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MUSIC THEORY

Notation guidance for exams

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During your music theory exam, you will be expected to complete some tasks which involve writing notation. These are completed using software called 'Flat', which is embedded into the online exam system. Below are instructions on how to access it before your exam and also some sample tasks to help you prepare.

How to access Flat

1. Go to Flat.io
2. Create a free account or sign in with Google/Apple.
3. Click on 'New score or tab'

Notation tools can be selected in the top header, then added by clicking into the score. You can also change and add instruments by clicking on the instrument icon in the top left corner, then 'manage instruments'. If you make any errors, there are 'undo' and 'cut' buttons in the top right corner.

Here is a list of tasks which will help you familiarise yourself with Flat.io before using it in an exam,

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1. Write an ascending scale or arpeggio which uses accidentals. Then try this descending and using a key signature instead of accidentals.
2. Write some notes into both clefs of a piano part using eighth notes, eighth note rests, quarter notes and quarter note rests. Rests can be created by deleting a note, which once deleted will be replaced with a rest of the same value.
3. Try changing the bar line at the end of a bar. To do this, click on the last note in a bar then select one of the bar line tools in the 'measure' tab. Clicking on the bar line tool multiple times will cycle through options.

GRADE 1

1. Write a short phrase into a treble clef using eighth notes, eighth note rests, quarter notes and quarter note rests. Rests can be created by deleting a note, which once deleted will be replaced with a rest of the same value.
2. Write a short phrase which includes slur and staccato notation. Try adding an accent to one of the notes as well.
3. Write an ascending scale or arpeggio which uses accidentals. Then try this descending and using a key signature instead of accidentals.
4. Write a chord using whole notes. Make sure the notes are all stacked on top of each other.
5. Add a dynamic marking to a bar of music, followed by a crescendo or diminuendo.
6. Using the 'drum set' instrument, write a bar of eighth-note hi-hats using voice 1. Then, click on the blue 'voice 1' button and switch to 'voice 2'. Now add some bass drum and snare notes. Voice 1 and voice 2 represent the higher and lower notation in a drum staff. For example, you could use voice 1 for hi hats and voice 2 for bass drum and snare, so that the note stems go in the correct direction.

GRADE 2

1. Write an ascending scale or arpeggio which uses accidentals. Then try this descending and using a key signature instead of accidentals.
2. Write a chord using whole notes. Make sure the notes are all stacked on top of each other.
3. Add a dynamic marking to a bar of music, followed by a crescendo or diminuendo.
4. Write a short phrase into a bass clef using eighth notes, eighth note rests, quarter notes and quarter note rests. Rests can be created by deleting a note, which once deleted will be replaced with a rest of the same value.
5. Write a short phrase which includes slur, tenuto and staccato notation. Try adding an accent to one of the notes as well.
6. Using the 'drum set' instrument, write a bar of eighth-note hi-hats using voice 1. Then, click on the blue 'voice 1' button and switch to 'voice 2'. Now add some bass drum and snare notes. Voice 1 and voice 2 represent the higher and lower notation in a drum stave. For example, you could use voice 1 for hi hats and voice 2 for bass drum and snare, so that the note stems go in the correct direction.
7. Try adding a flam to one of the snare notes (the notation tool for this is located in the 'note' tab)

GRADE 3

1. Write an ascending scale or arpeggio which uses accidentals. Then try this descending and using a key signature instead of accidentals.
2. Write two consecutive chords using whole notes. Make sure the notes are all stacked on top of each other.
3. Write a short phrase which includes slur, tenuto and staccato notation. Try adding an accent to one of the notes as well.
4. Add pedal notation under a piano stave (located in the 'dynamic' tab when using a piano instrument)
5. Using the 'drum set' instrument, write a bar of eighth-note hi-hats using voice 1. Then, click on the blue 'voice 1' button and switch to 'voice 2'. Now add some bass drum and snare notes. Voice 1 and voice 2 represent the higher and lower notation in a drum stave. For example, you could use voice 1 for hi hats and voice 2 for bass drum and snare, so that the note stems go in the correct direction.
6. Add a dynamic marking to a bar of music, followed by a crescendo or diminuendo.
7. Write a short phrase with a pitched instrument using eighth notes, eighth note rests, quarter notes and quarter note rests. Rests can be created by deleting a note, which once deleted will be replaced with a rest of the same value.

