



Music Vocabulary - Year 3

Words	RAG	Definition
Appalachian music		Appalachian music is the music of the region of Appalachia in the Eastern United States. It is derived from various European and African influences, including English ballads, Irish and Scottish traditional music (especially fiddle music), hymns and African-American blues.
backing vocals		The singer(s) that remain in the background.
bar		A measure e.g. 4_4 would mean you play 4 crotchet beats in one bar.
Baroque music		Baroque music refers to the period of Western classical music composed from about 1600 to 1750. Bach, Handel and Vivaldi are some of the famous composers from this period.
beat		the basic unit of time or the pulse
Blues		Blues music is a type of secular folk music that originated in the African-American communities of the South in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is derived from a mix of African and European musical traditions and influenced the development of popular music forms like jazz, rhythm and blues, rock, and country music. Blues music is characterised by a simple but expressive form, a sad sound from repeated use of blue notes. Blues singers express feelings of sorrow and hardship, as well as draw attention to social injustices.
clef		A musical symbol used to indicate which notes are represented by the lines and spaces on a musical stave. We learn to read treble clef.
Country		A form of popular music originating in the rural southern USA. It is a mixture of ballads and dance tunes played on fiddle, banjo, guitar, and pedal steel guitar. Also called country and western.
crotchet		A note having the time value of a quarter of a semibreve or half a minim, represented by a large solid dot with a plain stem.
detached		A form of musical articulation. It signifies a note of shortened duration, separated from the note that may follow by silence. The Italian term is <i>staccato</i> .
Disco		A style of pop music intended mainly for dancing to, typically soul-influenced, popular particularly in the late 1970s.
Folk music		Music that originates in traditional popular culture. It is often not written down but each generation learns how to play it.
forte		This is the Italian term for loud.
guitar		a stringed musical instrument, with a fretted fingerboard and incurved sides. It can have six or twelve strings, played by plucking or strumming.
harpsichord		A keyboard instrument whose strings are plucked and therefore make a shorter sound than that of the piano.
hook		A catchy and memorable part of a song that catches the listener's ear and makes them want to keep listening.
imagination		To be creative.
key signature		Any of several combinations of sharps or flats after the clef at the beginning of each stave, indicating the key of a piece of music.
legato		The Italian term for smooth.
metre		Metre is the organisation of rhythms into certain regular patterns. The time signature tells you the metre.
minim		A note having the time value of two crotchets or half a semibreve, represented by a ring with a stem.
Native American music		Indigenous people make flutes, drums, bells and rattles, and variations of each. The different instruments serve different purposes, depending on the song or dance. They also use their voice.



notation		the link between sound and symbol
ostinato		A continually repeated musical phrase or rhythm.
pentatonic scale		A scale which only has 5 notes.
piano		The Italian term for quiet.
quaver		A note having the time value of an eighth of a semibreve or half a crotchet, represented by a large dot with a hooked stem.
Reggae		A style of popular music with a strongly accented subsidiary beat, originating in Jamaica. Reggae evolved in the late 1960s from ska, calypso and rhythm and blues, and became widely known in the 1970s through the work of Bob Marley; its lyrics are much influenced by Rastafarian ideas.
repeats		To play something over and over again.
rests		an interval of silence for a set period of time
rhythm patterns		Long and short sounds or silence mixed together.
riff		A short repeated phrase in pop music and jazz, typically used as an introduction or chorus in a song.
staccato		the Italian term for short and detached
stave		A set of five parallel lines on any one or between any adjacent two of which a note is written to indicate its pitch.
structure (form)		the order or design of different parts or sections of a piece or song
synthesizer		An electronic musical instrument, operated by a keyboard, producing a wide variety of sounds.
texture		Layers of sound. Layers of sound working together make music very interesting to listen to.
time signature		The time signature tells you how many of a particular note value are contained in each bar.



