

Building Bricks

Exploring the Elements of Music



A. Pitch

The **highness** or **lowness** of a sound.

B. Tempo

The **speed** of a sound or piece of music.

FAST: *Allegro, Vivace, Presto*
SLOW: *Andante, Adagio, Lento*
GETTING FASTER –
Accelerando (accel.)
GETTING SLOWER –
Ritardando (rit.) or Rallentando (rall.)



C. Dynamics

The **volume** of a sound or piece of music.

VERY LOUD: *Fortissimo (ff)*
LOUD: *Forte (f)*
QUITE LOUD: *Mezzo Forte (mf)*
QUITE SOFT: *Mezzo Piano (mp)*
SOFT: *Piano (p)*
VERY SOFT: *Pianissimo (pp)*
GETTING LOUDER: *Crescendo (cresc.)*
GETTING SOFTER: *Diminuendo (dim.)*



D. Duration

The **length** of a sound.

E. Texture

How much sound we hear.

THIN TEXTURE: (*sparse/solo*) – small amount of instruments or melodies.



THICK TEXTURE: (*dense/layered*) – lots of instruments or melodies.

F. Timbre or Sonority

Describes the **unique sound or tone quality** of different instruments voices or sounds.



Velvety, Screechy, Throaty, Rattling, Mellow, Chirpy, Brassy, Sharp, Heavy, Buzzing, Crisp, Metallic, Wooden etc.

G. Articulation

How individual notes or sounds are **played/techniques**.

LEGATO – playing notes in a long, smooth way shown by a **SLUR**.



STACCATO – playing notes in a short, detached, spiky way shown by a **DOT**.



H. Silence

The opposite or absence of sound, **no sound**. In music these are **RESTS**.



I. Notation

How music is **written** down.

STAFF NOTATION – music written on a **STAVE** (5 lines and spaces)



GRAPHIC NOTATION/SCORE – music written down using shapes and symbols to represent sounds.

