

Parameters for Session Skills – Playback

Initial-Grade 8 for all instruments

- ✔ If you choose Playback, you will be asked to perform some music you have not seen or heard before.
- ✔ You will be given a song chart and have 30 seconds to study it or to try out any sections. The examiner will then play the recorded backing track. You should listen to the audio, copying what you hear; you can also read the music from the song chart.
- ✔ You will hear a series of short melodic phrases or drum grooves and fills and are required to repeat each of them straight back in turn. A count-in will be given at the beginning of the recording, and a backing rhythm will be played throughout.
- ✔ In the exam you will have two chances to play along with the track:
 - first time – for practice
 - second time – for assessment.
- ✔ No variation or improvisation is required – what is printed on the song chart/heard on the track should be copied as accurately as possible, including any details of phrasing, articulation and dynamics at higher grades.

(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total length	Length of repeated sections	Time signatures	Note values	Rest values	Dynamics & articulation	Keys	Additional parameters
Initial	8 bars	2 bars	$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$	semibreves, minims, crotchets	crotchets	no dynamics or phrasing	A minor E minor	first position including open strings
1				quavers	minims	<i>p</i> and <i>f</i>	C major G major	
2			$\frac{3}{4}$	dotted minims		accents	F major D minor	ties
3	8 to 12 bars	2 to 4 bars		dotted crotchets, semiquavers, swung quavers	semibreves, quavers	<i>mp</i> and <i>mf</i> ; <i>staccato</i> and <i>legato</i> , <i>crescendo</i> and <i>diminuendo</i>	D major B minor	blues scale, second position, H-O and P-O
4			$\frac{6}{8}$	quaver triplets	dotted crotchets		A major C minor	slides, double stopping, syncopation
5	12 to 16 bars		$\frac{12}{8}$	dotted quavers	dotted minims	<i>pp</i> , <i>ff</i> and <i>sfz</i>	E major G minor	up to 5th position, chromatic melodic notes, chord symbols included in the song chart
6	16 to 20 bars	4 to 8 bars	$\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{9}{8}$	double dotted crotchets, dotted semiquavers, demisemiquavers	semiquavers, dotted quavers		B major plus any major or minor key up to four sharps or flats	vibrato, slaps and pulls, up to 7th position
7			$\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{8}$	crotchet triplets, semiquaver triplets		any common terms and signs	any major or minor key up to five sharps or flats	full fretboard range, bends
8	20 to 24 bars		$\frac{12}{16}$; time signature changes				any key	harmonics, any notation including double sharps and flats

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Grade	Total length	Length of repeated sections	Time signatures	Note values	Rest values	Dynamics & articulation	Additional parameters
Initial	8 bars	2 bars	$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$	minims, crotchets, quavers	minims, crotchets	no dynamics or phrasing	SD, BD, HT, LT, crash cymbal; single line only
1						<i>p</i> and <i>f</i>	mid tom tom, some 2-way coordination
2			$\frac{3}{4}$	dotted minims		accents	HH and RC, mostly 2-way coordination, ties
3	8 to 12 bars	2 to 4 bars		semiquavers, dotted crotchets	quavers, semibreves	<i>mp</i> and <i>mf</i>	HH with foot, off-beat BD rhythms, 3-way coordination
4			$\frac{6}{8}$	quaver triplets	dotted crotchets	<i>crescendo</i> and <i>diminuendo</i>	whole kit with open/closed HH, rim-clicks, rolls, flams, drags and ruffs
5	12 to 16 bars		$\frac{12}{8}$	dotted quavers, semiquaver triplets, sextuplets	dotted minims, dotted quavers	<i>pp</i> , <i>ff</i> and <i>sfz</i>	extended independence
6	16 to 20 bars	4 to 8 bars	$\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{3}{8}$	semibreves, dotted semiquavers, demisemiquavers	dotted quavers, dotted semiquavers, semiquavers		ghost notes
7			$\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{8}$	crotchet triplets, duplets		any common terms and signs	
8	20 to 24 bars		time signature changes				

