

*Mississippi Music Teachers Association*  
**Pre-College History and Terminology  
REQUIREMENTS**

**GRADE 4**

**Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the theory and music history information in the grade they enter and ALL previous grades.**

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750): A German composer who composed all genres of music except opera. J.S. Bach was famous as a composer as well as a keyboard player. Many of his children were also musicians.

ACCENT (>): Emphasis on one pitch or chord.

ARPEGGIO: A chord whose pitches are sounded one after another.

BAR LINE: A vertical line drawn through the staff to mark off measures.

COMPOSER: A musician who creates and notates music.


D.C. AL FINE (Da Capo al Fine): Repeat from the beginning to Fine (the end).

DOUBLE BAR: A double vertical line that marks the end of a piece or movement

DYNAMIC MARKINGS: Indications of loudness and softness in music, such as: FORTE (*f* = loud), PIANO (*p* = soft), MEZZO-FORTE (*mf* = moderately loud) and MEZZO-PIANO (*mp* = moderately soft).

FERMATA (◡): A sign meaning to pause, or hold the note.


MEASURE: The distance between two bar lines.

REPEAT SIGN (

RHYTHM: The organization of beats or pulses in time.

RITARDANDO (ritard. or rit.): Gradually getting slower.

SKIP/LEAP: An interval greater than a second

SLUR (

STEP: An interval of a second (2<sup>nd</sup>).

TRIAD: A three-note chord.


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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827): A German who composed all genres of music. He was born in Bonn, Germany, but lived in Vienna, Austria, during his adult years. During his early 30s, Beethoven began to grow deaf, and later became completely deaf. He was a concert pianist as well as a composer.

ARCO: With the bow.

8va... A sign placed over notes meaning to play them an octave higher than written.

8va... or 8va Basso: A sign placed below notes meaning to play them an octave lower than written.

FOLK MUSIC: Music that has been passed down orally for many generations before being written down. We usually do not know who wrote the melody or words. Many tell stories about work, love, or sadness; some are lullabies or patriotic songs.


HARMONY: Two or more notes sounding at the same time.

INTERVAL: The distance between two pitches (2nds, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, etc.)

LEGATO (leg.): To play smoothly, connecting the notes.

MELODY: Several notes (or tones) played or sung one after the other. Melodies are often referred to as a musical sentence.

PIZZICATO: Pinched, plucked. A playing technique that involves plucking the strings with fingers.

STACCATO (stacc. or ): To play short and detached, letting go of a note.

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**GRADE 6**

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**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791):** An Austrian composer who wrote all genres of music and was considered a child prodigy (genius). He began playing the harpsichord at age 4 and was composing music soon afterwards. He and his sister Nannerl performed concerts all over Europe during their childhood. He wrote over 600 compositions in his short lifetime of 35 years.

**A TEMPO:** Return to the original tempo of the composition.

**CRESCENDO** (cresc., ): Gradually louder.

**DECRESCENDO** (deces. ): Gradually softer.

**DIMINUENDO** (dim., dimin.): Gradually softer.

**D.S. AL FINE** (Dal Segno al Fine): Repeat from the sign to the place marked Fine.

**FORTISSIMO** (*ff*): Very loud.

**HARMONIC INTERVAL:** An interval between two notes written or sounded together.

**MELODIC INTERVAL:** An interval between two notes written or sounded separately.

**METRONOME:** A device that produces various beats at speeds which may be adjusted according to a tempo marking.

**PHRASE:** A small group of notes that form a unit of melody, often referred to as a “musical sentence.”

**PIANISSIMO** (*pp*): Very soft.

**PIANOFORTE** or **FORTEPIANO:** The full name of the piano.

**SONATINA:** A smaller sonata with one or more contrasting movements, often less technically demanding than a sonata.

**TEMPO:** The rate of speed of a composition. Some examples of tempo markings are:

**ALLEGRO:** Happy, fast.  
**ANDANTE:** Walking speed.  
**MODERATO:** Moderate speed.

**UP-BEAT, PICK-UP, or ANACRUSIS:** One or more notes preceding the first metrically strong beat of a phrase, often an incomplete measure found at the beginning of a piece.

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Four main periods of music:

BAROQUE:	1600-1750
CLASSICAL:	1750-1820
ROMANTIC:	1820-1900
CONTEMPORARY:	1900-present

Composers to recognize:

Baroque:	GEORGE PHILLIP TELEMANN (Germany), ANTONIO VIVALDI (Italy)
Classical:	FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (Germany)
Romantic:	ROBERT SCHUMANN (Germany), JOHANNES BRAHMS (Germany)
Contemporary:	BÉLA BARTÓK (Hungary)

ACCIDENTALS: Sharps, flats, and naturals found in a piece, but not found in the key signature.

