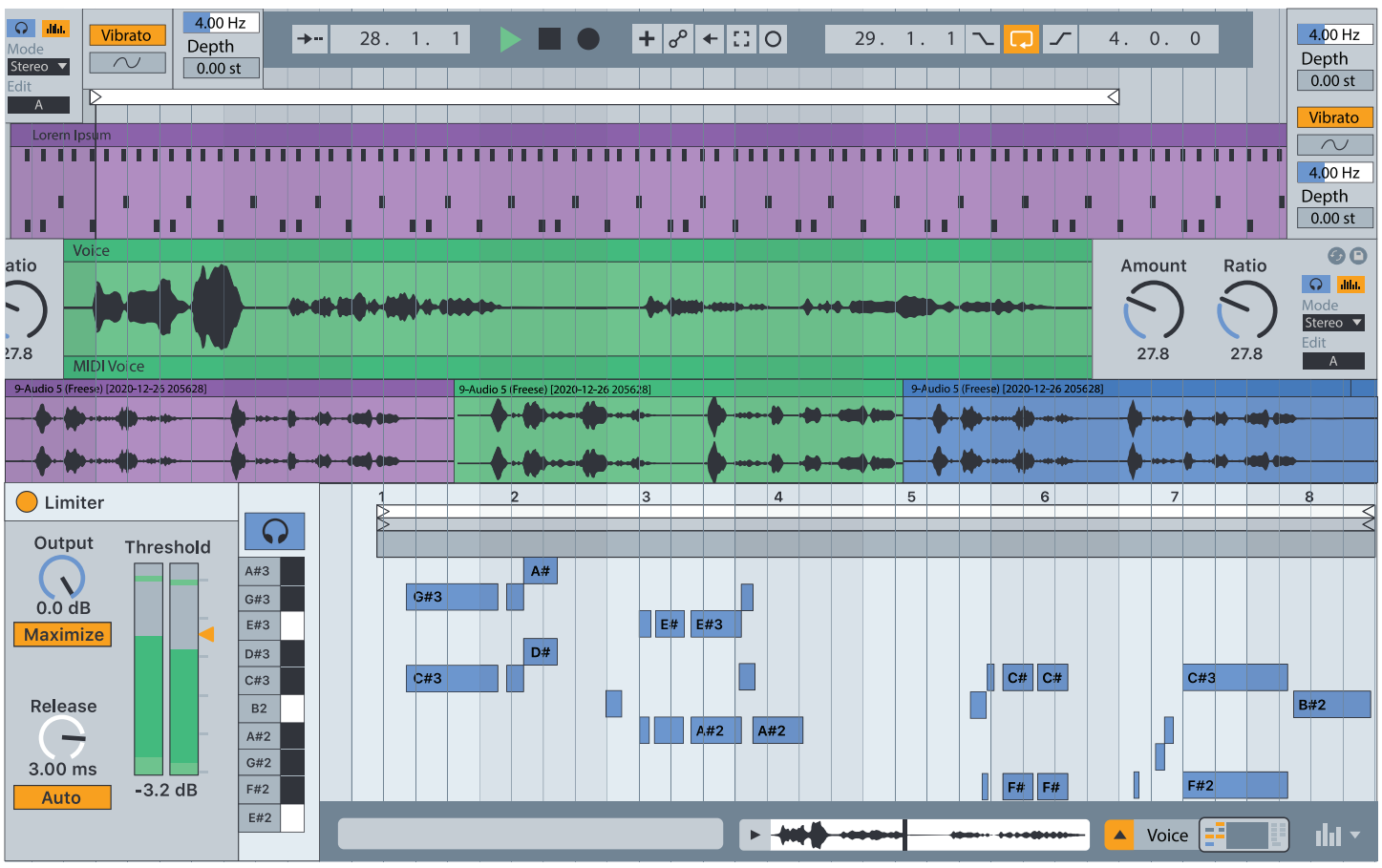
Term	Definition	Example
density	How many notes or sounds are played together at the same time, which could be described as thick or thin	Thick  Thin 
layers of sound	How many instruments or parts are playing at the same time	
textural devices	The ways layers of sound are changed or added to	**canon** – a melody repeated in quick succession by different voices or instruments  **doubling** – 2 or more instruments or voices playing the same melody at the same time  **countermelody** – a different second melody that is played or sung along with the main melody 
looping	Repeating a section of music	

