



Pearson
Edexcel

A level Music

Timing guidance for component 3
(appraising)





Timing guidance for component 3

Recommended Timings

One of the positive features of the Pearson A level Music Appraising exam is that candidates have complete control over the audio tracks and may listen to them as often as they wish, and in whichever order they wish, during the exam. Whilst this is a benefit, it does bring challenges, and in this document, we hope to provide some strategies to handle this successfully.

This is only a recommended guide, and we want candidates to have the flexibility to play to their individual strengths and have the choice how they spend the time. However, it is essential that they have a clear time plan and do not over-spend or under-spend time on certain questions.

Section B requires more time than Section A with the demands of essay writing, greater AO4 emphasis with discussion and references to other relevant examples of music.

Possible time plan option

Total exam time: 2 hours 10 minutes

Section A: 50 mins ideally but no more than 60 mins

Section B: 80 mins ideally but no less than 70 mins

Question 5: 35 mins ideally but no less than 30 mins

Question 6: 45 mins ideally but no less than 40 mins

How to plan for the exam

Have a clear time plan and stick to it

- Practice a whole paper under exam conditions, perhaps as a mock exam, using a time plan and controlling the audio tracks
- Practice writing individual Question 5 and 6 essays, under timed conditions and handwritten to ensure writing is legible
- Candidates may complete the exam paper in any order they wish
- Consider attempting the paper in a different order and perhaps start the exam with one of the essays



How to use time efficiently in the exam

Section A

Questions 1-3

- Do not over-spend time on these questions
- It is normal not to spend the same amount of time on each set work listening question as they will be worth different amounts of marks and have different demands with the various types of questions. These will include:
 - Questions of aural perception: naming instruments/voice types, playing techniques, identifying intervals, chords, cadences, keys.
 - Questions to describe specific elements, comparing music with similarities and differences, explaining how the composer creates a stated mood.
- Questions may be 1-mark, multi-mark or multiple choice.
- Learn main musical features of the elements, stylistic features of the genre and date of composition in advance

Question 4

- Do not over-spend time on the aural dictation question
- Limit the time or number of times you play the recording and move on when you have given it a good attempt

Section B

Question 5

- Leave enough time for this question to listen to the excerpt, making notes and planning the essay, and time to write the essay
- Learn some typical generic features of the style of the area of study in advance
- Interpret the question by highlighting key words in the question
- Listen to the audio track a few times and make notes in the answer area of the exam paper for each of the eight musical elements (melody, harmony, tonality, structure, sonority, texture, tempo/metre/rhythm, dynamics)
- Try writing the essay organised by musical elements rather than as a chronological account. This may provide a more balanced account of the unfamiliar piece



- Do not quote audio track timings in the essay, this is not required and will take up time
- Practise creating a musical discussion: identifying a musical feature, explaining it musically showing justification of the composer's intentions and how it links to the question, linking it with another piece of music, showing some knowledge of that piece and explaining the connection
- Other music should be referenced by naming the composer, piece and movement (if from a larger work). Do not only name the composer, or the piece
- Examples of other music should appear consistently throughout the essay, representing each element and connected to as many musical features as possible
- Try to justify the example of other music by writing a small amount of information to musically describe the example and show why it is a good example. Simply naming the piece provides only an illustration
- It is not necessary to write an introduction or conclusion for Question 5

Question 6

- Leave enough time for this question to plan and write the essay
- Divide the 45 minutes up and know how long to spend on each paragraph: the contextual introduction and each of the three elements
- Learn features of the musical elements of the set work in advance
- Practise writing the introductory contextual paragraph about the composer and piece in advance
- Work out which examples of wider listening to use in advance
- Produce an essay plan in the answer area of the exam paper with the main musical features for each element and perhaps the linked example of other music
- Try writing the essay organised by musical elements rather than as a chronological account. This will provide a more balanced and focused account of the piece
- The scores provided for Question 6 are only a helpful reminder and represent a third of the piece/movement. Do not spend time in the exam analysing and working through the score as this will use up a lot of time. It is not the time for score analysis, it is the time to write what you have learnt about the piece as a discussion. It is sensible to learn the main musical features of the piece before the exam
- Do not quote bar numbers in the essay, this is not required and will take up time



- Practise creating a musical discussion: identifying a musical feature, explaining it musically and the effect that it creates, linking it with another piece of music and showing some knowledge of that piece by explaining the connection
- Other music should be referenced by naming the composer, piece and movement (if from a larger work). Do not only name the composer, or the piece
- Examples of other music should appear consistently throughout the essay and be well represented for each element and connected to as many musical features as possible
- Try to justify the example of other music by writing a small amount of information to musically describe the example and show why it is a good example. Simply naming the piece provides only an illustration
- Candidates should provide an introduction for Question 6 to write about the historical, social and cultural context in which the piece was created and developed. However, they should also be encouraged to make contextual links throughout the essay alongside their musical features for the elements. It is not necessary for candidates to repeat the wording of the question regarding the three elements in their introduction
- It is not necessary for candidates to write a conclusion for Question 6, although they may should they wish if they have something to add to this part of the essay. However, they should take care not to repeat musical observations which have already been made in the essay