CHORD PROGRESSION: A succession of two or more chords.

CODA (⌘): A concluding section at the end of a movement or composition.

COMMON TIME (C): Four beats to the measure (4/4).

DUET: A composition played or sung by two people.

INVERSION: An instance where the root is no longer the lowest sounding note of the chord. There are three positions of a triad; ROOT POSITION, FIRST INVERSION, SECOND INVERSION.

KEY SIGNATURE: The sharps or flats at the beginning of each staff.

POCO A POCO: Little by little.

PRESTO: A tempo marking meaning quickly, rapidly.

QUARTET: A composition played or sung by four people.

RALLENTANDO (rall.): Gradually slowing in speed.

ROOT, THIRD, and FIFTH: Names given to the notes of a triad or chord.

SCALE: A stepwise series of ascending and descending tones in a given key.

SPICCATO: A bowing technique for string instruments in which the bow bounces lightly on the string.

TRIO: A composition played or sung by three people.

VIVACE: A tempo marking meaning lively, animated.

FORM: The structure and design of a composition, such as: Binary (AB), a composition in two sections, and Ternary (ABA), a composition in three sections.

The three pedals on a piano are: DAMPER PEDAL (right), SOSTENUTO PEDAL (middle), and the SOFT PEDAL, or UNA CORDA (left).

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**Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the theory and music history information in the grade they enter and ALL previous grades.**

Woodwind instruments: FLUTE, PICCOLO, CLARINET, OBOE, SAXOPHONE, and BASSOON.

Brass instruments: BARITONE, TRUMPET, HORN (French Horn), TROMBONE and TUBA.

Composers to recognize:

Baroque: GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL (Germany)

Classical: CARL STAMITZ (Germany)

Romantic: FREDERIC CHOPIN (Poland); FRANZ SCHUBERT (Austria)

Contemporary: SCOTT JOPLIN (USA), AARON COPLAND (USA)

ACCELERANDO (accel.): Becoming faster.

ACCOMPANIMENT: The musical background for a principal or solo part.

ALLA BREVE: Cut time; two strong beats to the measure (2/2 or  $\Phi$ ).

CADENCE: A chord progression. Two common cadences are V-I and IV-I.

CANTABILE: In a singing style.

CHROMATIC SCALE: A scale consisting of consecutive half steps.

CON MOTO: With motion, quicker.

DOLCE: Sweetly.

GLISSANDO: Playing rapid scales. Many instruments use a sliding movement.

HARPSICHORD: An ancestor of the piano. Its strings are plucked instead of struck. The organ and harpsichord were keyboard instruments of the Baroque period.

IMPROVISATION: The creation of music during the performance.

MENO MOSSO: Less motion; a slower tempo than before.

OSTINATO: A figure or phrase that is constantly repeated.

PIU MOSSO: More motion; a faster tempo than before.

RONDO: A piece in A-B-A-C-A form, often used in the final movements of sonatinas and sonatas. The "A" section returns in the same key each time, with "B" & "C" in other keys.

SATB: Initials for soprano, alto, tenor and bass, which defines the voice types required by a choir.

SEMPRE: Always or continuously.

SFORZANDO (*sf*, *sfz*): A sudden, strong accent.

TETRACHORD: Four consecutive notes in a pattern; two tetrachords can join to form a scale.

TRE CORDE (three strings): An instruction meaning to release the soft pedal (una corda) of the piano.

UNA CORDA (one string): An instruction meaning to use the soft pedal of the piano.

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**GRADE 9**

**Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the theory and music history information in the grade they enter and ALL previous grades.**

String instruments: VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, DOUBLE BASS, GUITAR, HARP.

Composers to recognize:

Baroque: ARCHANGELO CORELLI (Italy)  
Classical: FRIEDRICH KUHLAU (Germany)  
Romantic: FELIX MENDELSSOHN (Germany), EDVARD GRIEG (Norway), NICOLO PAGANINI (Italy), GIACOMO PUCCINI (Italy)  
Contemporary: DMITRI SHOSTAKOVITCH (Russia), GEORGE GERSHWIN (USA)

Famous performers to recognize: *Students should learn the following performers of their mediums.*

Pianists: CLAUDIO ARRAU, VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, ARTHUR RUBENSTEIN, CLARA SCHUMANN, ROSALYN TURECK.

