



Music Appendix – Glossary of Terms



Term	Explanation
A Capella	Without accompaniment from instruments, i.e. voices.
Appraising	Listening carefully and considering aspects of the music
Arrangements	How voices and instruments are used in a song; where they occur within the song.
Back beat	Beats 2 and 4 in a drumline or if we are clapping along with the music.
Backing	The accompaniment to a song.
Balance	The level of volume at which players or singers play. If the balance is good, then everyone can be heard.
Ballad	A gentle love song.
Band	Playing/singing/performing together
Bossa Nova	A Brazilian dance music that has syncopated guitar rhythms.
Blues	A style of music characterised by its harmonic structure and the notes used to create the melodies
Bridge/middle 8	Contrasting section which leads back to main material.
Call and response	A musical structure where a solo person sings or plays a musical idea, and the rest of the performers sing or play a different musical idea.
Chord	More than one note played at the same time.
Chorus	A repeated section in a song which gives the main message
Classical music	This often means all Western art music from the Medieval era to the present. More specifically, it is music composed between c.1720 and 1840, e.g. the era of Mozart, Joseph Haydn, and the young Beethoven.
Coda	Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.
Cover	A version of a song performed by someone other than the original artist. It might sound a bit or very different from the original.
Composing	Creating and developing musical ideas and 'fixing' them.
Crossover	Can be a mixture of different styles which introduces new music to different audiences.
Decks	Equipment used by DJs, MCs, and Rappers to mix sounds from different records and to make effects e.g. scratching that was first used in the late 1970s.
Disco	(Short for discotheque) is dance music from the 1970s, characterized by hypnotic rhythm, repetitive lyrics and electronically produced sounds.

Drum loops	A sequence of sounds/music that is recorded, may be sampled, and is reproduced digitally or electronically.
Dynamics	A musical dimension indicating how loudly or quietly the music is being played.
Ending	Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.
Ensemble	A French word used to describe playing, singing or performing together.
Folk tunes/melodies	Music sung or played by people, usually not recorded or performed. Often the music is passed down through families and friends.
Funk	Music with strong bass lines and a heavy syncopated beat.
Gospel	Music that is Christian usually sung with rich harmony and often with a call and response structure.
Groove	The rhythmic part of the music that makes you want to move and dance.
Grime	Electronic dance music that emerged in London in the early 2000s. It developed out of a British electronic music style called UK Garage, and draws influences from Jungle, Dancehall, and Hip Hop. It has been described as the "most significant musical development within the UK for decades."
Harmony	Different notes sung or played at the same time to produce chords.
Hip-Hop	Music that developed in the 1970s but remains very popular today. It includes rapping
Hook	A term used in Pop music to describe a short catchy phrase or riff that we can't stop singing; the bit that 'hooks' us in; the main musical idea from a song that we remember.
Improvise	To make up a tune and play it on the spot. There is an assumption that it can never be recreated.
Interlude	A passage of music played between the main themes.
Introduction	Music heard at the beginning of a song or piece of music.
Keyboard	An electric instrument played like the piano. It has a range of pre-recorded sounds.
Lyrics	The words of a song.
Melody	Another name for tune.
Melodic	The music has a melody or tune.
Motown	A 1960s label created from Soul music characterised by a rhythm section playing, laying down the groove with a funky bassline and a tambourine sounding over the top. Often brass sections play punchy riff-based rhythms and sometimes violins playing long high notes
Neo-Soul	The style emerged from Soul and contemporary RnB. The instrumentation, arrangement and studio mix are very important. Songs are mixed in the studio to sound as if they are from an older Soul era like the Motown era. The modern way in which the songs are produced, give a timeless Soul feel that has a contemporary edge.
Notation	Ways to visually represent music.
Offbeat	The beat that is not the strong beat. If a piece of music has 4 beats in a bar i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, beats 2 and 4 would be the 'off'

	beats.
Organ	Organ usually refers to church organs but is also used to describe a type of electric keyboard that is large and with 2 or 3 keyboards and foot pedals.
Original	The first ever version of a song.
Ostinato	A short repeated rhythmic or melodic pattern.
Outro	Short section which brings the song or piece to an end.
Pentatonic scale	A fixed five-note pattern e.g. the five black keys on a piano.
Performing	Singing and playing instruments for others to hear.
Phrase	A musical sentence.
Pitch	A musical dimension that describes the range of high and low sounds.
Pop music	A shortened form of 'Popular music'. Pop music constantly changes as we change and the world changes.
Pre-chorus	A short section in a song, before the chorus.
Producer	A record producer or music producer oversees and manages the sound recording and production of a band or performer's music.
Pulse/beat	The heartbeat or steady beat of a song/piece of music.
Rapping	A vocal technique in which the performer speaks rhythmically against a steady beat.
Recurring theme	A tune that repeats again and again in a piece of music.
Rhythm	A musical dimension that describes the combination of long and short sounds to make patterns
Reggae	Developed in the 1970s and originated from Jamaica, Reggae defined by Bob Marley. It has a prominent bass beat and a strong off-beat usually played on the guitar.
Riff	A short, repeated phrase, often played on a lead instrument such as guitar, piano or saxophone.
Roots Reggae	Music that deals with social and racial issues and references elements of Rastafari.
Sampling	Record a sample of music, a small section, and re-use it in another piece of music or song. Used frequently in hip-hop and other Pop music.
Secular	Non-religious.
Solo	An Italian word to describe playing, singing or performing of one person or on our own.
Structure/form/shape	How the sections (verses and choruses etc.) of a song are ordered to make the whole piece.
Rock music	Came from Rock'n'roll of America in the 1950s and 1960s. It is characterised by loud guitars and drums due to the heavy amplification, strong bass line and driving rhythms.
Style	The type of music e.g. Blues or Rock.
Style indicators	Identifiers that show us the genre of the music.

Swing	A type of rhythm often associated with Jazz. Notes in the rhythm pattern are made longer and shorter to create a syncopated effect.
Syncopation	Music with lots of rhythmic variety, often quite difficult. The strong beats occur in unexpected places.
Synthesizer	An electric instrument that looks like a keyboard and has pre-recorded and created sounds.
Tag	(Usually) a short ending, tagged on to the main part of the song.
Tempo	A musical dimension that describes how fast or slowly the music is played.
Texture	A musical dimension that describes the layers of sound in music.
Timbre	A musical dimension that describes the quality and character of the sound of the instruments used.
Turntables	(Typically 2) are used by DJs to manipulate sounds and create new music, sound effects, mixes and other creative sounds and beats.
Unison	Everyone plays or sings the same music at the same time.
Urban contemporary	Modern music that uses elements of Soul, Hip Hop, Funk, Jazz and RnB.
Verse	A section in a song which has the same tune but different words.