

Music Theory Information Sheets ABRSM Grade 4 | Sharon Bill

These information sheets are designed to accompany the ABRSM Music Theory in Practice Grade 4 workbook.

For more help in working through the ABRSM Theory workbook you can also access video tutorials where I work through each exercise with you, step by step. YouTube Links listed below and on each individual section (*links will be added as each video is uploaded so come back and download the PDF to get all the links). I explain the information shown on each of the PDF information sheets and show clearly how this can be applied to answer the questions given in each exercise. I thoroughly enjoy music theory and hopefully my help and enthusiasm for my subject will carry you through so as to be successful and rewarded in your studies.

The progression of information through the grades is accumulative. All of the information from ABRSM Grades 1, 2 and 3 will still be called upon and ABRSM Grades 1, 2 3 and 4 Music Theory provide the foundation for all future study.

Each section of this PDF Document accompanies a corresponding chapter in the ABRSM workbook and provides all the information necessary to understand and complete each exercise.

Music theory is a vital part of music making. Every musician needs to be able to understand what they are playing and why certain procedures need to be observed. However, even if you don't play an instrument the study of music theory is rewarding in its own right and can be a valuable skill enabling you to become a more informed listener.

Part A Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/L-x9XHBfjM>

Part A Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/N7OxyFDHUxA>

Part A Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/b19ruVJvdSI>

Part B Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/ZUI20vOx7x8>

Part B Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/1VKb8TG7nkE>

Part C <https://youtu.be/RhfNjMd3uxU>

Part D Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/DGls3zvvd5k>

Part D Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/gUDBAHjWNt8>
Part D Pt 3 https://youtu.be/_9mY4gVZQlo

Part E Pt 1 https://youtu.be/z_Ss2MKUQ_o

Part E Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/hWIUZuFFX28>

Part E Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/4hzFE2jXfso>

Part E Pt 4 <https://youtu.be/ZN7iDNuUUME>

Part E Pt 5 <https://youtu.be/4h7sK8yNH0Y>

Part E Pt 6 <https://youtu.be/JpOVMF5ezEo>

Part F <https://youtu.be/Znv8-v39qfl>

Part G Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/wutt4sQ2fuY>

Part G Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/t3n2-Whzbgw>

Part G Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/W1DL6Fdzsqs>

Part G Pt 4 <https://youtu.be/5oMg96wVzH0>

Part G Pt 5 <https://youtu.be/IFgTFLpCqqU>

Part H Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/esifAqyTi0w>

[CLICK HERE FOR THE REST OF THE WORKBOOK VIDEO LINKS AND PAST EXAM PAPERS AT THE END OF THIS DOCUMENT](#)

The material covered in Grade 4 is in addition to that in Grades 1, 2 and 3.

A - YouTube Video Link - Pt 1 - https://youtu.be/L_-x9XHBfJM

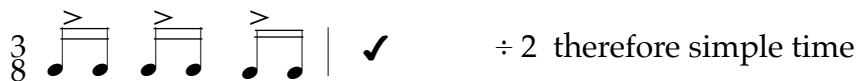
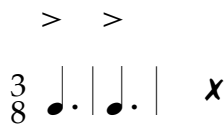
Time Signatures

This grade now includes an extensive range of simple and compound time signatures as outlined in your workbook.

Compound time signatures in this grade are in both quaver beats (eighth notes) and also semiquaver beats (sixteenth notes).

Be aware that $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{4}{8}$ are both in simple time.

$\frac{3}{8}$ doesn't work in compound time as a bar of one dotted crotchet beat (dotted quarter note) isn't feasible. E.g.








$\frac{4}{8}$ doesn't work in compound time as 4 isn't divisible by 3 and can't be grouped or counted properly in compound units. E.g.



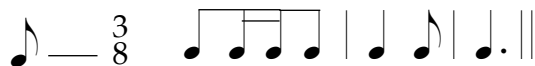
A Cont.

Remember that the bottom number of a time signature indicates what type of beat, as shown on this chart:

Whole Note		1
Half Note		2
Quarter Note		4
Eighth Note		8
Sixteenth Note		16

When converting rhythms to different time signatures without changing their effect the top number doesn't change. Observe the bottom number to note if the unit value has doubled or halved and then change notes accordingly.