Brass performers: Trumpet: ADOLPH “BUD” HERSETH; Horn: PHILIP FARKAS;  
Trombone: CHRISTIAN LINDBERG; Euphonium: BRIAN BOWMAN  
Tuba: ARNOLD JACOBS

Guitarist: ANDRÉS SEGOVIA

Vocalists: CHARLOTTE CHURCH, LEONTYNE PRICE, LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

Percussionists: Rock drums: GINGER BAKER; Jazz drums: GENE KRUPA

String performers: Violin: YASCHA HEIFETZ; Viola: LIONEL TERTIS; Cello: PABLO CASALS; Bass: SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY

Woodwind performers: Flute: JASMINE CHOI; Oboe: DIANA DOHERTY; Clarinet: SHARON KIM;  
Bassoon: MATTHIAS RACZ; Saxophone: SIGURD RASCHER

**ADAGIO:** A tempo marking meaning slowly, leisurely; a name given to a slow movement written in that time.

**ALLEGRETTO:** A tempo marking meaning moderately fast, but slower than Allegro.

**DOUBLE-REED WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS:** woodwind instruments that require two reeds that are separated by narrow opening and vibrate against each other by the breath. Example: bassoon and oboe.

**ENHARMONIC:** Notes that are named and written differently but are the same pitch.

**IMPRESSIONISM:** A period in music history chiefly represented by Claude Debussy and inspired by the impressionist painters of France. Impressionism is a term borrowed from painting to describe music that is intended to convey an impression rather than a specific, dramatic, or narrative idea. Blurred phrases, vague rhythms, parallel chords, and whole tone scales are some characteristics of this music.

**LENTO:** A tempo marking meaning slower than Adagio.

**M.D. (mano destra, It., or main droite, Fr.):** The right hand.

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(Grade 9 - Continuation)

M.S. or M.G. (mano sinistra, It., or main gauche, Fr.): The left hand.

MODULATION: Changing from one key to another within a movement or composition.

PROGRAM MUSIC: Instrumental music inspired by a non-musical idea, which is often written in the title or in descriptive remarks by the composer. In the music, the composer attempts to describe some action, scene, story, or mood.

SCHERZANDO: Playfully.

SINGLE-REED WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS: woodwind instruments that use one reed that vibrates by the breath. Example: clarinet and saxophone.

SONATA: A work for one or more solo instruments, usually in several movements.

SPIRITOSO: Spirited.

SYMPHONY: An extended orchestral work, usually in several movements. Although most symphonies are for orchestra alone, composers in the late classical period on included parts for voice, chorus, or solo instruments.

TONALITY: The harmonic organization of music around a central tone, called the tonic.

VIRTUOSO: A performer who excels in technical ability.

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**GRADE 10**

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Percussion instruments: CYMBALS, DRUMS, MARIMBA, PIANO, TAMBOURINE, TRIANGLE, TIMPANI, and XYLOPHONE.

Composers to recognize:

Baroque: HENRY PURCELL (England).

Classical: CARL PHILLIP EMANUEL BACH (Germany), DOMENICO CIMAROSA (Italy).

Romantic: PETER TCHAIKOVSKY (Russia), HECTOR BERLIOZ (French), CARL MARIA VON WEBER (Germany)

Contemporary: CHARLES IVES (US), IGOR STRAVINSKY (Russia).

Famous performers to recognize: *Students should learn the following performers of their mediums.*

Pianists: VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY, ALFRED BRENDEL, VAN CLIBURN, FANNY MENDELSSOHN, WALTER GIESEKING, JOSEF HOFMANN, RUTH LAREDO.

Brass performers: Trumpet: HERBERT CLARKE; Horn: DENNIS BRAIN;  
Trombone: ARTHUR PRYOR; Euphonium: SIMONE MANTIA;  
Tuba: BILL BELL

Guitarist: JULIAN BREAM

Vocalists: PLACIDO DOMINGO, MARIAN ANDERSON, BEVERLY SILLS

Percussionists: Jazz drums - MAX ROACH; Mallet - GARY BURTON

String performers: Violin: ISAAC STERN; Viola: LIONEL TERTIS;  
Cello: MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH; Bass: GARY KARR

Woodwind performers: Flute: EMMANUEL PAHUD; Oboe: NICHOLAS DANIEL;  
Clarinet: MARTIN FROST; Bassoon: JUDITH LECLAIR;  
Saxophone: MARCEL MULE

ALLARGANDO: Broadening, becoming slower.

ANDANTINO: A tempo marking meaning a little quicker than Andante.

BAGATELLE: A name sometimes given to short, light pieces of music.

CADENZA: A virtuoso passage in improvisational style. Its traditional place is near the end of a concerto movement; many times, it ends with a trill.