(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total length	Length of repeated sections	Time signatures	Note values	Rest values	Dynamics & articulation	Keys	Additional parameters
Initial	8 bars	2 bars	$\frac{4}{4}$	semibreves, minims, crotchets	crotchets	no dynamics or phrasing	D major E minor	within first position, no chords
1			$\frac{2}{4}$	quavers	minims	<i>p</i> and <i>f</i>	G major A minor	
2			$\frac{3}{4}$	dotted minims		accents	C major D minor	ties
3	8 to 12 bars	2 to 4 bars		dotted crotchets, semiquavers, swung quavers	semibreves, quavers	<i>mp</i> and <i>mf</i> ; <i>staccato</i> and <i>legato</i>	F major B minor	blues scale, 2 note chords, second position, H-O and P-O, chromatic melodic notes
4			$\frac{6}{8}$	quaver triplets	dotted crotchets	<i>crescendo</i> and <i>diminuendo</i>	A major C minor	3 note chords, slides, palm muting, double stopped melodic playing, syncopation
5	12 to 16 bars		$\frac{12}{8}$	dotted quavers	dotted minims	<i>pp</i> , <i>ff</i> and <i>sfz</i>	E major G minor	vibrato, bends, up to 5th position, chord symbols included in the song chart
6	16 to 20 bars	4 to 8 bars	$\frac{2}{2}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{2}{8}$, $\frac{8}{8}$	demisemiquavers			B major plus any major or minor key up to four sharps or flats	up to 7th position, harmonics
7			$\frac{7}{4}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$, $\frac{8}{4}$, $\frac{4}{8}$	crotchet triplets	semiquavers	any common terms and signs	any major or minor key up to five sharps or flats	full fretboard range
8	20 to 24 bars		time signature changes				any key	any expressive technique

(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total length	Length of repeated sections	Time signatures	Note values	Rest values	Dynamics & articulation	Keys	Additional parameters
Initial	8 bars	2 bars	$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$	minims, crotchets	crotchets	no dynamics or phrasing	C major A minor	RH only, 5 finger hand position
1				semibreves, quavers	semibreves, minims	<i>p</i> and <i>f</i>	G major E minor	mostly RH with simple LH in 2 bars, 5 finger hand position
2			$\frac{3}{4}$	dotted minims		accents	F major D minor	both hands throughout, small shifts of hand position, syncopation, ties
3	8 to 12 bars	2 to 4 bars		dotted crotchets, semiquavers, swung quavers	quavers	<i>mp</i> and <i>mf</i> ; <i>staccato</i> and <i>legato</i>	D major B minor	blues scale, 2 note chords in RH and LH, more LH movement, chromatic melodic notes
4			$\frac{6}{8}$		dotted crotchets	<i>crescendo</i> and <i>diminuendo</i> <i>tenuto</i>	A major C minor	3 note chords in RH, more independent LH movement
5	12 to 16 bars		$\frac{12}{8}$	dotted semibreves, quaver triplets	dotted minims	<i>pp</i> , <i>ff</i> and <i>sfz</i>	E major G minor	use of sustain pedal, chord symbols included in the song chart
6	16 to 20 bars	4 to 8 bars	$\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{2}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$	dotted quavers			B major plus any major or minor key up to four sharps or flats	simple ornamentation eg grace notes, glissandi, octaves in RH and/or LH
7			$\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$	crotchet triplets, semiquaver triplets, dotted semiquavers, demisemiquavers	semiquavers	any common terms and signs	any major or minor key up to five sharps or flats	RH tremolo
8	20 to 24 bars		time signature changes				any key	any expressive technique

(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total length	Length of repeated sections	Time signatures	Note values	Rest values	Dynamics & articulation	Keys	Intervals	Overall melodic range	Additional parameters
Initial	8 bars	2 bars	$\frac{4}{4}$	minims, crotchets		no dynamics or phrasing	C major A minor	stepwise movement only	a 4th	
1			$\frac{2}{4}$	semibreves, quavers	crotchets	<i>p</i> and <i>f</i>	G major E minor	major/minor 3rd	a 6th	
2			$\frac{3}{4}$	dotted minims			F major D minor	perfect 4th		ties
3	8 to 12 bars	2 to 4 bars		dotted crotchets, semiquavers, swung quavers	semibreves, minims, quavers	<i>mp</i> and <i>mf</i> ; <i>staccato</i> and <i>legato</i> accents	D major B minor	perfect 5th	an octave	blues scale, chromatic melodic notes
4			$\frac{6}{8}$	quaver triplets	dotted crotchets	<i>crescendo</i> and <i>diminuendo</i>	A major C minor	major/minor 6th	an 11th	syncopation
5	12 to 16 bars		$\frac{12}{8}$	dotted quavers	dotted quavers	<i>pp</i> , <i>ff</i> and <i>sfz</i>	E major G minor	major/minor 7th		chord symbols included in the song chart
6	16 to 20 bars	4 to 8 bars	$\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{9}{8}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$	crotchet triplets, dotted semiquavers, demisemiquavers, semiquaver triplets	semiquavers	<i>tenuto</i> , <i>subito</i>	any major or minor key up to 5 sharps or flats	octave		
7			$\frac{7}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$ $\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{5}{8}$ $\frac{4}{8}$ $\frac{8}{4}$ $\frac{4}{8}$ $\frac{8}{8}$			any common terms and signs	any major or minor key	major/minor 10th		
8	20 to 24 bars		time signature changes	duplets				major/minor 12th	a 12th	key changes within the song