For example, both of these rhythms sound the same and both are in triple time.



B - YouTube Video Link - Pt 1 - <https://youtu.be/ZUI20vOx7x8>

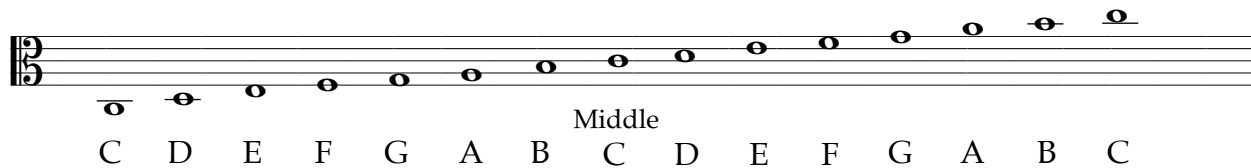
Alto Clef

The treble clef represents notes that are in the higher pitch register.

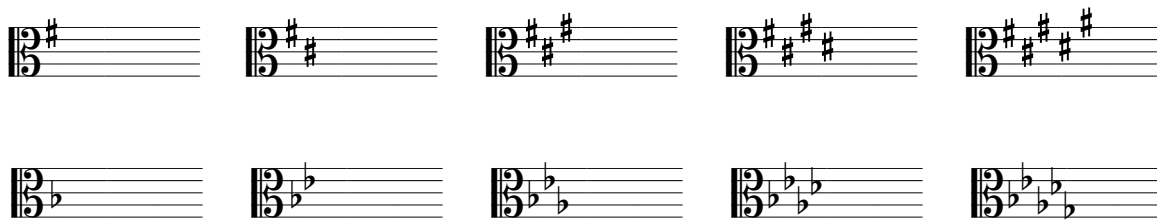
The bass clef represents notes that are in the lower pitch register.

The alto clef represents notes that occupy the middle of the register and avoids the necessity for too many ledger lines. It is chiefly associated with the viola. In the alto clef middle C is positioned on the middle line of the staff. This is also where the curves of the alto clef meet.

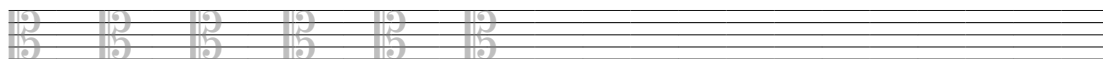
Use middle C as a reference point and work out all other notes from this note. As a point of reference the notes are as follows.



This now means that the positioning of key signatures on the staff moves correspondingly.



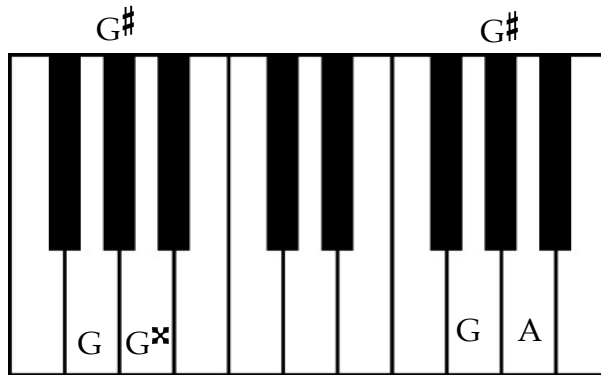
Practise drawing some Alto Clefs



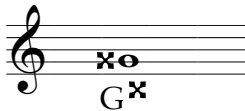
C - YouTube Video Link - <https://youtu.be/RhfNjMd3uxU>

Double Sharps and Double Flats

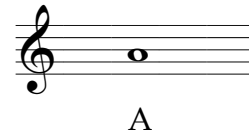
- ✘ The double sharp literally means to sharpen the note and then sharpen it again. This means raising the note by two semitones (a whole tone).