CON BRIO: With spirit, vigor.

CONCERTO: A piece for soloist and orchestra, usually in three movements. The cadenza section highlights the virtuosity of the performer.

GRAZIOSO: Gracefully.

IMITATION: A repetition of a motive in different voices.

LARGO: A tempo marking meaning broad and slow.

LOCO: In normal location or pitch register, used after an 8va sign.



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(Grade 10 - Continuation)

**MORENDO:** Dying away by degrees, gradually slower and softer.

**MOTIVE:** A musical “idea”; a short group of tones (generally one to two measures) arranged in a definite rhythmic pattern

**PARALLEL KEYS:** Keys with the same tonic, such as C Major and c minor.

**REPETITION:** A repeat of a motive; notes used may be the same or slightly different.

**RELATIVE KEYS:** Keys with the same key signature, but a different tonic. Example: C Major and A minor.

**SCALE DEGREES:** Special names for the tones of the scale:

TONIC:	first or main note
SUPER-TONIC:	above the tonic
MEDIANT:	midway between first and fifth tones
SUB-DOMINANT:	the fourth tone of the scale
DOMINANT:	fifth tone
SUB-MEDIANT:	sixth tone
LEADING TONE:	“leads to” tonic, also called SUB-TONIC - seventh tone

**SENZA:** Without.

**SEQUENCE:** A repetition of a motive on a different pitch, either higher or lower.

**SIMILE:** Continue performing in the same way or a similar manner.

**STRINGENDO:** Pressing, accelerating the tempo.

**SUBITO:** Suddenly, at once.

**THEME AND VARIATIONS:** A type of composition in which a theme (usually a simple tune) is changed in different ways.

**TEXTURE:** The horizontal (melodic) and vertical (harmonic) elements of music. There are three basic kinds of musical texture:

MONOPHONIC:	a single melodic line without accompaniment;
HOMOPHONIC:	a single melodic line with chordal accompaniment;
POLYPHONIC (CONTRAPUNTAL):	two or more independent melodic lines.

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Composers to recognize:

Baroque:	FRANCOIS COUPERIN (France)
Classical:	JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH (Germany)
Romantic:	SERGEI RACHMANINOV (Russia), EDWARD MACDOWELL (USA), HUGO WOLF (Austria)
Impressionism:	CLAUDE DEBUSSY (France)
Contemporary:	ROBERT MUCZYNSKI (USA), VINCENT PERSICHETTI (USA), SERGEI PROKOFIEV (Russia), ARNOLD SCHOENBERG (Austria)

Famous performers to recognize: *Students should learn the following performers of their mediums.*

Pianists:	MARTHA ARGERICH, HANS von BULOW, EMIL GILELS
Brass performers:	Trumpet: MILES DAVIS; Horn: TOM BACON; Trombone: J. J. JOHNSON
Guitarists:	JOHN WILLIAMS, DAVID RUSSELL
Vocalists:	JOHN SUTHERLAND, MARIA CALLAS, ROBERT MERRILL
Percussionists:	Rock drums: JOHN BONHAM; Recording session drums: HAL BLAINE
String performers:	Violin: ITZHAK PERLMAN; Viola: WILLIAM PRIMROSE; Cello: YO-YO MA; Bass: EDGAR MEYER
Woodwind performers:	Flute: JEAN PIERRE RAMPAL; Oboe: SHERRY SYLAR; Clarinet: CHARLES NEIDICH; Bassoon: SOPHIE DERVAUX; Saxophone: CLAUDE DELANGLE

**ARIA:** A long accompanied song for a solo voice, typically one in an opera or oratorio.

**AUTHENTIC CADENCE:** The harmonic progression of V-I.

**BITONALITY:** Contemporary compositional technique; using 2 keys simultaneously

**BRASS QUINTET:** A musical ensemble of five brass players: two trumpets, French horn, trombone & tuba.

**ETUDE:** A piece written to help master a specific technical skill.

**FUGUE:** A contrapuntal composition for several parts or “voices” (usually 3 or 4), based on one melodic theme or motive (subject).

**GIOCOSO:** Playfully, humorously.

**LEGGIERO:** Light, nimble, quick.

**NOCTURNE:** “Night piece”; a quiet, sentimental, or romantic composition written in a melancholy style. The title “nocturne” was first used in 1812 by composer John Field.

**OPERA:** A drama set entirely to music; the text is sung with orchestral accompaniment.

**PIANO TRIO:** A musical ensemble of three players: violin, cello and piano.

**PLAGAL CADENCE:** The harmonic progression of IV-I.

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**RECITATIVE:** A vocal passage part of a cantata, opera, or oratorio in which singers declaim using natural rhythms of speech.

