

SESSION SKILLS

PLAYBACK

For your exam, you can choose either Playback or Improvising.

If you choose Playback, you will be asked to play some music you have not seen or heard before.

In the exam, you will be given the song chart and the examiner will play a recording of the music. You will hear several two-bar or four-bar phrases; you should play each of them straight back in turn. There's a rhythm track going throughout, which helps you keep in time. There should not be any gaps in the music. In the exam you will have two chances to play:

- First time – for practice
- Second time – for assessment.

You should listen to the audio, copying what you hear; you can also read the music. Here are some practice song charts.

Practice playback 1

♩ = 120

f *p*

5

f

9

Practice playback 2

♩ = 54

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 6/8 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 54. The first system consists of four measures. The right hand plays a melodic line starting with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes. The left hand plays a bass line of quarter notes. Dynamics are marked as *p* (piano) in the first measure and *mf* (mezzo-forte) in the second measure. The system ends with a repeat sign.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The second system consists of four measures. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes. The left hand plays a bass line with quarter notes. Dynamics are marked as *f* (forte) in the first measure and *p* (piano) in the second measure. A hairpin crescendo is shown in the third measure, and a hairpin decrescendo is shown in the fourth measure. The system ends with a repeat sign.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The third system consists of four measures. The right hand plays chords in the first two measures, followed by a melodic line in the last two measures. The left hand plays a bass line of quarter notes. Dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte) in the first measure and *mp* (mezzo-piano) in the third measure. The system ends with a repeat sign.

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IMPROVISING

For your exam, you can choose either Playback, or Improvising. If you choose to improvise, you will be asked to improvise over a backing track that you haven't heard before in a specified style.

In the exam, you will be given a song chart and the examiner will play a recording of the backing track. The backing track consists of a passage of music played on a loop. You can choose whether to play a lead melodic line, rhythmic chords, or a combination of the two.

In the exam you will have two chances to play:

- First time – for practice
- Second time – for assessment.

Here are some improvising charts for practice.

Practice improvisation 1

♩ = 80 **Reggae**

The chart consists of two staves. The first staff is in 4/4 time and contains five measures of chords: Cm, Fm, Gm, Cm, and Fm. The second staff is in 5/4 time and contains five measures of chords: Dm7, A^b, Fm7, G7, and Cm. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Practice improvisation 2

♩ = 44 **R'n'B**

The chart consists of two staves. The first staff is in 6/8 time and contains four measures of chords: A, F[#]m, E, and Bm7. The second staff is in 5/4 time and contains four measures of chords: F[#]m, E, Bm, D, and A. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.