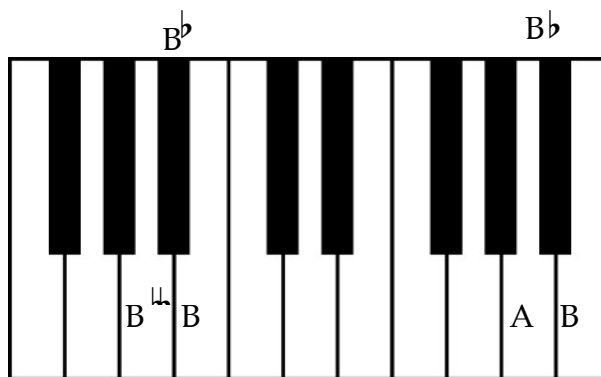
It is represented on the staff as:



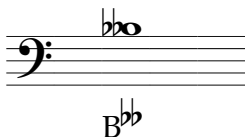
In musical terms this is not the same as



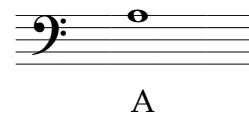
- ♭♭ The double flat literally means to flatten the note and then flatten it again. This means lowering the note by two semitones (a whole tone).



It is represented on the staff as:



In musical terms this is not the same as



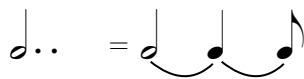
D - YouTube Video Link - Pt 1 - <https://youtu.be/DGIs3zvvd5k>

Breves, Double Dots and Duplets

Breves



Double Dots

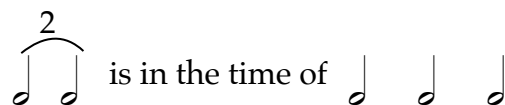
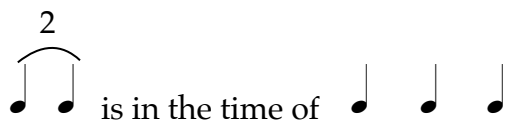
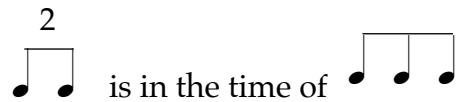


Duplets

Previously it was shown that a triplet squeezes three beats into the time of two beats. (See Grade 2 D.)

A duplet stretches two beats into the time of three beats.

For example:



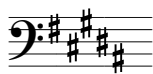
E - YouTube Video Link - Pt 1 https://youtu.be/z_Ss2MKUQ_o

Major & Minor Keys with Five Sharps or Flats

Major, Harmonic Minor and Melodic Minor scales will now include the following keys:

C Major	A Minor	No sharps or flats
G Major	E Minor	F sharp
D Major	B Minor	F & C sharp
A Major	F sharp Minor	F C & G sharp
E Major	C sharp Minor	F C G & D sharp
B Major	G sharp Minor	F C G D & A sharp
F Major	D Minor	B flat
B flat Major	G Minor	B & E flat
E flat Major	C Minor	B E & A flat
A flat Major	F Minor	B E A & D flat
D flat Major	B flat Minor	B E A D & G flat

The key signatures are written as follows:



The degrees of the scale have given names:

1st	TONIC
2nd	SUPERTONIC
3rd	MEDIANT
4th	SUBDOMINANT
5th	DOMINANT
6th	SUBMEDIANT
7th	LEADING NOTE

F - YouTube Video Link - <https://youtu.be/Znv8-v39qfI>

Four Bar Rhythms

No new material is introduced in this section. However, the opening anacrusis may be made up of more complicated rhythms and the time signatures covered grades in one, two, three and four may be called upon.

It is of the utmost importance that rhythms are correctly beamed and rests are properly grouped. Take care to make sure the following points are considered.

- If the exercise begins with an anacrusis ensure that the answering phrase reflects this same anacrusis rhythm.
- If an anacrusis is given make sure that the opening bar and the closing bar add up to make a complete bar of the given time signature.
- Consider whether the exercise is in simple or compound time and make sure that the beaming of notes and grouping of rests reflects this.
- Count carefully to make sure that every bar has the correct number of beats. If you have too much difficulty in counting the beats it is likely that you have incorrectly grouped notes or rests.
- Tap the finished extract to listen to the musical flow of the rhythms. There should be a sense of musical continuity and an obvious question and answer phrase structure without the rhythm being either too boring or too busy and disconnected.

