



A-level MUSIC

Component 3 Composition

June 2026

Composition 1: Composition to a brief

Composition 2: Free composition

Issuing instructions

To be conducted between 15 September 2025 and 15 May 2026.

All completed work must be submitted to AQA by 15 May 2026.

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- appropriate facilities and materials for producing and recording compositions.

Instructions

- Composition 1: Composition to a brief: Choose **one** of the briefs in this booklet.
- Composition 2: Free composition: This need not reference areas of study or a given brief.
- For each composition you must include a programme note (approx.150 words).
- For each composition you must include a notated score and/or lead sheet and/or aural guide.
- For each composition you must include an audio file, preferably in .mp3 format, although .wav and other audio formats that would play on any device are also acceptable.
- Together, the compositions **must** last a combined minimum time of **four and a half minutes**. There is no maximum duration.
- If the combined minimum duration of your composition is **less than four and a half minutes** then a penalty proportionate to the severity of the timing infringement will be applied.
- You must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as your own.

Information

- Composition 1 is marked out of 25.
 - Composition 2 is marked out of 25.
 - The maximum mark for this paper is 50.
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Composition 1: Composition to a brief

Choose **one** of the following briefs.

0**1****Brief 1: Chorales**

Candidates should complete **both** chorales.

Chorale 1

Complete the harmonisation of the following chorale by adding parts for alto and tenor.

The image shows a musical score for a chorale in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major (three flats). The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of staves. The first system contains measures 1-5, the second system contains measures 6-10, and the third system contains measures 11-15. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is written in the bass clef. The score is incomplete, with many notes missing, particularly in the bass line, indicating where the candidate should add parts for alto and tenor.

Chorale 2

Harmonise the following chorale melody by adding parts for alto, tenor and bass.

The musical score for Chorale 2 is written on a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of 16 measures. The melody begins with a quarter rest in the first measure, followed by a half note G4 in the second measure, and a half note F#4 in the third measure. The melody continues with a half note E4 in the fourth measure, a half note D4 in the fifth measure, a half note C4 in the sixth measure, a half note B3 in the seventh measure, a half note A3 in the eighth measure, a half note G3 in the ninth measure, a half note F#3 in the tenth measure, a half note E3 in the eleventh measure, a half note D3 in the twelfth measure, a half note C3 in the thirteenth measure, a half note B2 in the fourteenth measure, a half note A2 in the fifteenth measure, and a half note G2 in the sixteenth measure. The score is divided into four systems of four measures each, with measure numbers 5, 11, and 15 indicated at the start of their respective systems.

[25 marks]

Turn over for the next brief

Turn over ►

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2

Brief 2

Compose a song in a lively **soul** style.

The song will be released on a music streaming platform.

The song must include the following motifs.

Motif 1



Motif 2



Motif 3



The motifs may be:

- used in any order
- used separately or simultaneously
- used in any section(s) of the song
- transposed to any pitch
- developed and extended.

The song must be scored for:

- solo **and** backing vocals
- drum kit
- electric guitar
- bass guitar.

You may include other instruments of your choice.

You should provide lyrics. These may be your own or someone else's (who should be acknowledged).

You will **not** be assessed on the quality of the lyrics.

[25 marks]

0

3

Brief 3

Compose music to underscore a scene in a romantic comedy movie.

The scene takes place in the evening in a café, where the two main characters are having dinner. There is a small band playing in the background. In the scene your music will be diegetic: it will look and sound as though it is being played live by this band.

The Director would like your music to reflect a change of mood in the scene.

Your music should include the following two leitmotifs. Each leitmotif is associated with one of the two main characters.

Leitmotif 1



Leitmotif 2



The music must be scored for live performance by instruments which would be appropriate for the context of performance in a café.

The music should last between **two** and **three** minutes.

[25 marks]

Turn over for the next brief

Turn over ►

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4

Brief 4

Write a song for a musical which is inspired by the life of Marie Curie.

The song is a **solo** for the main character, Marie Curie. The song occurs midway through the first act of the musical. She is singing about her determination to overcome the frustrations in her scientific work.

Your song must use the following lyrics.

