

The final first teach date for A Level Music (H543) is **September 2026**. The final assessment opportunity will be **Summer 2028**. There is no resit opportunity.

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Music

H543/04 Composing B

Marking criteria

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

- Marking criteria is provided for teacher reference to aid planning and teaching the content of the non-examined, externally assessed components.
- The Composing components are marked by OCR based on the marking criteria below.
- The component is marked out of **75**.
- **35** marks are available for Section 1.
- **40** marks are available for Section 2.
- This document consists of **8** pages.

This component assesses Assessment Objective 2: Create and develop musical ideas with technical and expressive control and coherence.

To select the most appropriate mark within the band descriptor, assessors should use the following guidance:

- where the learner's work convincingly meets the statement in a mark band, the highest mark in that mark band should be awarded
- where the learner's work adequately meets the statement in a mark band, the most appropriate mark in the middle range of that mark band should be awarded
- where the learner's work just meets the statement in a mark band, the lowest mark in that mark band should be awarded.

Section 1: Board Set Brief – 35 marks

Response to brief and ideas (15 marks)

Learners are assessed on:

- The appropriateness of the response to the commission and the occasion or audience.
- Quality of ideas and overall structural concept.
- Aural familiarity evidenced in the composition.
- Arrangement: the materials chosen should show invention in the arrangement through the addition of original ideas / the creative handling of structure.
- Understanding of musical conventions in relation to the chosen style/genre/tradition.
- Use of musical elements for expressive communication.

13–15 marks	Creative and musically convincing response; strong, inventive, demonstrates excellent understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre; excellent use of musical elements for expressive communication in relation to the brief.
10–12 marks	Appropriate response; effective shaping of materials and structure, demonstrates understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre; good use of musical elements for expressive communication.
7–9 marks	Moderately appropriate response; demonstrates some understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre. Lacking invention or character; some use of musical elements for expressive communication.
4–6 marks	Limited response; demonstrates basic understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre. Basic use of musical elements for expressive communication.
1–3 marks	Little effectiveness in response; demonstrates little understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre. Little understanding of use of musical elements for expressive communication.
0 marks	No response or no response worthy of credit

Compositional techniques (10 marks)

Learners are assessed on:

- the use of musical elements, techniques and resources to assemble, combine, connect and develop ideas – including melodic and harmonic understanding
- structure and control of musical material
- where appropriate, skills of text setting
- understanding of the medium – idiomatic writing for instruments or skills in the use of music technology
- in arrangement, inventive use of instruments and textures beyond simple transcription will be credited.

9–10 marks	Very secure control of a broad range of techniques; inventive, wholly idiomatic use of the medium; sophisticated use of a range of musical elements in combination.
7–8 marks	Secure control of a range of techniques; mostly idiomatic use of the medium; good use of appropriate musical elements in combination.
5–6 marks	Moderate control of most appropriate techniques; competent use of the medium; some use of appropriate musical elements in combination.
3–4 marks	Limited control of some appropriate techniques; simple use of the medium; demonstrates basic understanding of the use of musical elements.
1–2 marks	A little technical control; a little understanding of use of the medium; little understanding of use of musical elements.
0 marks	No technical control; no understanding of use of the medium.

Communication (10 marks)

Learners are assessed on:

- accuracy and attention to detail in realisation
- accurate, expressive and coherent communication of the composer's intention
- use of articulation, phrasing, and dynamics for expressive communication.

9–10 marks	Vivid communication of the learner's intention for the composition. Very secure use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics where appropriate.
7–8 marks	Secure communication of the learner's intention for the composition. Secure use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics where appropriate.
5–6 marks	Moderately secure communication of the learner's intention for the composition. Some use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics where appropriate.
3–4 marks	Limited communication of the learner's intention for the composition. Limited use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics where appropriate.
1–2 marks	Poor communication of the learner's intention for the composition. Basic use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics where appropriate.
0 marks	No response or no response worthy of credit.

Section 2: Learner Set Brief – 40 Marks

Composing in response to learner set brief in discussion with the centre.

Effectiveness of the learner set brief (5 marks)

Learners are assessed on how well the brief they set allows them to go on to compose a piece of music that demonstrates their musical ideas effectively.

4–5 marks	A detailed brief which provides an excellent starting point for learners to compose a piece that demonstrates the ability to create and develop musical ideas with technical control, expressive control and coherence.
2–3 marks	A brief which provides an adequate starting point for learners to compose a piece that demonstrates the ability to create and develop musical ideas with technical control, expressive control and coherence.
1 mark	A basic brief which doesn't provide enough detail to be a satisfactory starting point.
0 marks	No response or no response worthy of credit.

Response to brief and ideas (15 marks)

Learners are assessed on:

- the appropriateness of the response to the commission and the occasion or audience
- quality of ideas and overall structural concept
- aural familiarity evidenced in the composition
- arrangement: the materials chosen should show invention in the arrangement through the addition of original ideas / the creative handling of structure
- understanding of musical conventions in relation to the chosen style/genre/tradition
- use of musical elements for expressive communication.

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7–9 marks	Moderately appropriate response; demonstrates some understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre. Lacking invention or character; some use of musical elements for expressive communication.
4–6 marks	Limited response; demonstrates basic understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre. Basic use of musical elements for expressive communication.
1–3 marks	Little effectiveness in response; demonstrates little understanding of musical devices and conventions in relation to the chosen genre. Little understanding of use of musical elements for expressive communication.
0 marks	No response or no response worthy of credit.

Compositional techniques (10 marks)

Learners are assessed on:

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5–6 marks	Moderate control of most appropriate techniques; competent use of the medium; some use of appropriate musical elements in combination.
3–4 marks	Limited control of some appropriate techniques; simple use of the medium; demonstrates basic understanding of the use of musical elements.
1–2 marks	A little technical control; a little understanding of use of the medium; little understanding of use of musical elements.
0 marks	No response or no response worthy of credit.

Communication (10 marks)

Learners are assessed on:

- accuracy and attention to detail in realisation
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5–6 marks	Moderately secure communication of the learner's intention for the composition. Some use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics where appropriate.
3–4 marks	Limited communication of the learner's intention for the composition. Limited use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics where appropriate.
1–2 marks	Poor communication of the learner's intention for the composition. Basic use of articulation, phrasing and dynamics where appropriate.
0 marks	No response or no response worthy of credit.

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