Helpful Hints

Above each bar sketch the basic unit beat for each complete bar so you are sure that each bar is properly complete.

On a piece of scrap paper sketch out a 'rhythm bank' of combinations of rhythms to fill a unit beat to give you an idea of what options you can choose from. That way the grouping is already thought out and you can concentrate on what will best suit your given opening.

G - YouTube Video Link - Pt 1 - <https://youtu.be/wutt4sQ2fuY>

Triads on chords I IV & V

A triad can now be placed on the first, fourth and fifth degree of the scale. When referring to the degrees of the scale numbers 1, 4 and 5 refer to the single degrees of the scale. When roman numerals are used this refers to the triad built upon that degree of the scale.

I refers to a triad built upon the Tonic, or first degree of the scale.

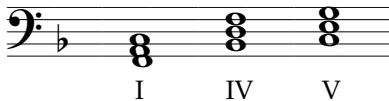
IV refers to a triad built upon the Subdominant, or fourth degree of the scale.

V refers to a triad built upon the Dominant, or fifth degree of the scale.

For example:

I refers to a triad built upon the Tonic, or first degree of the scale.

F Major



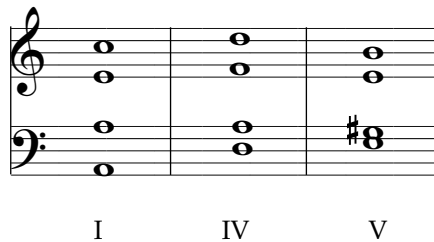
These are in root position as the degree of the scale that the chord is based upon is at the bottom, or root, of the chord.

Triads can be spread over two clefs and certain notes may be doubled.

For example:

A Minor

- I A C E
- II (B)
- III (C)
- IV D F A
- V E G B



Notice that, because the 7th is raised in a minor scale, chord V will have an accidental to show this.

H - YouTube Video Link - Pt 1 - <https://youtu.be/esifAqyTi0w>

Intervals

Intervals can be made larger or smaller by the addition of an accidental. Being a part of either a major or a minor key is no indication of what a specific interval between two notes might be.

- A major interval made a semitone bigger becomes augmented.
- A major interval made a semitone smaller becomes minor.
- A minor interval made a semitone bigger becomes major.
- A minor interval made a semitone smaller becomes diminished.

Because 4ths, 5ths and 8ves are neither major or minor but are perfect:

- A perfect interval made a semitone bigger becomes augmented.
- A perfect interval made a semitone smaller becomes diminished.

The summary of these rules is given in a handy reference chart in your workbook.

An interval can be fully named by following these steps:

- Treat the lower note as the key note / tonic.
- Observer the key signature and how this affects the given notes, but ignore any accidentals for now.
- Would the upper note be part of the named key note's major or minor scale?
- Does the accidental make the interval smaller or larger?

Be aware that a flat on the lower note makes the interval bigger and a sharp on the lower note makes the interval smaller. It is helpful to visualise this on a piano keyboard.

Here are some examples:



Maj	Min	Aug	Aug	Dim
3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd

I - YouTube Video Link - <https://youtu.be/rQoIZbJK-uo>

Writing a rhythm to words

In the exam this is an alternative to completing a four bar rhythm (see Grade 4 section F). Practise both questions so you don't restrict your choice in the exam. However, I tend to advise students to attempt the four bar rhythm as this involves the least amount of work.

- Writing a rhythm to words involves the principles of what was covered in completing a four bar rhythm but also requires the following points to be addressed:
- The natural accent of the given words must correspond to their placement within the structure of the bar.
- An appropriate time signature must be chosen to suit the rhythms of the words.
- The basic rhythm which fits the words must then be embellished to form an interesting musical whole.

The most important factor is to consider if the given poem begins on the first beat of the bar. You decide this by reading it in a 'tum-te-tum' kind of way.

E.g. "Roses are Red, Violets are Blue..."

The accent falls on the first syllable and so "Ro..." will sit at the first beat of the bar.

However, some poems will form an anacrusis.

E.g. "There once was a lady from Norwich..."

Here the strong accent falls on the word 'once' and so there will be an anacrusis of one beat for the word 'There' and then the word 'once' will sit on the first beat of the first full bar.

