

# Marking criteria (all instruments)

Grades 1–8	Pieces				
	Pitch	Time	Tone	Shape	Performance
<b>Distinction</b> 27–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly accurate notes and intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent, with flexibility where appropriate</li> <li>Rhythmic character well conveyed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well projected</li> <li>Sensitive use of tonal qualities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assured</li> <li>Fully committed</li> <li>Vivid communication of character and style</li> </ul>
<b>Merit</b> 24–26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely accurate notes and intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustained, effective tempo</li> <li>Good sense of rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainly controlled and consistent</li> <li>Good tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive</li> <li>Carrying musical conviction</li> <li>Character and style communicated</li> </ul>
<b>Pass</b> 20–23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally correct notes</li> <li>Sufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable tempo</li> <li>Generally stable pulse</li> <li>Overall rhythmic accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally reliable</li> <li>Adequate tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some realisation of musical shape and/or detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally secure, prompt recovery from slips</li> <li>Some musical involvement</li> </ul>
<b>Below Pass</b> 17–19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent note errors</li> <li>Insufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsuitable and/or uncontrolled tempo</li> <li>Irregular pulse</li> <li>Inaccurate rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uneven and/or unreliable</li> <li>Inadequate tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Musical shape and detail insufficiently conveyed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insecure, inadequate recovery from slips</li> <li>Insufficient musical involvement</li> </ul>
<b>13–16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely inaccurate notes and/or intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erratic tempo and/or pulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serious lack of tonal control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Musical shape and detail largely unrealised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacking continuity</li> <li>No musical involvement</li> </ul>
<b>10–12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly inaccurate notes and/or intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incoherent tempo and/or pulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No tonal control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No shape or detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to continue for more than a short section</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>

Grades 1–8	Scales and arpeggios	Sight-reading*
<b>Distinction</b> 19–21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly accurate notes/pitch</li> <li>Fluent and rhythmic</li> <li>Musically shaped</li> <li>Confident response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent, rhythmically accurate</li> <li>Accurate notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Musical detail realised</li> <li>Confident presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Merit</b> 17–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely accurate notes/pitch</li> <li>Mostly regular flow</li> <li>Mainly even tone</li> <li>Secure response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate tempo, usually steady pulse</li> <li>Mainly correct rhythm</li> <li>Largely correct notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Largely secure presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Pass</b> 14–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally correct notes/pitch, despite errors</li> <li>Continuity generally maintained</li> <li>Generally reliable tone</li> <li>Cautious response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuity generally maintained</li> <li>Note values mostly realised</li> <li>Pitch outlines in place, despite errors</li> <li>Cautious presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Below Pass</b> 11–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent errors in notes and/or pitch</li> <li>Lacking continuity and/or some items incomplete</li> <li>Unreliable tone</li> <li>Uncertain response and/or some items not attempted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacking overall continuity</li> <li>Incorrect note values</li> <li>Very approximate notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Insecure presentation</li> </ul>
<b>7–10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very approximate notes and/or pitch</li> <li>Sporadic and/or frequently incomplete</li> <li>Serious lack of tonal control</li> <li>Very uncertain response and/or several items not attempted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No continuity or incomplete</li> <li>Note values unrealised</li> <li>Pitch outlines absent</li> <li>Very uncertain presentation</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>

Grades 1–8	Aural tests
<b>Distinction</b> 17–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurate throughout</li> <li>Musically perceptive</li> <li>Confident response</li> </ul>
<b>Merit</b> 15–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses</li> <li>Musically aware</li> <li>Secure response</li> </ul>
<b>Pass</b> 12–14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths just outweigh weaknesses</li> <li>Cautious response</li> </ul>
<b>Below Pass</b> 9–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weaknesses outweigh strengths</li> <li>Uncertain response</li> </ul>
<b>6–8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inaccuracy throughout</li> <li>Vague response</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>

\* Includes Transposition for Horn, Trumpet and Organ (Grades 6–8) and Figured bass realization for Harpsichord (Grades 4–8).

In these cases, of the total 21 marks, 12 are allocated to Sight-reading and 9 to Transposition (or Figured bass realization), and one combined mark is recorded.

