

# 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**.



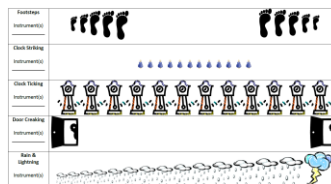
### I. Notation

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.



### J. How Music Works

Music can create an **atmosphere** or **ambience** e.g., *supermarkets and restaurants*.

Music can create an **image** e.g., *in response to art, a story, a poem, a character, a situation* – this is called **PROGRAMME MUSIC**.

Music can be **calming** e.g., *end of an evening in clubs and bars*.

Music can be used for **spiritual reasons** e.g., *worship, meditation, reflection, hymns and chants, yoga, and spiritual reflection*.

Music can be used for **commercial** purposes e.g., *advertising, TV themes*.