The workbook offers extensive explanation and exercises to practise with.

J - YouTube Video Link - Pt 1 - <https://youtu.be/Tgi0Q5JyGgw>

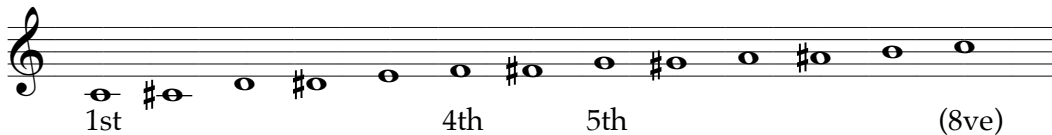
The Chromatic Scale

Although there are a variety of ways in which a chromatic scale can be written it really is just a matter of adding accidentals so that every semitone is represented. Referring to the piano keyboard is a good way of making sure that nothing is doubled or missed.

Here are some simple points which must be observed:

- Make sure that every line and space on the staff is represented at least once, but not more than twice.
- The 1st, 4th and 5th degrees of the given key should be represented unaltered.

For example:



K - YouTube Video Link - <https://youtu.be/e9AGbtfsCXc>

Ornaments

Ornaments are embellishments around the written notation involving playing more notes than written in accepted patterns determined by the symbol given.

Look carefully where the ornament is placed. If it is placed after a note then that note must be written (played) before the ornament is realised.

The trill involves playing alternating notes after and including the given note. A trill often ends with a turn pattern to finish.



The turn involves playing notes either side of the given note, beginning with the note *above* that which is written.



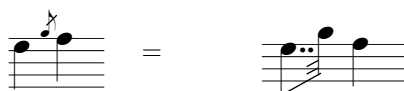
The upper mordent alternates once, a note higher than the given note and then back again.



The lower mordent alternates once, a note lower than the given note and then back again.



The acciaccatura squeezes in a note above the written note but without altering the time value of the given note - it takes value from the previous note.



The appoggiatura add in a note above the written note, but share the time value equally with the given note.



L - YouTube Video Link - <https://youtu.be/p4TTgwq9ww4>

Instruments

String Family

Instruments in the string family can play single notes and double notes / double stopping. Although advanced players can play more notes simultaneously.

Violin	Treble Clef
Viola	Alto Clef (sometimes treble clef)
Cello	Bass Clef (sometimes tenor clef)
Double Bass	Bass Clef

Woodwind Family

Instruments in the woodwind family can only play single notes.

Flute	Treble Clef
Oboe	Treble Clef
Clarinet	Treble Clef
Bassoon	Bass Clef

Brass Family

Instruments in the brass family can only play single notes.

Cornet	Treble Clef
Trumpet	Treble Clef
Horn	Treble Clef (sometimes bass clef)
Trombone	Bass Clef (though other clefs can be used)
Tuba	Bass Clef

Percussion

Only tuned percussion uses standard notation

Glockenspiel	Treble Clef
Xylophone	Treble Clef
Tubular Bells	Treble Clef
Timpani	Bass Clef

Untuned percussion, (E.g. snare drum) has its own notation system.

M - YouTube Video Link - <https://youtu.be/-gruWXW8LyY>

Performance Directions

In addition to learning Italian performance directions, building on those learned in previous grades, you also now need to understand some French musical terms. Include all of these in your thematically grouped terms and directions.

It is also necessary to understand the mechanics of various instruments and certain signs and directions pertinent to these specific instruments.

More specifically these are related to:

Brass - mutes

Strings - bowing instructions
- specific strings and performance directions on strings/areas of the bridge

Piano - use of pedals
- specific directions for hands
- specific directions for performance of chords.

