

## GCSE Music specimen paper extended writing model student answers

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfo381CL3Og>

### Model Student Answer A

*Beethoven's sonata is for a piano but Handel is writing for a different type of keyboard. It might be a harpsichord which is a different type of piano. Beethoven's sonata sounds much harder to play because both hands are busy and have lots of fast notes. Handel puts the difficult bits in the top. Both composers use chords but only Beethoven has them in both hands. Beethoven uses two speeds, Grave and Allegro. Handel's piece starts much slower and gets even slower later. Both pieces are in minor key, but not the same.*

### Examiner's Commentary

The student makes isolated points about both extracts (AO3) but does not include supporting musical examples. There is some attempt to explore similarities and differences but these are undeveloped. The student does not make evaluative and critical judgements (AO4). There are several missed opportunities to use musical vocabulary, for example 'speed' rather than 'tempo'. In addition some of the musical observations are vague, for example the reference to 'difficult bits in the top'. The reference to tonality is irrelevant.

**Level 1 2/12**

### Model Student Answer B

*Handel's sonata is written for harpsichord. This Baroque instrument does not have a sustaining pedal. Because each note does not sound for long on a harpsichord Handel decides to add ornaments to long notes, like the trill in the first bar. In contrast Beethoven is writing for a type of piano called the pianoforte which can hold long notes like the first chord in his piece. However Beethoven also uses ornaments (in the exposition). Both composers put the ornaments in the right hand. I think this is because both composers have the melody mainly in the right hand which makes the melody easy to hear. Beethoven's sonata is in C time, which is 4 beats in a bar, but then it becomes 'cut common time' which is 2 beats in a bar. This is also where the tempo changes. Handel's sonata is also in C time. It stays in C time*

*which I think is more usual for Handel's time. It is much slower than Beethoven's sonata and there is a change to Adagio (even slower) at the very end for the coda. The rhythm in Handel's piece looks much more difficult to play with lots of dotted rhythms. You hear the dotted rhythms in the first two bars. Beethoven does use dotted rhythms in his slow introduction but in the main sonata section he tends to use either repeated crotchets or quavers particularly in the accompaniment.*

### **Examiner's Commentary**

The student makes accurate points about both extracts and provides supporting musical examples (AO3). The student also demonstrates some stylistic awareness (AO3). A good range of musical vocabulary is used including 'exposition', 'ornaments' and 'accompaniment' (AO3). The pupil refers to similarities such as melodies appearing in the right hand (AO4) and also attempts to compare and contrast (AO4) for example commenting on Beethoven's change in metre. **Level 3 9/12**

### **Model Student Answer C**

*Beethoven and Handel have composed for different keyboard instruments: Handel writes for the harpsichord and Beethoven writes for the pianoforte. The harpsichord has a much smaller range and that is why Handel's piece has a compass of just over three octaves. In comparison Beethoven writes much lower and higher notes. He uses these particularly at the end of the exposition. The harpsichord also cannot make much difference in dynamics which is why there are no dynamics in Handel's score. Beethoven uses lots of dynamics for example in the first two beats of bar 4 where he uses sf. Both of the sonatas start in common time. However Beethoven changes to 2/2 at the start of the exposition. Changes of time signature in the middle of a piece are much more common during Beethoven's time. Beethoven also uses dramatic changes in tempo which makes it sound quite Romantic. Handel has an adagio at the very end but it is not very dramatic. For much of the exposition Beethoven has continuous quavers, particularly in the accompaniment part. Mozart does this too and it is a feature of Classical music. This leads me to say that the melody for both pieces is in the right hand. The melody is the most important feature of both pieces and it stands out at the top of the texture. Both composers make the melody more beautiful by adding ornaments especially mordents (e.g. bar 5 of Handel's sonata and in the second subject of Beethoven's sonata). Handel needs to add these ornaments because the notes of a harpsichord don't last long because they are plucked and there is no sustaining pedal. The rhythm in Handel's sonata is more interesting. He sometimes uses regular length notes like the crotchet accompaniment (left hand) in the opening 4 bars but the rhythm of the melody is really intricate, for example the very short notes in the adagio where the melody is moving quicker than the chords.*

### **Examiner's Commentary**

This is a detailed answer: each point made is relevant and all aspects of the question are addressed. The student makes perceptive points about both works and provides supporting musical examples throughout (AO3). The student demonstrates an awareness of the stylistic

context of both works (AO3). There is extensive and sophisticated use of musical vocabulary including 'second subject' and 'mordent' (AO3). The works are compared, contrasted and the student draws conclusions (AO4) for example the student comments on the limitations of the harpsichord in comparison with the pianoforte and draws conclusions.

**Level 4 12/12**