

### Comparison standard questions

The Musical Elements (GSMIRTH) section starting on page 31 is useful for reference when you are working through these questions.

Compare **Structure and form** by asking the following questions:

1. What is the overall form? (binary, ternary etc.)
2. What is the tonal structure? (main keys arrived at structural points)
3. How clearly are sections articulated? (e.g. by cadences, rests, changes etc.)
4. Discuss repetitions (including motivic links) and how they are varied or transformed.
5. Discuss notable contrasts.

Compare **Melody** by asking the following questions :

Also: ornaments.

1. To what extent is the melody diatonic (or modal)? Discuss the use of chromaticism.
2. Are phrases based on regular (periodic) units? Discuss irregularities.
3. Are there repeated motifs? (if so, how are they modified?)
4. Discuss the balance of stepwise (conjunct) and leaping (disjunct) motion? (Are leaps based on arpeggios? Are they small or large?)
5. What melodic devices are used (e.g. sequences, inversions etc. and also use (or lack) of standard embellishments such as auxiliary, passing note, appoggiatura etc.)

Compare **Instrumentation** by asking the following questions:

1. Is the combination of instruments traditional or more unusual?
2. How are the instruments in the ensemble grouped or combined?
3. Are there any examples of interesting or unusual writing for individual instruments?
4. Is there any notably virtuosic writing? (is the music more suitable for amateur or professional performance?)
5. What performance indications are present in the score?

Compare **Rhythm** by asking the following questions:

1. What are the metre and tempo?
2. Are phrases regular or irregular?
3. What is the level of rhythmic activity?
4. What rhythmic devices are used? (e.g. hemiola, syncopation, cross-rhythms)
5. How fast or slow is the harmonic rhythm? (speed at which the chords change)

Compare **Texture** by asking the following questions:

1. What is the basic texture? (polyphonic, homophonic etc.)  
Also: mention examples of any contrasting or particularly interesting textures
2. Describe the relationships between different instruments or voices (e.g. the violin plays the melody while the cello plays a countermelody; the two flutes are in parallel thirds)
3. What specific techniques are used? (contrapuntal techniques such as canon and stretto; use of ostinati etc.)
4. How full is the texture? (consider number of instruments, doublings etc., remember to document changes – i.e. “at the beginning the texture is full but ...”)
5. What accompanying textures or devices are used?

Compare **Harmony** by asking the following questions:

Also: describe any examples of notable harmonic devices (e.g. pedal, circle of fifths etc.)

1. Does the piece employ triadic harmony?
2. Does the piece employ functional harmonic progressions?
3. Is the harmony mostly diatonic or chromatic?
4. How dissonant is the harmony?
5. To what extent are cadences used to confirm the key and how emphatic are they?

Compare **Tonality** by asking the following questions:

1. What key is it in? (or is it modal or based on some other principle of pitch organisation?)
2. To what keys does the piece modulate? Are the resulting tonal relationships functional?  
[give examples of any notable keys to which the music modulates]
3. Describe how the music modulates (suddenly or gradually? using pivots or abrupt modulations? articulated with changes of texture/dynamics etc. or unobtrusively?)
4. Is the tonality clear or ambiguous? (harmony questions 2,3 & 4 feed into the answer to this question)