Music Vocabulary - Year 4

Words	RAG	Definition
AB form		Binary form in music is when a piece of music has two sections that are then repeated throughout the piece.
acoustic guitar		A guitar that does not require electrical amplification.
banjo		A stringed instrument of the guitar family, with a round open-backed soundbox of parchment stretched over a metal hoop.
brass		brass wind instruments (including trumpet, horn, and trombone)
bridge		A section of contrasting musical material that then prepares for, and returns to, the original material section.
by ear		You don't play from music.
call and response		The first and often solo part is answered by a second and often ensemble part.
choral music		Music sung by a choir or a group of singers with two or more voices per part.
chord		A group of (typically three or more) notes sounded together.
choreography		the sequence of steps and movements in dance
Classical music		Music written in the European tradition during a period lasting approximately from 1750 to 1830, when forms such as the symphony, concerto and sonata were standardised.
clarinet		a woodwind instrument with a single-reed mouthpiece
Contemporary R&B		A popular music genre that combines rhythm and blues with elements of pop, soul, funk, hip hop, and electronic music.
crescendo		The Italian term for gradually getting louder.
digital/electronic sounds		Music produced from a wide variety of sound resources.
diminuendo		The Italian term for gradually getting quieter.
Electronic Dance Music (EDM)		It is also known as dance music, club music, or simply dance. It is a broad range of percussive electronic music genres made largely for nightclubs, raves and festivals.
fortissimo		The Italian term for very loud.
interval		the distance in pitch between any 2 notes
lyrics		the words of a song
marching band		a group of instrumental musicians who perform while marching, often for entertainment or competition. Instrumentation typically includes brass, woodwind and percussion instruments.
mezzo forte		The Italian term for quite loud.
mezzo piano		The Italian term for quite quiet.
musical style		Music and musical styles are often referred to as being from a 'period' in time. We are able to hear similar characteristics in music that has been created by different composers from the same time period.
octave		The interval between (and including) two notes.
pianissimo		The Italian term for very quiet.
piccolo		A small flute sounding an octave higher than the ordinary one.
solo		a piece of music for one performer
steel pans		A percussion instrument originating in Trinidad, made out of an oil drum with one end beaten down and divided by grooves into sections to give different notes.
strings		A section of the orchestra containing the stringed musical instruments like the violin and the cello.
timbre		All instruments, including voices, have a certain sound quality, eg the trumpet has a very different sound quality to the violin.
tonality		The character of a piece of music is related to its key centre or tonality e.g. tonal music is in a major or minor key.



trombone		A brass instrument consisting of a long cylindrical metal tube with two turns and having a movable slide for varying the tone.
tuba		a large brass wind instrument of bass pitch
turntables		A set of two or more record decks connected to sound mixing equipment, used by a DJ.
unison		Is when two or more musical parts sound either the same pitch or the pitch is separated by intervals of one or more octaves and played at the same time.
woodwind		Wind instruments other than brass instruments forming a section of an orchestra, including flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons.



Music Vocabulary - Year 5

Words	RAG	Definition
a cappella		Sung without instrumental accompaniment.
accordion		A musical instrument played by stretching and squeezing with the hands to work a central bellows that blows air over metal reeds, the melody and chords being sounded by buttons or keys.
amplifier		An electronic device (as in a stereo system) for amplifying voltage, current, or power. Electric and bass guitars are plugged into these.
backbeat		A strong accent on one of the normally unaccented beats of the bar, used especially in jazz and popular music e.g. beats 2 and 4.
backing loops		A short section of music which is repeated continuously over which other music can be played.
ballad		a slow sentimental or romantic song
bassline		the lowest part or sequence of notes in a piece of music
big bands		A large group of musicians playing jazz music.
brass section		The group of musicians in an orchestra who play brass instruments e.g. trumpet, trombone and tuba.
Contemporary Jazz		It is an umbrella term for the diverse array of new music in the jazz idiom produced and recorded in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. It includes modern jazz and smooth jazz.
cover		To play or record a song by someone else who is not the original artist or composer.
deck		a multitrack recording and mixing environment
drum kit		A set of drums, cymbals, and other percussion instruments, used with drumsticks or brushes. The most basic components are a foot-operated bass drum, a snare drum, a suspended cymbal and one or more tom-toms.
flute		A wind instrument made from a tube with holes that are stopped by the fingers or keys, It is held horizontally. It is normally silver.
Funk		Music that combines elements of rhythm and blues and soul music.
groove		a particular rhythm in popular or jazz music
Hammond organ		a type of electronic organ
harmonica		A small rectangular wind instrument with a row of metal reeds along its length, held against the lips and moved from side to side to produce different notes by blowing or sucking. Also called mouth organ.
harmony		The combination of musical notes playing at the same time to produce a pleasing effect.
interlude		The instrumental music played in between verses or sections of a song.
Minimalism		A movement in music characterised by the repetition of very short phrases which change gradually, producing a hypnotic effect.
note names		Each line or space is assigned a note name.
note values		the duration of a note
Rock n' Roll		A type of popular dance music originating in the 1950s, characterised by a heavy beat and simple melodies.
scratching		The action of playing a record using the scratch technique.
Soul		A kind of music incorporating elements of rhythm and blues and gospel music, popularised by American black people. Characterised by an emphasis on vocals and an impassioned improvisatory delivery.
South African Pop		This is also know as <i>kwela</i> . It is a style of rhythmical, repetitive popular music of central and southern Africa, resembling jazz, in which the lead part is usually played on the penny whistle.
Swing		Swing music is a style of jazz played by big bands ¹²³⁴ that was popular in the 1930s and 1940s.



