

Music Vocabulary for EYFS, KS1, and KS2

Category	Vocabulary	Definitions
EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage)		
Sound	Loud, quiet, high, low	Sound is what you hear; it can vary in volume (loud or quiet) and pitch (high or low).
Movement	Fast, slow	Movement describes how music feels or flows in terms of speed.
Actions	Clap, tap, stomp, shake	Actions involve physical movements used to create or respond to music.
Instruments	Drum, triangle, shaker, tambourine, bells	Instruments are objects used to produce sound, often by hitting, shaking, or striking.
Songs	Sing, hum, chant	Singing uses your voice to create music; humming involves making a sound with closed lips; chanting involves rhythmically speaking or singing.
Emotions	Happy, sad, excited, calm	Music often conveys or evokes emotions, which can change depending on the melody or rhythm.
Exploration Words	Listen, hear, play	Listening and hearing involve perceiving sound, while playing refers to creating music with an instrument or voice.
Simple Concepts	Beat, rhythm	The beat is the steady pulse in music, while rhythm is the pattern of sounds and silences.
KS1 (Key Stage 1)		
Musical Elements	Pitch (high/low), tempo (fast/slow), dynamics (loud/quiet), duration (long/short)	Musical elements are the building blocks of music. Pitch is how high or low a sound is, tempo is the speed, dynamics describe volume, and duration refers to how long a note is held.
Rhythm	Beat, pulse, pattern	Rhythm is the arrangement of sounds in time; the beat

		or pulse is the consistent tempo, and a pattern is a repeated sequence.
Instruments	Xylophone, maracas, cymbals, recorder	Instruments in this group are used in early music education to explore sound and rhythm.
Performance Words	Sing, play, perform, listen	Performance words describe how music is shared; performing means presenting music for others, and listening is focusing on sound.
Descriptive Words	Smooth, bumpy, soft, strong	Descriptive words help explain the texture or feeling of music.
Genres	Classical, folk, nursery rhymes	Genres are styles of music, like traditional folk or formal classical pieces.
Composing	Create, make, pattern, repeat	Composing involves creating music by arranging sounds or notes.
Structure	Beginning, middle, end, chorus, verse	Structure refers to how music is organized, such as sections like verses and choruses.
Teamwork	Together, group, share, take turns	Teamwork words emphasize collaboration in music-making.
KS2 (Key Stage 2)		
Advanced Musical Elements	Melody, harmony, dynamics (crescendo/decrescendo), timbre, texture	Melody is the main tune, harmony is the combination of notes, dynamics indicate volume changes, timbre refers to sound quality, and texture describes layers of sound.
Notation	Staff, treble clef, note names (C, D, E, F, G, A, B), rests, bar line	Notation is the system of writing music, using symbols like notes, rests, and lines.
Rhythmic Terms	Crotchet, quaver, minim, semibreve, dotted notes	These terms describe note durations, from short (quavers) to long (semibreves).
Instruments	Violin, guitar, keyboard, ukulele, percussion, brass	Instruments in this category represent more advanced and varied options for musical expression.

Performance Words	Solo, duet, ensemble, audience	Solo means one performer, duet is two, ensemble is a group, and audience refers to listeners.
Genres and Styles	Jazz, blues, pop, rock, classical, world music	These are broader categories of music, each with unique characteristics and cultural origins.
Composing and Improvising	Compose, improvise, arrange, structure, dynamics	Composing is creating music from scratch, improvising is making it up spontaneously, and arranging is reworking existing music.
Cultural Context	Traditional, modern, history, origin, composer	Cultural context involves the background and influences of music, including its origins and creators.
Analytical Vocabulary	Describe, compare, contrast, evaluate, appraise	Analytical words are used to discuss and reflect on music critically.