



HOLYPORT
COLLEGE

MUSIC TRANSITION WORK 2026

A Level Music Summer Transition Work (Eduqas)

Transitioning from GCSE to A Level Music is a significant leap, demanding deeper analytical skills, advanced theoretical understanding, and a higher level of practical proficiency.

This summer transition work is designed to bridge the gap between Year 11 and Year 12, ensuring you hit the ground running with the Eduqas A Level Music syllabus in September.

The tasks are split into three key areas:

1. Listening & Appraising
2. Theory & Analysis
3. Practical Skills (Performance & Composition)

I recommend pacing yourself and completing a few tasks each week rather than trying to do it all at once.

Good luck, and I look forward to seeing you in September!

Best wishes,

Mr Hamilton - Director of Music

Worksheet 1: Listening & Appraising – Introduction to the A Level Set Works (Western Classical Tradition)

Part 1: Listening & Appraising – Deepening Your Musical Ear

A Level Music requires you to listen actively, critically, and analytically. This means understanding how music works, not just what it sounds like.

Task 1: Introduction to the A Level Set Works (Western Classical Tradition)

The Eduqas A Level has compulsory set works that you'll study in detail. Start by getting familiar with the sound worlds of these pieces.

Step 1: Listen to the following movements from two symphonies:

- Haydn: Symphony No. 104 in D major, 'London' (Movements 1 & 2)
 - Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4 in A major, 'Italian' (Movements 1 & 2)
- (You can easily find these on YouTube or your preferred music streaming service. Search for "Haydn Symphony 104 Movement 1" etc.)

Step 2: For EACH piece you listen to, answer the following questions to capture your initial thoughts and first impressions.

Piece 1: Haydn: Symphony No. 104 in D major, 'London'

- Movement 1:
 - What instruments do you hear most prominently?
 - What is the overall mood or feeling of this movement?
 - Can you hear any recurring melodies or short musical ideas? Describe them briefly.
 - Does the music change character significantly throughout the movement?
If so, where and how?
 - How does the music make you feel?
- Movement 2:
 - What instruments do you hear most prominently?
 - What is the overall mood or feeling of this movement?
 - Can you hear any recurring melodies or short musical ideas? Describe them briefly.
 - Does the music change character significantly throughout the movement?
If so, where and how?
 - How does the music make you feel?

Piece 2: Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 4 in A major, 'Italian'

- Movement 1:
 - What instruments do you hear most prominently?
 - What is the overall mood or feeling of this movement?
 - Can you hear any recurring melodies or short musical ideas? Describe them briefly.
 - Does the music change character significantly throughout the movement?
If so, where and how?
 - How does the music make you feel?

● Movement 2:

- What instruments do you hear most prominently?
- What is the overall mood or feeling of this movement?
- Can you hear any recurring melodies or short musical ideas? Describe them briefly.
- Does the music change character significantly throughout the movement?
If so, where and how?
- How does the music make you feel?

Step 3: Simple Comparison

After listening to both symphonies, complete the table below by noting down 2-3 similarities and 2-3 differences you notice. Think about aspects like mood, speed (tempo), instrumentation, and general sound.

	Aspect Similarities (2-3 points)	Differences (2-3 points)
Mood		
Tempo		
Instrumentation		
General Sound		

Worksheet 2: Listening & Appraising – Exploring 20th Century Sounds

Part 1: Listening & Appraising – Deepening Your Musical Ear

Task 2: Exploring 20th Century Sounds

Step 2: Listen to both of these pieces.

Option E (Into the Twentieth Century):

- **Poulenc: Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano, Movement II**
- **Debussy: Three Nocturnes, Number 1, Nuages**

(Again, these can be found on YouTube or streaming services.)

Step 2: For EACH chosen piece, reflect on the following questions.

Piece 1 (Poulenc):

- How is this music different from the Haydn/Mendelssohn symphonies you listened to in Worksheet 1?
- Are there any unusual sounds, harmonies, or rhythms? Describe them in detail.
- What instruments are used? How are they used differently compared to traditional classical music?
- Does this music tell a story or create a specific atmosphere? If so, what do you imagine or feel?

Piece 2 (Debussy):

- How is this music different from the Haydn/Mendelssohn symphonies you listened to in Worksheet 1?
- Are there any unusual sounds, harmonies, or rhythms? Describe them in detail.
- What instruments are used? How are they used differently compared to traditional classical music?
- Does this music tell a story or create a specific atmosphere? If so, what do you imagine or feel?

Extension Activity (Optional):

If you have time, listen to the other option as well. How do the pieces from "Into the Twentieth Century" compare to those from "Into the Twenty-first Century"? Note down any initial observations.