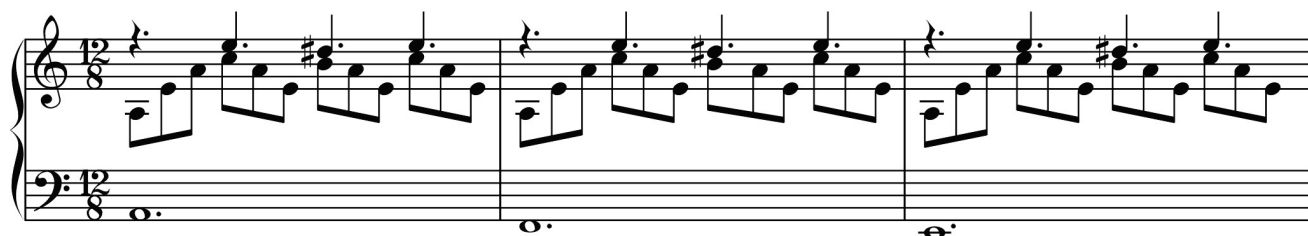
I've worked through days that stretch to endless night,
 The measurements seem just out of reach,
 The spark I seek stays stubborn, hides from sight,
 The clues fall silent; they do not teach.
 I sift the pitchblende till my fingers bleed,
 The air is thick with dust and doubt,
 And still, I dig—this endless, desperate need,
 But where's the answer? When will it shout?

They call me stubborn; let them call me more,
 I will not shrink beneath their gaze,
 I'll crush each doubt that's thrown before my door,
 I'll set this world, this element, ablaze.
 For there's something glowing deep within,
 Not just the radium's dim light,
 It's the promise that my mind could win,
 Though shadows press and fuse with night.

I'll dig through earth, I'll burn through flame,
 Till truth lies shimmering in my hand,
 And though they may not know my name,
 They will come to understand.
 The sparks will sing, and I'll name them all,
 The hidden rays, the phantom's gleam,
 I'll prove that even those who stumble, fall,
 Can rise again, can chase the dream.

You may add further lyrics. You will **not** be assessed on the quality of the lyrics.

The song must include the following accompaniment. It may be transposed if you wish.



The song must be scored for **at least two** and **up to eight** instruments of your choice.

[25 marks]

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5

Brief 5

Compose a piece in **Bebop** style.

The piece will be performed at an event celebrating the centenary of John Coltrane's birth.

The piece should be composed in the structure of a Head arrangement.

The piece must use the following changes (chord progression) for the Head.

B♭maj7	Gm7	D7	Gm7	C7	Fmaj7	B♭maj7	D7
Gm7	D7	E♭maj7	G7	Cm7	Fmaj7	B♭maj7	F7

Developments of the changes (chord progression) from the Head may use:

- chord substitution
- chord extension
- chord alteration.

The piece must be fully notated.

The piece must be scored for:

- **either** solo piano
- **or** a solo instrument of your choice with accompanying instrument(s). The accompaniment must include **either** a piano **or** a guitar.

[25 marks]

Turn over for the next brief

Turn over ►

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Brief 6

Compose a piece of instrumental music which is a fusion of Latin American and Western European styles.

The piece will be performed as the introductory music for the opening of a dance competition.

The competition organisers would like the music to capture the spirit of the event's strapline:

Each step is a symphony of movement, unleashing the rhythm of the soul.

You must choose at least one Latin American dance rhythm and use it in your piece.

The piece must contain the following features:

- chromatic melody
- rhythmic energy
- syncopation.

The piece must be scored for an ensemble of **up to four** pitched instruments of your choice.

Additional untuned percussion instruments may also be used.

[25 marks]

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7

Brief 7

Compose a piece of postmodernist instrumental music.

The piece will be performed at a festival promoting the music of current Celtic composers.

The piece must be based on the following Celtic folk melody.



The folk melody may be stated in its entirety **and/or** used as fragments of motif and phrase.

The piece must contain the following features:

- contrapuntal textures
- dissonant **and** non-functional harmonies.

The piece must be scored for:

- **either** an ensemble of a **minimum of four** and a **maximum of eight** acoustic instruments
- **or** a string orchestra.

[25 marks]

Turn over for the free composition

Turn over ►

Composition 2: Free composition

Free compositions need not reference areas of study or a given brief.

[25 marks]

END OF BRIEFS

There are no briefs printed on this page

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