Symphony orchestra		a large classical orchestra, including string, wind, brass, and percussion instruments
syncopation		Displace the beats or accents in (music or a rhythm) so that strong beats become weak and vice versa.
tag ending		An added section of music that helps finalise the performance in jazz tunes.
tonal centre		The tonic, also known as the tonal centre, is that particular note (and the chord built on it) on which the music is stable and at rest - it feels like home.
violin		A stringed musical instrument played with a horsehair bow.

Music Vocabulary - Year 6

Words	RAG	Definition
cello		A bass instrument of the violin family, held upright on the floor between the legs of the seated player.
chords		A group of (typically three or more) notes sounded together.
clarinet		A woodwind instrument with a single-reed mouthpiece, a cylindrical tube with a flared end, and holes stopped by keys.
dimensions of music		pulse, rhythm, pitch, tempo, texture, timbre, dynamics, structure/form and duration
double bass		The largest and lowest-pitched instrument of the violin family, providing the bassline of the orchestral string section and also used in jazz and some country music.
drum machine		A programmable electronic device able to imitate the sounds of a drum kit.
elements		See dimensions of music
Film Music		Music used in a film to accompany the action and create atmosphere.
French horn		A brass instrument with a coiled tube, valves, and a wide bell, developed from the simple hunting horn in the 17th century.
Gospel		Gospel songs were originally sung by African slaves. Lyrics related to escaping to freedom, with a religious element often in praise or giving thanks to God. Today, gospel music is performed by choirs. Often the music is a cappella. Sometimes choirs will clap to provide a rhythmic accompaniment to their singing. Many gospel songs feature prominent sections for solo singers.
Hip Hop		A style of popular music of US black and Hispanic origin, featuring rap with an electronic backing.
Motown		Music released on or reminiscent of the US record label Tamla Motown. It was important in popularising soul music.
notation		A series of symbols, markings, and sometimes, numbers that inform musicians how to perform a piece of music.
oboe		A woodwind instrument with a double-reed mouthpiece, a slender tubular body and holes stopped by keys.
orchestral		Written for an orchestra to play.
phrases		Short section of a composition into which the music seems naturally to fall.
producer		A person who supervises the making of a musical recording.
Romantic		A stylistic movement in Western Classical music associated with the period of the 19th century commonly referred to as the Romantic era. Famous composers include: Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Brahms and Beethoven.
Salsa		A type of Latin American dance music incorporating elements of jazz and rock.
style indicators		Certain elements that you expect to hear to be in keeping with the style of music.
timpani		Timpani or kettledrums are musical instruments in the percussion family.
unison		In music, unison is two or more musical parts that sound either the same pitch or pitches separated by intervals of one or more octaves, usually at the same time.
xylophone		A musical instrument played by striking a row of wooden bars.
Zimbabwean Pop		This music includes different forms of music that Zimbabweans have been exposed to. It can also be called chimurenga, jiti, sungura or museve.