

MUSIC VOCABULARY

Accompaniment	A vocal or solo part that supports or is background for a solo part.
Bar	A unit of music, such as 12-bar or 8-bar, denoting length.
Beat	A unit of measure in rhythmic time.
Canon	A musical form in which melody is imitated exactly in one or more parts, similar to a <i>round</i> .
Chamber music	Any music written for a chamber ensemble—a string quartet, a piano trio, a chamber orchestra, etc. Music for a soloist, or for a soloist with accompanist, may or may not be chamber music.
Choral, chorus	Choral means of a choir; a <i>choral work</i> is a work for choir, and a chorus is a relatively large choir, or group of singers.
Chord	Three or more tones played simultaneously.
Compose	To create original music by organizing sound. Usually written down for others to perform.
Composition	A single, complete piece of music, (also, piece and work).
Concert	A program by a chamber ensemble, orchestra, band, or chorus; there are also rock, jazz, and pop concerts.
Dynamics	Variation and contrast in force or intensity.
Elements of music	Melody, harmony, rhythm, and form and the expressive elements of dynamics, tempo, and timbre (tone color).
Embellishment	Notes that are added to ornament a melody (melodic embellishment) or rhythmic pattern (rhythmic embellishment).
Ensemble	Any group of performers, but it is most commonly used for smaller groups. A large group would be referred to as an <i>orchestra, chorus, or band</i> .
Form	The organization and structure of a composition, and the interrelationships of music events within the overall structure
Genre	A type of musical work such as choral, jazz, mariachi, etc.

Harmony	The simultaneous sounding of two or more tones of relative tone.
Improvise	To spontaneously compose music.
Melody	A rhythmic succession of single tones organized into a cohesive or aesthetic whole.
Notation	Written documentation of musical notes indicating pitch and rhythm for performance.
Opera	A drama set to music for voices and orchestra and presented with costumes and sets.
Performance	The actual act of making music; sometimes used to mean a musical presentation.
Phrase	A musical idea comparable to a sentence or a clause in language; may be complete or incomplete.
Pitch	The location of a note in related to its highness or lowness.
Production	A performance of a work that involves staging—costumes, scenery, etc.—as well as music. The term may also refer to the costumes, scenery, and so on, as distinct from the music.
Program	(1) An entire concert or recital (2) The printed booklet given to audience members at a concert, opera, recital, etc. (3) A literary text, a place, an event, or the like, on which a musical composition is based.
Recital	A program by a soloist or by 2 performers (soloist and accompanist, or a duo).
Rhythm	Combinations of long and short, or even or uneven sounds that establish a musical continuum and convey a sense of movement.
Score	The organized notation of all of the instrumental and/or vocal parts of a composition.
Staff/Staves	The horizontal lines on and between which notes are written.
Symphony	A composition for orchestra, usually in four movements.
Tempo	The pace at which music moves according to the speed of the underlying beat.
Texture	The character of the different layers of horizontal and vertical sounds.
Theme and variation	A compositional form in which a theme is clearly stated and is followed by a number of variations.
Timbre	The color or quality of a musical tone.

Time Signature	A sign used in music to indicate meter, usually written as a fraction with the bottom number indicating the kind of note to be played as a unit of time and the top number indicating the number of units in each measure.
Twelve-bar blues	A chord pattern often used in blues music based on the 1 st , 4 th , and 5 th chords and the blues scale in specific order within twelve bars.
Vocal, vocalist	Vocal means <i>of the voice</i> ; vocalist is a synonym for <i>singer</i> .