



Learning to fly in Music

These are the skills and habits which outstanding students of Music develop. Do as many of these as possible to become completely independent in the subject and to develop the skills and knowledge needed to attain 8/9 at GCSE and A* at A Level. **Remember that just doing what your teacher tells you - in your lessons and beyond - is not enough to develop your full potential in the subject.**

In your lessons

- Asking specific questions and asking for help.
- Thinking critically about your own work and finding ways to improve it.
- Listening to other students and the teacher, but engaging in discussions is key.
- Thinking about ways in which new knowledge you encounter in the lesson fits in with what you already know.

Between your lessons

- Looking back over your notes and activities from the last lesson, making sure you know what you have or haven't understood. Bring anything you don't understand to your next lesson.
- Practise composing short melodies (in any style) at your instrument.
- Complete theory exercises from an appropriate grade theory book.
- Extend your performance repertoire by quickly learning as much as you can of a new piece in a week, then move on!
- Try to listen to a new piece of music from the wider listening lists as often as you can.
- Reading ahead and making notes about the set composers/compositions.
- Making notes of any questions to ask your teachers or look up yourself.
- Going to see your teacher to ask for clarification and guidance.
- Practise your sight reading and scales on a daily basis.

Beyond your lessons

- Reading critical books/articles about the composers/set works you are studying.
- Keeping a music listening diary or blog.
- Talking to your friends and family about what you have heard/read.
- Listening to Classical music podcasts from **BBC Radio 3**, **Classic FM** or different styles of contemporary music and new artists on **BBC Radio 6**.
- Going to concerts: **Classical**, **Opera**, **Musicals**, **World Music** etc. **Royal Festival Hall**, the **Barbican** etc. Write up a *short* evaluation on how the composer uses the Elements of Music.
- Developing a sense of the big picture - the history of Classical Music - and how what you have read relates to this. Where are the gaps in your knowledge?
- Keeping a vocabulary log to keep track of new words you encounter or to discover new words.
- Don't forget to sing. Join a choir. this will improve both you singing and aural skills.
- Be in one of the many bands at school.
- If your traditional theory skills are already strong, **London College of Music** also do some popular/jazz theory workbooks. Stretch yourself and broaden your skills.
- Learn to improvise.
- Read the **BBC Music Magazine**, kept in both the school library and music department.
- Choose a composer whose music you like and try to find out more about him/her. Use the school library. Ask to borrow some CDs from the music department office.
- Challenge yourself to learn a piece in a different style to that which you are accustomed.

Of course we recognise that our students have busy lives and that this level of engagement is not always possible all the time - but this is what you should aim for if you want to reach the highest level in the subject. You don't need to do ALL of these things to improve in Music - just doing one or two of them will have an impact. Decide on two or three to focus on to improve your skills.