

Glossary: Helpful Music Vocabulary (*terms we would like children to know and use*)

General vocab

***bar** – a regular section on a staff, separated by vertical lines. Contains the beats*

***beat**– unit of rhythm*

canon – tune that is repeated at regular intervals by different performers, but with different starting times

chant – singing in unison, with a similar rhythm to speech

choir – group of singers

***chord** – 2 or more notes (usually 3) played simultaneously in harmony*

chord progression – string of chords played in succession, usually a pattern

clef – a symbol on written music, defining what pitch to play the note

***crescendo** – getting louder*

***decrescendo/diminuendo** – getting quieter*

dissonance – harsh sounds, chords not in harmony

downbeat – first beat in a bar

drone – monotonous tone

duet – two vocalists or instruments

*** dynamics** – how loud or quiet a piece of music is*

***ensemble** – all instruments in an orchestra or all voices in a choir, playing at once*

flat – playing a note a semitone lower than the written one

***forte** – loud*

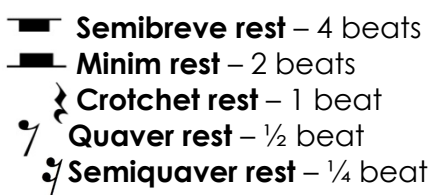
***harmony** – pleasing combination of two or more notes, played in background behind melody*

***accent** – where the music is emphasised*

Note lengths



Rest lengths



key – system of notes based on a key note

key signature – the flats and sharps at the beginning of each line, to be played throughout the piece
music

major – a happy sounding piece of music

measure – a bar in a piece of music

minor – a sad sounding piece of music

***notation** – a method of writing music*

octave – 8 full tones above the key note. Start and end of a scale

off beat – the unaccented beat

***orchestra** – a large group of instruments, usually classical *

***pulse** – the constant beat in a piece of music*

***rest** – moment when a note is not played for a defined length of time*

rhythm – structured groups of accented and unaccented beats

scale – successive notes of a key, ascending or descending

sharp – note to be raised by a semitone

slur – a curve over notes, suggesting that it is slurred together

staccato – short, sharp notes

*** staff** – five horizontal lines on which notes are written*

*** tempo** – speed of a piece*

*** time signature** – how many beats to a bar*

unison – playing or singing the same notes simultaneously

vibrato – quickly alternating between two notes – a wobbly sound

Common Tempo words

adagio – slow and calm

allegro – quick and lively

andante – relaxed and flowing

largo – slow and broad

lento – slow

moderato – a reasonable pace

rit. (ritardando) – slowing the tempo (also **ral. (rallentissez)**)

presto – quick and lively

prestissimo – extremely quick