GRADE 4

1. Write a phrase with a pitched instrument using the following: sixteenth notes, eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, whole notes and their equivalent rests.
Rests can be created by deleting a note, which once deleted will be replaced with a rest of the same value.
Dotted values can also be selected in the 'note' tab.
2. Write a short phrase which includes slur, tenuto and staccato notation. Try adding an accent to one of the notes as well.
3. Add a dynamic marking to a bar of music, followed by a crescendo or diminuendo.
4. Write an ascending scale which uses accidentals. Then try this descending and using a key signature instead of accidentals.
5. Write two consecutive chords using quarter notes. Make sure the notes are all stacked on top of each other.
6. Write two bars of piano notation in both treble and bass clef. Then add suitable pedal notation (located in the 'dynamic' tab when using a piano instrument).

GRADE 5

1. Write a phrase with a pitched instrument using the following: sixteenth notes, eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, whole notes and their equivalent rests.
Rests can be created by deleting a note, which once deleted will be replaced with a rest of the same value.
Dotted values can also be selected in the 'note' tab.
2. Write a short phrase which includes slur, sforzando, tenuto and staccato notation. Try adding an accent to one of the notes as well.
3. Add a dynamic marking to a bar of music, followed by a crescendo or diminuendo.
4. Write an ascending scale which uses accidentals. Then try this descending and using a key signature instead of accidentals.
5. Write two consecutive chords using quarter notes. Make sure the notes are all stacked on top of each other.
6. Write one to two bars of piano notation in both treble and bass clef. Then add a glissando between two notes and pedal notation (located in the 'dynamic' tab when using a piano instrument).
7. Amend the note value within the tempo indicator. For example, if the default tempo at the top of the score reads as crotchet=80 then try converting this to quaver=80
8. Using the 'drum set' instrument, write a bar of eighth-note hi-hats using voice 1. Then, click on the blue 'voice 1' button and switch to 'voice 2'. Now add some bass drum and snare notes with a fill at the end. Voice 1 and voice 2 represent the higher and lower notation in a drum staff. For example, you could use voice 1 for hi hats and voice 2 for bass drum and snare, so that the note stems go in the correct direction.

GRADE 6 TO 8

1. Write a phrase with a pitched instrument using the following: sixteenth notes, eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, whole notes and their equivalent rests.
Rests can be created by deleting a note, which once deleted will be replaced with a rest of the same value.
Dotted values can also be selected in the 'note' tab.
2. Write a short phrase which includes slur, sforzando, tenuto and staccato notation. Try adding an accent to one of the notes as well.
3. Add a dynamic marking to a bar of music, followed by a crescendo or diminuendo.
4. Write an ascending scale which uses accidentals. Then try this descending and using a key signature instead of accidentals.
5. Write two consecutive chords using quarter notes. Make sure the notes are all stacked on top of each other.
6. Write one to two bars of piano notation in both treble and bass clef. Then add a glissando between two notes and pedal notation (located in the 'dynamic' tab when using a piano instrument).
7. Amend the note value within the tempo indicator. For example, if the default tempo at the top of the score reads as crotchet=80 then try converting this to quaver=80
8. Using the 'drum set' instrument, write two bars of eighth-note hi-hats using voice 1. Then, click on the blue 'voice 1' button and switch to 'voice 2'. Now add some bass drum and snare notes with a fill at the end. Voice 1 and voice 2 represent the higher and lower notation in a drum staff. For example, you could use voice 1 for hi hats and voice 2 for bass drum and snare, so that the note stems go in the correct direction.