Worksheet 3: Listening & Appraising – Deconstructing Your Favourite Music

Part 1: Listening & Appraising – Deepening Your Musical Ear

Task 3: Active Listening – Deconstructing Your Favourite Music

Apply analytical thinking to music you enjoy. This task helps you practise identifying musical elements in a context you're already familiar with.

Instructions:

Step 1: Choose 2-3 of your favourite pieces of music (any genre – pop, rock, electronic, jazz, folk, film score, etc.).

List the pieces you have chosen below:

1. Piece Title: _____
Artist: _____
2. Piece Title: _____
Artist: _____
3. Piece Title: _____
Artist: _____

Step 2: For each chosen piece, actively listen and answer the following analytical questions. Be as detailed as possible!

Piece 1 Analysis: " _____ "
by " _____ "

- **Instrumentation/Sonority:** What instruments/voices do you hear? How are they

used (e.g., lead melody, accompaniment, rhythmic backing, texture)?

- *Your Answer:*

- **Melody:** Describe the main melody. Is it smooth (conjunct) or jagged (disjunct)? Does it move stepwise or with big leaps? Is it memorable? What is its overall shape?

- *Your Answer:*

- **Rhythm/Tempo:** What's the tempo (e.g., fast, slow, moderate)? Is the rhythm simple or complex? Are there any repeated rhythmic patterns?

- *Your Answer:*

- **Harmony:** Does the harmony sound simple (e.g., mostly major/minor chords) or more complex (e.g., dissonant, unexpected chords, jazz chords)? Does it change key at any point?

- *Your Answer:*

- **Texture:** Is the music thick or thin? Is there one main melody with accompaniment (homophonic)? Or are there multiple independent melodies (polyphonic)? Are there sections with different textures?

- *Your Answer:*

- **Structure:** Can you identify clear sections like verse, chorus, bridge, intro, outro, pre-chorus? Does it follow a common form like AABA? Map out the order of sections.

- *Your Answer:*

- **Mood/Atmosphere:** How is the overall mood or atmosphere created through the musical elements you've described above? What feelings does the music evoke?

- *Your Answer:*

Piece 2 Analysis: " _____ " by " _____ "

(Repeat the same questions as above for your second chosen piece.)

- **Instrumentation/Sonority:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Melody:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Rhythm/Tempo:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Harmony:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Texture:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Structure:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Mood/Atmosphere:**

- *Your Answer:*

Piece 3 Analysis (Optional): " _____ " by
" _____ "

(Repeat the same questions for your third chosen piece if you selected one.)

- **Instrumentation/Sonority:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Melody:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Rhythm/Tempo:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Harmony:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Texture:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Structure:**

- *Your Answer:*

- **Mood/Atmosphere:**

- *Your Answer:*

Worksheet 4: Theory & Analysis – Understanding Sonata Form

Theory & Analysis – Building Your Musical Vocabulary

Understanding Sonata Form (The Foundation of Classical Symphonies)

Sonata form is crucial for the compulsory set works in the Eduqas A Level Music syllabus.

Step 1: Research and Understand.

Look up "Sonata Form" using online resources (see suggested resources at the end of the transition work). Understand its main sections:

- **Exposition:**
 - First Theme (often energetic, in the tonic key)
 - Transition (modulates to a new key)
 - Second Theme (often more lyrical, in the new key, usually the dominant or relative major/minor)
 - Codetta (Closing Section - confirms the new key)
- **Development:**
 - Themes (or fragments of themes) are broken up, explored, and moved through different keys, creating tension.
- **Recapitulation:**
 - Themes return, but usually all in the **home key** (tonic), resolving the tension of the Development.
- **Coda (Optional):**
 - A concluding section that provides a final emphasis on the tonic key.

Step 2: Listen and Identify.

Listen: To Haydn: Symphony No. 104, Movement 1.

(Try to find a version that might provide a diagram or basic score if possible, as this will help immensely.)

- As you listen, try to identify where you hear the different main sections:
 - **Exposition:** Approximately where does it begin and end?
 - **Development:** Approximately where does it begin and end?
 - **Recapitulation:** Approximately where does it begin and end?
- Can you hear the distinction between the **First Theme** and the **Second Theme** in the Exposition and Recapitulation? Describe their character.

Step 3: Activity – Diagram Sonata Form.

Draw a simple diagram of Sonata Form in the space below (or on a separate sheet). Label its key sections and briefly describe what happens musically in each.

(Draw your diagram here or attach it separately.)

