

Setting Out Your Answer

There are a few different ways to set out your HSC Music 1 Aural Skills

In the sample answers you can look at different ways of setting out your answers and try them out when you practice listening.

It is well worth setting aside an hour each week and listening to four pieces and writing answers. It will help you learn to budget your time, strengthen your hand muscles and help you hear and write better answers.

Make sure you listen OUTSIDE your comfort zone; listen to the music that is least familiar.

Practice writing HSC aural answers

Why Practice?

- You need to develop concentration skills and stamina. Four pieces in an hour is a lot of concentration.
- You need to build your writing muscles.
- You need to get used to ALL types of music, so you won't panic.
- You need to practice writing different types of answer and try using different layouts.
- You need to become quick at the obvious and easy.
- The more feedback you can get the better.

There is no easy way, you need to know, memorise the concepts and language, and you need to practice listening, hearing it, and writing it down.

Avoid cognitive over load: Learn to hear and name the basics. Sometimes there is so much happening in the music your brain freezes and you can't hear anything. This is called cognitive overload. If you have memorized the aspects of each concept, make a plan and focus on specific 'things' you will be able to hear, write it down, then listen for the next thing.

Be able to identify the Big4 and common tricks easily and quickly

Big4

Tonality - major/minor

Time – duple/triple

Tempo= speed

Instrument/s and it's role

Melody

Harmony

Bass

Rhythm

Fillers

Common instruments

Orchestra

Band

Rock band

Jazz combo

Techno

Aerophones- wind instruments

Idiophones- bells, rattles

Chordophones- stringed

instruments

Membranophones- drums

Common tricks

Sequence

Imitation

Counter melody

Ornaments- trills

Pedal note- pedal point

Staggered entry

Call & response

Question/answer

(Solo/tutti)

Filler= fills

Cadences: finished/unfinished

Syncopation

Ostinato

Riff

Make sure you know which of the above fit in to more than one concept

Texture types

Monophonic- one layer- unison, unaccompanied melody or bass line

Homophonic- melody and chords move together, melody and accompaniment

Polyphonic- 2 or more melodies at same time: imitation, melody+ countermelody; several different melodies at once

Answering the question

Use all the information provided in the question: Composer, title of piece. This may tell you something about the style/genre of the excerpt

Have a plan for your listening.

- Plan what you will listen for in each playing, remember to note the easy/obvious points that relate to your question

Make a map of the music: listen and identify sections in the music, or events in the music

Work out what to focus on

- **Stick to the question**
- **Get the obvious things** first- check for the Big4 and Common Tricks
- **Run through your check list of the concept/s**
- **Don't waste time on one small point for example:** if you can't identify the time signature quickly, leave it and go on to what you can hear

Connect your comments to the question, quote examples from the music to explain your answer

Setting out your answer

Make a map: In the first playing, outline the sections or events in the music

Use a jigsaw approach (Refer to *This Little Babe*)

- In playing one and two, leave room between your first comments so you can add extra information each time you hear the piece. ***You will not hear everything in the first playing, or in order, you must leave room.***

Use dot points you do not need to write in full sentences

ONE IDEA PER LINE this allows room for you to add things with each playing

- If easy for you using diagrams and symbols may be a quick way to jot down what you can hear BUT make sure these are labeled and explained clearly
- *If easy for you and appropriate you may notate rhythms or pitch but **don't waste time if this is not quick and easy for you.*** It is not necessary for music 1 students to notate music

Useful ways of setting out your answer

The Section Outline: Use the structure of the excerpt. Whenever a piece has a clear structure use the structure to layout the answer. Try and keep your comments in chronological order.

Use the first playing to make a map or outline of the musical structure, leaving room between your sections, for example:

LEAVE
ROOM
BETWEEN
SECTIONS

Combinations of Intro-Verse-Chorus (etc...) (Pop/rock/folksong)

Section 1- Section 2- Section 3 (etc.)

A-B-A

AA BB (or) A B

A B A C A

A B C D

Theme- Var 1, Var 2, Var 3 (etc.)

Tutti-solo-tutti-solo

Head (Jazz melody over main riff) -Solo

(improvised)- Head (etc.)

Tutti-solo-tutti-solo

12 bar blues

A A¹ A² A³

When using letters,
A B A etc, use A to
describe the same
material or A1 when
material is repeated

You may need to
include arrows to
link comments to
the correct section
of the music

The unfolding structure: Use musical events in the excerpt.

Sometimes pieces unfold without clear sections. If the sections of the music are not clear you can use one of the following:

- Use musical events- change in register, instrumentation
- Use the words or lyrics

Headings, dot points and musical examples from the excerpt

Sometimes using headings works better, but you must draw examples from the music to make your points and you need to **make sure you explain, WHAT and WHERE** in the music your point occurred.

- Use clear headings.
- Quote examples from the music to support your statements.
- Link the comments back to the question.

The table or column answer: good for comparing version 1/version 2.

- May still require you to label the sections

Checklist for answering HSC music 1 aural questions

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **PLAN what you will listen for in each playing.**
- **Use a Jig Saw method**, LEAVE SPACE between the sections or changes in the excerpt.
- ***When possible, use the structure of the excerpt to layout your answer.***
- **Stay with the music**, leave room between your initial comments so you can add in details as you hear them. **You cannot write and listen, and** you need to listen to the end of the excerpt as well.
- **Write the obvious first. Don't waste time on obscure and difficult to hear 'things'.**
- Use point form.
- **Make sure the layout for your answer is clear: try to lay it out in chronological order.**
- **Stick to the question.**
- **Explain, diagrams and musical words.**
- **Use examples from the music to back up your statements.**
- **Listen to all layers** of the music: **WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW, WHY?**
- **Explain the roles of instruments:** *rhythm, melody, harmony, texture, dynamics, tone colour, or both pitch and duration, e.g.: ostinato.*
- *Adapt the format of your answer to suit the question.*