

Glossary and Vocabulary Words

Indiana Academic Standards for Music

The purpose of this document is to define vocabulary used in Indiana Academic Standards for Music. The goal of this list is to be a reference tool for educators

A Capella: without instrumental accompaniment

Accompaniment: an instrumental or vocal part designed to support or complement a melody

Arrangement: setting or adaptation of an existing musical composition

Articulation: characteristic way in which musical tones are connected, separated, or accented; types of articulation include legato (smooth, connected tones) and staccato (short, detached tones)

Audiate: hear and comprehend sounds in one's head (inner hearing), even when no sound is present

Aurally Perceived: reception of sound through the ears

Beat: underlying steady pulse present in most music

Canon: piece of music in which the same melody is begun in different parts successively, so that the imitations overlap

Chord: group of (typically three or more) notes sounded together, as a basis of harmony

Composition: original piece of music that can be repeated, typically developed over time, and preserved either in notation or in a sound recording

Compound Meter: meter in which each beat of the measure divides naturally into three equal parts

Concepts, music: understandings or generalized ideas about music that are formed after learners make connections and determine relationships among ideas

Context: environment that surrounds music, influences understanding, provides meaning, and connects to an event or occurrence

Countermelody: a secondary melody that is sounded simultaneously with the principal one

Create: conceive and develop new artistic ideas, such as an improvisation, composition, or arrangement, into a work

Cue: conducting signal to a performer to begin their performance

Culture: values and beliefs of a particular group of people, from a specific place or time, expressed through characteristics such as tradition, social structure, religion, art, and food

Curwen Hand Signs: set of hand symbols that correspond with Solfege

Descant: An independent treble melody sung or played above a basic melody

Diction: the style of enunciation in speaking or singing

Discipline: a branch of knowledge, typically one studied in higher education

Drone: musical instrument, or part of one, sounding a continuous note of low pitch, in particular a pipe in a bagpipe, or a string in an instrument such as a hurdy-gurdy or a sitar, or an open fifth on a bass xylophone

Dynamics: level or range of loudness of a sound or sounds

Elements of music: basic characteristics of sound (pitch, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, timbre, texture, form, and style/articulation) that are manipulated to create music

Empathetic: showing an ability to understand and share the feelings of another

Ensemble: group of individuals organized to perform artistic work: traditional, large groups such as bands, orchestras, and choirs; chamber, smaller groups, such as duets, trios, and quartets; emerging, such as guitar, iPad, mariachi, steel drum or pan, and Taiko drumming

Explore: discover, investigate, and create musical ideas through singing, chanting, playing instruments, or moving to music

Expressive qualities: qualities such as dynamics, tempo, articulation which -- when combined with other elements of music -- give a composition its musical identity

Fragment Song: an echo song or call-and-response song where a soloist sings and then followed by another soloist or group.

Frequency: The rate per second of a vibration constituting a wave, either in a material (as in sound waves), or in an electromagnetic field (as in radio waves and light)

Function: use for which music is created, performed, or experienced, such as dance, social, recreation, music therapy, video games, and advertising

Genre: category of music characterized by a distinctive style, form, and/or content, such as jazz, march, and country

Gesture: a movement of part of the body, especially a hand or the head, to express an idea or meaning

Harmony: chordal structure of a music composition in which the simultaneous sounding of pitches produces chords and their successive use produces chord progressions

Historical Periods: span of years during which music that was created and/or performed shared common characteristics; historians of Western art music typically refer to the following: Medieval (ca. 500-ca. 1420), Renaissance (ca. 1420-ca. 1600), Baroque (ca. 1600-ca. 1750), Classic (ca. 1750-ca. 1820), Romantic (ca. 1820-ca. 1900), and Contemporary (ca. 1900-)

Intonation: singing or playing the correct pitch in tune

Major Key/Scale: scale in which the ascending pattern of whole and half steps is whole, whole, half, whole, whole, whole, half

Melodic contour: shape of a melody created by the way its pitches repeat and move up and down in steps and skips

Meter: grouping of beats and divisions of beats in music, often in sets of twos (duple meter) or threes (triple meter)

Minor scale: scale in which one characteristic feature is a half-step between the second and third tones; the three forms of the minor scale are natural, harmonic, and melodic

Motif/Motive: brief rhythmic/melodic figure or pattern that recurs throughout a composition as a unifying element

Movement: act of moving in nonlocomotor (such as clapping and finger snapping) and locomotor (such as walking and running) patterns to represent and interpret musical sounds

Music vocabulary: domain-specific words traditionally used in performing, studying, or describing music

Non-pitched instruments: instruments, such as woodblocks, whistles, electronic sounds, that do not have definite pitches or tones

Non-traditional Notation: visual representation of musical sounds that is not using traditional notation

Ostinato: a continually repeated musical phrase or rhythm

Partner Songs: short songs that even though have different texts, rhythms and melodic lines, their harmonic structures are the same. This allows for the songs to be performed together without dissonance

Perform: process of realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation

Performing Forces: The selected instrumentation

Performing, performance: experience of engaging in the act of presenting music in a classroom or private or public venue

Phrasing: performance of a musical phrase that uses expressive qualities such as dynamics, tempo, articulation, and timbre to convey a thought, mood, or feeling

Pitch: identification of a tone or note with respect to highness or lowness (i.e., frequency)

Purpose: reason for which music is created, such as, ceremonial, recreational/social, commercial, or generalized artistic expression

Repertoire: body or set of musical works that can be performed

Respond: understand and evaluate how the arts convey meaning

Rhythm: duration or length of sounds and silences that occur in music; organization of sounds and silences in time

Round: a limited type of canon, in which a minimum of three voices sing exactly the same melody at the unison, but with each voice beginning at different times so that different parts of the melody coincide in the different voices, but nevertheless fit harmoniously together

Simple Meter: meter in which each beat of the measure divides naturally into two equal parts

Structure: totality of a musical work

Style: label for a type of music possessing distinguishing characteristics and often performance practices associated with its historical period, cultural context, and/or genre

Technical accuracy/technical skill/technique: ability to perform with appropriate timbre, intonation, and diction as well as to play or sing the correct pitches and rhythms at a tempo appropriate to the musical work

Tempo: rate or speed of the beat in a musical work or performance

Timbre: tone color or tone quality that distinguishes one sound source, instrument, or voice from another.

Traditional Notation: known also as Western Notation and is the most common way of writing music notation

Tonality: tonic or key tone around which a piece of music is centered

Voicing: the sound of a chord as determined by the selection of the component notes and the way the notes are distributed to the instruments

Unison: two or more musical parts sounding the same pitch or at an octave interval, usually at the same time