**SONATA FORM:** A form which became prevalent in the Classical period, and is found in most first movements of sonatas, symphonies, and other works. It consists of three main sections: EXPOSITION, DEVELOPMENT, RECAPITULATION. Sometimes there is an INTRODUCTION and/or CODA. The basis of Sonata form is key relationships.

**EXPOSITION:** contains the first theme in the tonic key and second theme in a contrasting key.  
**DEVELOPMENT:** uses material from the exposition, or entirely new material, and usually modulates.  
**RECAPITULATION:** repeats the exposition, except that both the themes are now in the tonic key.

**STRETTO:** Contracted, quicker. In fugal writing, stretto is a section where a “subject” and its “answer” overlap.

**STRING QUARTET:** A musical ensemble of four string players: two violins, viola and cello.

**SUITE:** An instrumental form of the Baroque period consisting of several movements based on dances. The 4 main dances are: ALLEMANDE, COURANTE, SARABANDE, and GIGUE; optional dances are often included, some are GAVOTTE, MINUET, BOURRÉE, POLONAISE. Dances in each suite are in the same key and are usually in Binary form.

**TENUTO** (ten. or -): Hold for full value.

**WOODWIND QUINTET:** A musical ensemble of five woodwind players: flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn and bassoon.

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Composers to recognize:

Baroque:	JEAN PHILIPPE RAMEAU (France)
Classical:	KARL CZERNY (Germany), C.W. von GLUCK (Germany)
Romantic:	RICHARD WAGNER (Germany), FRANZ LISZT (Hungary)
Impressionism:	MAURICE RAVEL (France)
Twentieth Century:	ALBERTO GINASTERA (Argentina), PAUL HINDEMITH (Germany), ARAM KHACHATURIAN (Russia), FRANCIS POULENC (France), W. M. GRANT STILL (Mississippi, USA).

Famous performers to recognize: *Students should learn the following performers of their mediums.*

Pianists:	LEON FLIESCHER, DAME MYRA HESS, ALICIA DE LARROCHA.
Brass performers:	Trumpet: ALLEN VIZZUTTI; Horn: FROYDIS von WEKRE; Trombone: JOE ALESSI; Euphonium: STEVEN MEAD; Tuba: DANIEL PERANTONI
Guitarists:	MANUEL BARRUECO, SHARON ISBIN
Vocalists:	BRYN TERFEL, RENÉE FLEMING, DAWN UPSHAW
Percussionists:	Jazz drums: BUDDY RICH; Mallet: LIONEL HAMPTON
String performers:	Violin: DAVID OISTRAKH; Viola: TABEA ZIMMERMANN; Cello: LEONARD ROSE; Bass: FRANÇOIS RABBATH
Woodwind performers:	Flute: SIR JAMES GALWAY; Oboe: ALEX KLEIN; Clarinet: SEBINE MEYER; Bassoon: KLAUS THUNEMANN; Saxophone: TIMOTHY MCALLISTER

ANIMATO: A tempo marking meaning animated, with spirit.

ATONALITY: Absence of tonality, i.e., music with no key center; occurs in Contemporary music, especially that of Arnold Schoenberg.

CALANDO: Gradually slower and more subdued.

CHAMBER MUSIC: Instrumental music performed by one player on each part instead of many players on each part. Combinations include: Trio (3), Quartet (4), Quintet (5), Sextet (6), Septet (7), and Octet (8), Nonet (9).

CON: With.

DOPPIO MOVIMENTO: Twice as fast as the previous tempo.

MAESTOSO: A tempo marking meaning majestic, dignified.

MAZURKA: A Polish folk dance in triple meter; characteristically, the weak beats (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> beats) of the measure are accented. Chopin wrote many mazurkas for the piano.

NON TROPPO: Not too much.

ORATORIO: A lengthy musical work for orchestra, soloists and chorus, usually on a religious theme, performed without the use of costumes, scenery, or action.

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**PESANTE:** Heavily, weighty.

**POLONAISE:** Polish folk dance of a stately and festive character; it is usually in a moderate triple meter. Chopin's polonaises symbolize Polish heroism.

**POLYTONALITY:** The simultaneous use of 2 or more keys; most often occurs in the Contemporary period.

**RUBATO:** A flexibility of tempo utilizing slight accelerandos and ritardandos for musical expression.

**TOCCATA:** A virtuosic composition for keyboard or plucked string instruments featuring sections of brilliant passagework.

**WHOLE TONE SCALE:** A scale consisting only of whole steps/tones.