# Marking criteria (singing)

Grades 1–5	Songs					Grades 6–8
	Pitch	Time	Tone	Shape	Performance	
<b>Distinction</b> 27–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly accurate notes and intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent, with flexibility where appropriate</li> <li>Rhythmic character well conveyed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well projected</li> <li>Sensitive use of tonal qualities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assured</li> <li>Fully committed</li> <li>Vivid communication of character and style</li> </ul>	<b>Distinction</b> 22–24 (Lists A & B) 19–21 (Lists C & D)
<b>Merit</b> 24–26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely accurate notes and intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustained, effective tempo</li> <li>Good sense of rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainly controlled and consistent</li> <li>Good tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive</li> <li>Carrying musical conviction</li> <li>Character and style communicated</li> </ul>	<b>Merit</b> 20–21 (Lists A & B) 17–18 (Lists C & D)
<b>Pass</b> 20–23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally correct notes</li> <li>Sufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable tempo</li> <li>Generally stable pulse</li> <li>Overall rhythmic accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally reliable</li> <li>Adequate tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some realisation of musical shape and/or detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally secure, prompt recovery from slips</li> <li>Some musical involvement</li> </ul>	<b>Pass</b> 16–19 (Lists A & B) 14–16 (Lists C & D)
<b>Below Pass</b> 17–19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent note errors</li> <li>Insufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsuitable and/or uncontrolled tempo</li> <li>Irregular pulse</li> <li>Inaccurate rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uneven and/or unreliable</li> <li>Inadequate tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Musical shape and detail insufficiently conveyed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insecure, inadequate recovery from slips</li> <li>Insufficient musical involvement</li> </ul>	<b>Below Pass</b> 13–15 (Lists A & B) 11–13 (Lists C & D)
13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely inaccurate notes and/or intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erratic tempo and/or pulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serious lack of tonal control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Musical shape and detail largely unrealised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacking continuity</li> <li>No musical involvement</li> </ul>	10–12 (Lists A & B) 9–10 (Lists C & D)
10–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly inaccurate notes and/or intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incoherent tempo and/or pulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No tonal control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No shape or detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to continue for more than a short section</li> </ul>	8–9 (Lists A & B) 7–8 (Lists C & D)
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	0

Grades 1–8	Unaccompanied traditional song	Sight-singing
<b>Distinction</b> 19–21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent control of pitch and intonation</li> <li>Rhythmic character well conveyed</li> <li>Sensitive use of vocal qualities</li> <li>Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping</li> <li>Fully committed communication, vivid story-telling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent, rhythmically accurate</li> <li>Accurate notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Musical detail realised</li> <li>Confident presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Merit</b> 17–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good control of pitch and intonation</li> <li>Rhythmic character conveyed</li> <li>Good use of vocal qualities</li> <li>Clear musical shaping</li> <li>Good musical involvement and story-telling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate tempo, usually steady pulse</li> <li>Mainly correct rhythm</li> <li>Largely correct notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Largely secure presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Pass</b> 14–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally reliable control of pitch and intonation</li> <li>Adequate sense of rhythmic character</li> <li>Sufficient use of vocal qualities</li> <li>Some musical shaping</li> <li>Some musical involvement and story-telling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuity generally maintained</li> <li>Note values mostly realised</li> <li>Pitch outlines in place, despite errors</li> <li>Cautious presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Below Pass</b> 11–13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unreliable control of pitch and/or intonation</li> <li>Inadequate sense of rhythmic character</li> <li>Insufficient use of vocal qualities</li> <li>Lack of musical shaping</li> <li>Insufficient musical involvement and/or story-telling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacking overall continuity</li> <li>Incorrect note values</li> <li>Very approximate notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Insecure presentation</li> </ul>
7–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very unreliable control of pitch and/or intonation</li> <li>Lacking rhythmic character</li> <li>No use of vocal qualities</li> <li>No musical shaping</li> <li>Lacking musical involvement and/or story-telling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No continuity or incomplete</li> <li>Note values unrealised</li> <li>Pitch outlines absent</li> <li>Very uncertain presentation</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>

Grades 1–8	Aural tests
<b>Distinction</b> 17–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurate throughout</li> <li>Musically perceptive</li> <li>Confident response</li> </ul>
<b>Merit</b> 15–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses</li> <li>Musically aware</li> <li>Secure response</li> </ul>
<b>Pass</b> 12–14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths just outweigh weaknesses</li> <li>Cautious response</li> </ul>
<b>Below Pass</b> 9–11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weaknesses outweigh strengths</li> <li>Uncertain response</li> </ul>
6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inaccuracy throughout</li> <li>Vague response</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>