Useful Online Resources for Theory & Analysis (General):

- **MusicTheory.net:** Excellent interactive lessons and exercises for harmony, scales, intervals.
- **Khan Academy Music Theory:** Good for foundational understanding.
- **Open Music Theory:** More advanced, but you can explore specific topics like harmony and counterpoint.
- **YouTube:** Search for "Sonata Form Explained," "Advanced Harmony Lessons."

Worksheet 5: Theory & Analysis – Roman Numerals & Advanced Chords

Theory & Analysis – Building Your Musical Vocabulary

A Level Music requires a strong understanding of how music is put together. Go beyond GCSE basics.

Task 1: Roman Numerals & Advanced Chords (Refresh & Extend)

Step 1: Review and Consolidate Roman Numerals (Diatonic Chords)

- Ensure you are confident with Roman numerals for diatonic chords (I, ii, iii, IV, V, vi, vii°) in both **major** and **minor** keys.
- Understand root position, 1st inversion (indicated by '6'), and 2nd inversion (indicated by '6/4').

Quick Review Questions:

1. Write out the diatonic chords in C Major using Roman numerals (including inversions).
 - *Your Answer:*
2. Write out the diatonic chords in A Minor (natural, harmonic, or melodic - specify which) using Roman numerals.
 - *Your Answer:*
3. What is the difference between a root position triad, a first inversion triad, and a second inversion triad? Explain using an example (e.g., C Major chord).
 - *Your Answer:*

Step 2: Explore and Understand Advanced Concepts.

Research and understand the following concepts. Try to find examples (online sheet music, analyses) or even compose short progressions using them to solidify your understanding.

1. Seventh Chords:

- **Dominant 7th (V7):** What notes make up a G7 chord? What is its typical function?
 - *Your Answer:*
- **Major 7th:** How does a Cmaj7 differ from a C Major triad?
 - *Your Answer:*
- **Minor 7th:** How does a Cmin7 differ from a C Minor triad?
 - *Your Answer:*
- *Activity Idea:* Compose a short 4-chord progression using a Dominant 7th chord. Write it out or play it on an instrument.

2. Suspensions:

- **4-3 Suspension:** Explain how a 4-3 suspension works (preparation, suspension, resolution). Provide a short musical example or description.
 - *Your Answer:*

- **9-8 Suspension:** Describe a 9-8 suspension.
 - *Your Answer:*
- **7-6 Suspension:** Describe a 7-6 suspension.
 - *Your Answer:*
- *Activity Idea:* Find a simple melody or hymn tune. Can you identify any suspensions? If not, try to insert a simple 4-3 suspension.

3. **Non-Chord Notes (beyond basic identification – understand their function):**

- **Passing Notes:** What is a passing note? What is its role in a melody?
 - *Your Answer:*
- **Auxiliary Notes (Neighbour Notes):** Distinguish between upper and lower auxiliary notes.
 - *Your Answer:*
- **Appoggiaturas:** How is an appoggiatura different from a passing note or auxiliary note? What effect does it create?
 - *Your Answer:*
- *Activity Idea:* Listen to a simple piece of classical music (e.g., a short Mozart piano piece). Can you hear any of these non-chord notes? Try to label them.

4. **Simple Modulation:**

- What does it mean for music to "modulate"?
 - *Your Answer:*
- How does music typically shift from one key to another? (e.g., via a "pivot chord" or direct modulation).
 - *Your Answer:*
- What are some common modulations you might hear in classical music (e.g., to the dominant or relative minor/major)?
 - *Your Answer:*

Activity: Find short pieces of simple sheet music online (e.g., hymns, simple piano pieces) and try to **analyse** the chords using Roman numerals and identifying any non-chord notes. Print out or copy a section and **annotate** it.

Worksheet 6: Practical Skills – Performance Preparation

Part 3: Practical Skills – Performance & Composition

This component requires active music-making.

Task 1: Performance Preparation – Stepping Up Your Game

A Level performance typically requires a Grade 6 standard.

Step 1: Current Repertoire Review.

Think about pieces you currently play or sing.

- How close are they to Grade 6 standard?
- Identify specific areas for improvement (e.g., technical accuracy, musicality, expression, dynamics, tone **colour**).
 - *My current pieces are:*
 - *Areas for improvement:*

Step 2: New Challenge Piece.

Identify a piece that is slightly challenging for you but achievable over the summer. It could be a Grade 5 or 6 piece. This is your focus piece for dedicated summer practise.

- *My new challenge piece is (Title/Composer/Grade if known):*

Step 3: Focused Practice.