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N YouTube Video Link - Pt 1 - <https://youtu.be/k0faDwjHvVY>

Test yourself on the following. Only look up to check your answers when you have attempted every question. If you don't know, GUESS. Remember, it is better to learn by your mistakes.

ritenuto

tempo

allegretto

MM $\text{♩} = 60$

dolce e espressivo

maestoso

simile (sim.)

troppo

vivo

leggiero

comodo

marziale

pesante

rubato

stringendo

triste

volta

all breve

con sordini

arco

una corda

affettuoso

8va

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YOUTUBE VIDEO LINKS CONTINUED

Part H Pt 2 https://youtu.be/PG3ci4_8DqA

Part H Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/OS-FKcrRFqg>

Part I <https://youtu.be/rQolZbJK-uo>

Part J Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/Tgi0Q5JyGgw>

Part J Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/HGs33BtzY2M>

Part J Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/rT753g7mMao>

Part J Pt 4 <https://youtu.be/NZLYa0W4Ohs>

Part K <https://youtu.be/e9AGbtfsCXc>

Part L <https://youtu.be/p4TTgwq9ww4>

Part M <https://youtu.be/-gruWXW8LyY>

Part N Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/k0faDwjHvVY>

Part N Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/Sl6SJjH917o>

Part N Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/LlimD8CFrwo>

Part N Pt 4 <https://youtu.be/uHkSpGsvAhg>

ABRSM 2018 GRADE 4 EXAM PAST PAPERS

2018 A Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/7f-GKUZBkJM>

2018 A Pt 2 https://youtu.be/NJe5_kDD-hc

2018 A Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/IH8thNwjttY>

2018 A Pt 4 <https://youtu.be/oG2hJqwH0L4>

2018 A Pt 5 <https://youtu.be/0PeIPrm0rbU>

2018 B Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/S54f6jY2zbc>

2018 B Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/p-vtbdIbBps>

2018 B Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/xy6gsJweo94>

2018 B Pt 4 <https://youtu.be/N1Yk7ZuNtOg>

2018 B Pt 5 <https://youtu.be/gSbVDFiVI9o>

2018 C Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/we0CgpmCdIs>

2018 C Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/GObn7jtgZIE>

2018 C Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/5KOSiTYNrr0>

2018 C Pt 4 https://youtu.be/UpT0_aCkO4k

2018 C Pt 5 <https://youtu.be/8HwYLEMu9QU>

2018 S Pt 1 https://youtu.be/Ur0uQ_5KZZM

2018 S Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/JbHI8AR0T-8>

2018 S Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/LwrADs6nig8>

2018 S Pt 4 <https://youtu.be/jCbl-VMgFwY>

2018 S Pt 5 <https://youtu.be/CBQtN6dvLa0>

ABRSM MUSIC THEORY GRADE 4 2017 PAST PAPERS

2017 A Part 1 https://youtu.be/sLYvPg_K9FU

2017 A Part 2 <https://youtu.be/BT-GqcE39is>

2017 A Part 3 <https://youtu.be/Pr7P3SgkMkA>

2017 B Part 1 <https://youtu.be/BaOOAbKpbUA>

2017 B Part 2 <https://youtu.be/Su12PtGMCAI>

2017 B Part 3 <https://youtu.be/YNFXeW3MKoU>

2017 C Part 1 https://youtu.be/d1D_VmZN2t0

2017 C Part 2 <https://youtu.be/nXJuDZvxJHk>

2017 C Part 3 <https://youtu.be/mS5Qz1dlhmY>

2017 S Part 1 <https://youtu.be/855b92p6CyU>

2017 S Part 2 <https://youtu.be/9od6IAoAi6k>

2017 S Part 3 <https://youtu.be/tEXWborReZI>

ABRSM 2016 ABRSM GRADE 4 EXAM PAST PAPERS

2016 A Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/0buhtTRqPuU>

2016 A Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/Yfqh1ifUm2o>

2016 B Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/oSBRsCWAeIU>

2016 B Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/gTchGI3OWms>

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2016 B Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/PZaVNfJU0eo>

