

# Advanced Level Music (Edexcel) @



Welcome to Wyke!

A Level Music is an introduction to the world of Musicology.

We study music as an academic subject (scholarly research into music) including formal training for instrumental performance skills and compositional techniques.

The following document is designed to help you prepare for this process of discovery and learning.

# Summer Prep work for A' Level Music

- We will be studying compositions by a range of composers, spanning the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- However, music (like all art and culture) is a product of its time and place.
- It's very easy for us to assume that musicians have always worked in the same ways and in similar circumstances. How wrong we would be to make this assumption!
- To help us in our journey of discovery, we need to investigate the cultural contexts of our set composers.

- Cultural Contexts =
- The family background of the composer
- The nationality of the composer (including their native language)
- Their employment conditions: who they worked for (institutions, individual employers, a range of paid commissions?) the demands that were made of them, their financial condition (successful, poorly paid etc.) and the reliability of their employment.
- The social conditions and range of technologies that were available to them (including musical instruments).
- The political and religious/philosophical upheavals that may have surrounded them.

- We will focus on composers from more distant times (because the contexts of their lives are so dramatically different to our own).
- For each composer I have included a range of areas that need to be researched and considered/discussed. All of the information you will need is easily obtainable via internet research.
- However: research requires genuine comprehension and intelligent thought!
- This means that you should take time to:
- Thoroughly read any information you are researching
- Make detailed notes (including the name of the source you are reading)
- Construct your written answers ENTIRELY in your own words.

The task: writing an essay to explain your research



Explain and exemplify: how did the cultural contexts of Bach, Vivaldi and Mozart influence the music that they composed? (40 marks. Guide word count: 1500 – 2000)

- You should construct your answer in paragraphs, and deal with each composer in turn.
- Where relevant, you should make comparisons/contrasts between the working lives of the composers.
- All of the writing must be in your own words: I'm keen to discover what your writing style is like, and also what help and guidance may be needed in the coming months/years.
- You may use images to illustrate your essay IF they are relevant to your writing.
- Mark = a relevant explained fact/point.
- Remember:

**Explain** = give reasons for cause and effect (i.e. 'this' happened because...)

**Exemplify** = for example...

Writing style hint: factual information, explanation, examples, relevance.

Avoid: personal opinions and 'chat' speak: slang words, figures of speech, story telling (once upon a time...!)

This should be a fascinating journey: be a detective and have fun with it! It's a fascinating and very surprising world (and oh-so different to our world).

# J.S. Bach

- Listen: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiXoXt01\\_rM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiXoXt01_rM)
  - His dates of birth/death?
- His upbringing?
- His employer?
- His musical heroes/influences?
- His nationality?
- Examples of the musical genres he composed?
- Who were the rulers of the area he lived and worked in?
- Why is he classified as a composer of the High Baroque era?
- What is a chorale?
- Why are so many of his works written for the Lutheran Church?
- Which instruments did he play?
- Why is the concept of servant-hood relevant to Bach?
- How was Bach's Germany different to the nation-state we call Germany today?
- How did Bach sell his own compositions?
- How did Bach earn money from being a teacher?
- What is Equal Temperament? How is Bach associated with it?
- His beliefs?
- What is a Cantata?
- His family life?

# A. Vivaldi

- Listen:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yZaYMfNyfo>



- His upbringing?
  - His nationality?
- Why is he known as The Red Priest?
  - Who were the rulers of the area he lived and worked in?
- How many operas did Vivaldi compose?
  - How was Vivaldi's Italy different to the nation-state we call Italy today?
- Where did Vivaldi have his music published? How did this help his income?
  - Were issues of copyright relevant to Vivaldi?
- His dates of birth/death?
- His employer?
  - What is meant by the term Virtuoso in Vivaldi's work?
- Why are so many of his works written for string ensembles?
  - Which instruments did he play?
- His musical heroes/influences?
- His beliefs?
- What is a Concerto? How many did he write? Why?
- How did his fame spread across Europe?
- Why is he classified as a composer of the High Baroque era?
- Why was he involved with 'royal' families?
- Why is the concept of servant-hood relevant to Vivaldi?
- What was the nature of the L'ospital he worked at?

- Listen:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkA65PLEdac>

# W.A. Mozart

- His upbringing and early career?
  - His nationality?
- Who ruled Vienna? Why was this relevant to Mozart?
- How many operas did Vivaldi compose?
- What is the range of genres/musical forms composed by Mozart?
  - Which instruments did he play?
- His dates of birth/death?
- His employers?
- His musical heroes/influences?
  - The ruling elite of Vienna felt threatened by the events taking place in France during the late 1780s/1790s. Why?
- Why is it significant that he began to compose operas in the German language?
- His beliefs?
- What new instruments were available to Mozart?
- What is an Opera? How many did he write? When were the first operas composed?
- How did his fame spread across Europe?
  - Why is he classified as a composer of the Classical era?
- How did Mozart break away from the concept of servanthood?
  - Why did so many people own their own pianos/musical instruments at the time (think about the limitations regarding listening to music at the time)?
- Why was Vienna such an influential centre for musical life in Europe?
- Why was Mozart's wife relevant to his musical career?
- Where did Mozart have his music published? How did this help his income?