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Music Life Skills | Performing media and timbre

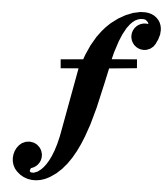
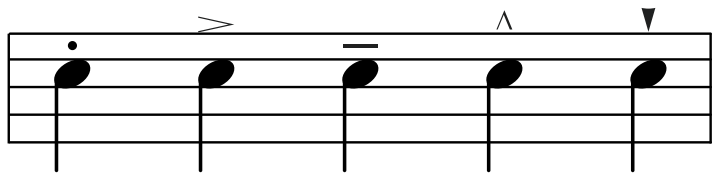
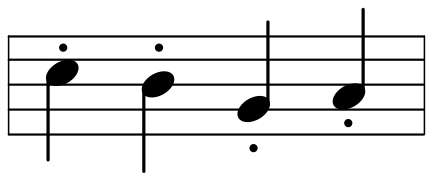
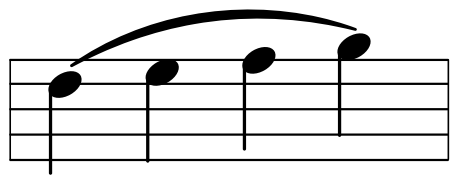
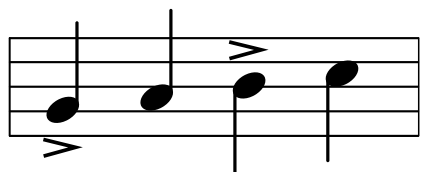
Music Life Skills 11–12

Term	Definition
performing media and/or sound sources	The people or instruments that make music, including voices, instruments, electronic sounds and acoustic sounds
sound production methods	The way instruments or voices make sounds, including blowing, plucking, scraping, strumming and shaking
timbral descriptions	The unique sound or tone that makes an instrument or voice sound different from others, including nasal and metallic
instrument specific techniques	The specific playing techniques that apply to each instrument, for example strumming on a guitar
electronic and digital manipulation of sounds	Using digital technologies such as looping, sampling, delay, echo, pitch-shifting and digital reverb 

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Music Life Skills | Dynamics and expression

Music Life Skills 11–12

Term	Definition	Example
forte	Loud	
piano	Soft	
crescendo	Becoming louder	
diminuendo	Becoming softer	
articulation	How a note is played or sung	
staccato	Short bursts of sound with space between each note	
legato	Smooth connected sounds with no breaks between notes	
vibrato	A wobble or variation in pitch	*vib.*
mute	Softening or dampening the sound of a musical instrument	*P.M, con sordino, +*
accent	Emphasising a particular note or sound	

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Music Life Skills | Structure

Music Life Skills 11–12

Term	Definition
macrostructure	The overall structure of a piece of music, including verse-chorus, binary and ternary
verse-chorus form	The typical structure of popular music consisting of verses with changing lyrics and choruses with repeated lyrics, which alternate throughout the song
binary form	Two different sections AB
ternary form	Three sections with the first and last section very similar – ABA
microstructure	The small details of music, including riffs, motifs, themes and leitmotifs
riffs	Repeated patterns of notes or chords typically found in rock music
motifs	Short musical ideas or phrases repeated in the music
theme	Melodies or musical ideas the piece is built around
leitmotif	A short piece of music that represents a person, place, idea or feeling in a story
call and response	A musical conversation where one part (the call) is answered by another part (response)

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