Dedicate time each week to focused practise on your chosen piece. Pay close attention to the following aspects. Tick them off as you focus on them in your practise sessions.

- **Accuracy:** All notes and rhythms correct.
 - ☐ Checked all notes against the score.
 - ☐ Ensured all rhythms are precise.
- **Technical Control:** Smooth scales, clean arpeggios, consistent tone.
 - ☐ Worked on finger/vocal technique specific to challenging passages.
 - ☐ Focused on consistent tone and sound quality.
- **Musicality:** Dynamics, phrasing, articulation, conveying the mood.
 - ☐ Marked in dynamics and observed them.
 - ☐ Thought about phrasing and breath control.
 - ☐ Used appropriate articulation (legato, staccato, etc.).
 - ☐ Considered the overall mood and how to convey it.
- **Memorisation:** If appropriate for your instrument/piece, work on **memorising** the piece.
 - ☐ Attempted to play sections from **memory**.
 - ☐ Identified areas needing more **memorisation** work.

Step 4: Record Yourself.

Record your practise sessions or a final performance of your piece. Listen back critically – what went well? What could be improved? This is an invaluable self-assessment tool.

- *Reflections after recording:*
 - *What went well?*
 - *What could be improved for next time?*

Worksheet 7: Practical Skills – Composition Exploration

Part 3: Practical Skills – Performance & Composition

This component requires active music-making.

Task 2: Composition Exploration – Experimenting with Ideas

You'll need to compose in the Western Classical Tradition and also a free composition for your A Level.

Step 1: Idea Generation & Sketching.

1. Short Melody Writing:

- Compose 2-3 short melodies (4-8 bars) for a single instrument or voice.
- Focus on shape, contour, and creating a sense of direction.
- Try starting from a simple rhythmic idea and then adding pitches.
- *Sketch your melodies here (use a staff or describe them):*

2. Harmonising a Melody:

- Take one of your melodies (or a simple tune you know, like a folk song).
- Try to add basic harmony using triads (I, IV, V). You can do this by ear, on a keyboard, or by writing out simple chord symbols below the melody.
- *Write your harmonised melody here (use chord symbols or basic notation):*

Step 2: "Classical Style" Mini-Task.

- **Brief:** Compose a very short (16-32 bars) piece for piano or string quartet that sounds like it could be from the Classical period (e.g., a simple minuet, a short theme and variations).
- **Focus:** Use clear melodies, balanced phrases, diatonic harmony (I, IV, V, vi), and simple structures (e.g., AABB).
- **Inspiration:** Listen to examples from Mozart, Haydn, or early Beethoven for inspiration.
- *Make notes on your ideas for this piece, or sketch out sections:*

Step 3: Free Composition Brainstorm.

Think about what inspires you musically. This is where you can be truly creative!

- What styles or genres would you like to explore in a free composition? (e.g., film music, electronic, jazz, folk fusion, something experimental?)
- Brainstorm ideas for:
 - **Instrumentation:** What instruments/voices would you use?
 - **Mood/Atmosphere:** What feeling do you want to create?
 - **Potential Starting Points:** (e.g., a specific rhythm, a chord progression you like, a text to set, an image or story that sparks an idea).
- *Record your brainstormed ideas here:*
- **Music Technology Experiment (Optional):**
 - If you have access to music technology (DAW like GarageBand, Logic Pro, Cubase, Ableton), experiment with creating a short track using loops, samples, or MIDI instruments based on your free composition ideas. What did you learn from this?
 - *Notes on Music Technology Experiment:*

Top Tips for Summer Success

Here are some final tips to help you make the most of your A Level Music summer transition work:

General Advice:

- **Listen Actively, Listen Widely:** Don't just hear the music; listen to it. Try to identify specific musical features. Explore genres beyond your comfort zone – you might discover a new **favourite!**
- **Use Your Instrument/Voice:** The best way to understand music is to make it. **Practise** regularly, even for short periods. Consistency is key.
- **Don't Be Afraid of "Theory":** Think of theory as the language of music. The more vocabulary you learn, the better you can understand and create. It helps you **realise** what you're hearing and why it works.
- **Keep a Music Journal:** Note down your thoughts on pieces you've listened to, ideas for compositions, challenges you face, and progress you make. This helps you track your learning.
- **Utilise Online Resources:** There's a wealth of free tutorials, analyses, and scores available. Don't be afraid to search for explanations on concepts you find tricky.
- **Pace Yourself:** Don't try to do everything in one go. Break down the tasks into manageable chunks over the weeks. Set small, achievable goals.
- **Enjoy the Process!** A Level Music is incredibly rewarding. Embrace the challenge and your passion for music.