

Music FET

General guidelines for all music students in grade 10, 11 and 12.

The following is a reminder of the expected minimum time allocation for the components of studying music, according to the CAPS document issued by the DoBE. Please remember that these are minimum expectations, which means that (1) if music is not a strong subject for you, you must put in more time than this, (2) if you put in only this amount of time, you may expect only the minimum mark, (3) these times are usually administered by a trained teacher and therefore one hour of taught lessons is likely to be more efficient (you would get more done during one hour when taught as opposed to when studying at home). Therefore, you should allow for more time than these specified:

Practical Music (studying your instrument): 2 hours per week. This means 2 hours of actual playing, challenging yourself and continuously improving. By the time you are assessed, you should no longer even have to think about what note to play, how to play it, the form and expression of the piece, etc, because you should have practised it so often that it is stored in your “muscle memory”. Your scales should be relaxed, fluid, at a constant tempo and dynamic, and faultless. Your sightreading should be natural and easy. All of these require regular and focused practice and cannot be “caught up” later. You have to spend some time on this every day.

Music Literacy (theory, harmony, analysis, composition): 1 hour per week. This is the intellectual skill of music. It is also something that can be improved by **practising!** There are only so many ways a question can be asked, and so repeated exposure to different questions, different problems, different ways of seeing the content, etc will help to build up your ability to spot which response is required, and how to apply it to the question. Even the matrices make silly errors such as mixing up their clefs, mis-naming notes on the stave, and so on – nobody is above simple repetition and practice. **NB** that the 1 hour suggested minimum is a total of 1 hour of work, not 1 hour of trying to figure out what to do!

General Music Knowledge (listening, music history, instruments, etc): 1 hour per week. These are the supplemental areas of knowledge which complete the picture. This is an area which requires of you that you are good students: that you actively seek more knowledge, more information, and more ways to broaden your minds. You have to demonstrate two skills in this area: (1) being able to understand and articulate what you hear and (2) being able to clearly articulate an understanding of the context of the music. Music history isn't just memorising a bunch of dates; it's about putting your mind into the mind of the musicians we study. What was their experience of life, of the world? What was their experience of being musicians, and what led them to write their music?

Regarding (1) improving your listening: listening is a conscious skill – you have to get past the first impression of music; that is something for the audience. As musicians, we need to be actively engaged with how music works, and to connect the practical, literate and general skills of music inside our brains. To start training at this skill, try to learn a song on your instrument by ear. That is, work out the notes by playing along with the song. (There are also useful apps which can slow down the music for you to play along without changing the key.) Start with a simple piece which has a lot of repetition. Once you have done that, write down what you are playing.