2016 C Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/OnXLAfzq9lw>

2016 C Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/g30A7ThA4Kg>

2016 C Pt 3 <https://youtu.be/7BTJKPcFcWQ>

2016 S Pt 1 <https://youtu.be/wK8-my2tFH>

2016 S Pt 2 <https://youtu.be/Q7AxlevpRYY>

2016 S Pt 3 https://youtu.be/B1_rilHCSPY

ABRSM MUSIC THEORY GRADE 4 2015 PAST PAPERS

2015 A Part 1 <https://youtu.be/-p28pV4O7-Y>

2015 A Part 2 <https://youtu.be/66y0TF28uTY>

2015 A Part 3 <https://youtu.be/5jmfjUeF0jU>

2015 A Part 4 <https://youtu.be/am85b-TH7Ec>

2015 B Part 1 <https://youtu.be/W1K3XOJWF44>

2015 B Part 2 <https://youtu.be/ljITj4GsPBQ>

2015 B Part 3 <https://youtu.be/mdZhgmgdobY>

2015 B Part 4 <https://youtu.be/FxEAccAxwMI>

2015 C Part 1 <https://youtu.be/cSNmltZ3BRE>

2015 C Part 2 <https://youtu.be/cZsA1L-e9vE>

2015 C Part 3 <https://youtu.be/SB9oI3nFBYo>

2015 C Part 4 https://youtu.be/JmCPlyfv_o4

2015 S Part 1 <https://youtu.be/ZxNsiFAVdlU>

2015 S Part 2 <https://youtu.be/SIZiwBx0RP4>

2015 S Part 3 <https://youtu.be/EsLg4Z15Nas>

2015 S Part 4 <https://youtu.be/bYWJhuKRTS4>

ABRSM MUSIC THEORY GRADE 4 2014 PAST PAPERS

2014 A Part 1 <https://youtu.be/GB0M5wXxXBw>

2014 A Part 2 <https://youtu.be/qFSRUtTjvcQ>

2014 A Part 3 <https://youtu.be/ACaVOqrpwMs>

2014 A Part 4 <https://youtu.be/XK7fcPCAoWg>

2014 B Part 1 <https://youtu.be/N9Hfvzt8FLE>

2014 B Part 2 https://youtu.be/_c_jubnfUQk

2014 B Part 3 https://youtu.be/P21-C_eqDzg

2014 B Part 4 <https://youtu.be/fXgolJ3DMrE>

2014 C Part 1 <https://youtu.be/nXBS0bvp-ZQ>

2014 C Part 2 <https://youtu.be/Wkm0eBWk23M>

2014 C Part 3 https://youtu.be/I_CakMJZF0s

2014 C Part 4 <https://youtu.be/SHZglxDLzek>

2014 S Part 1 <https://youtu.be/sNo-OsS-3Uo>

2014 S Part 2 <https://youtu.be/LAu45fnRn7M>

2014 S Part 3 <https://youtu.be/ePuKztblpl0>

2014 S Part 4 <https://youtu.be/K2VPpsNgveg>

ABRSM Grade 4 Sample Revised Exam Papers X & Y

Sample Paper X 2017 Pt 1
<https://youtu.be/hizEokqvmyo>

Sample Paper X 2017 Pt 2
<https://youtu.be/aCr3HOG21TI>

Sample Paper X 2017 Pt 3
<https://youtu.be/7v1eIRvFsHk>

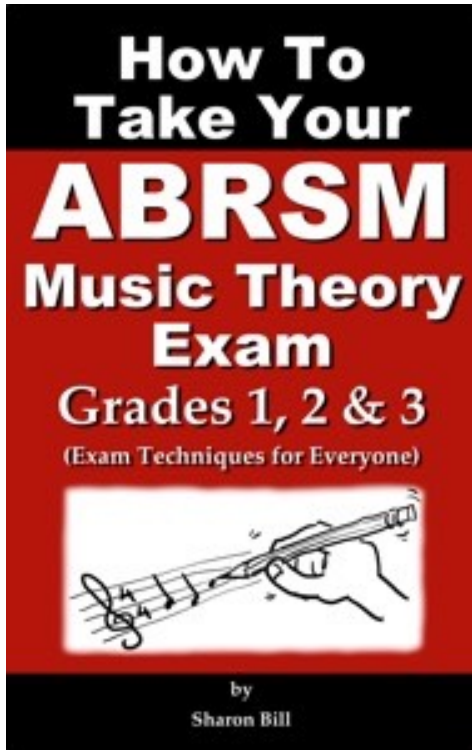
Sample Paper Y 2017 Part 1
https://youtu.be/Wti_uGkOII8

Sample Paper Y 2017 Part 2
https://youtu.be/_nmPaBNEAIA

Sample Paper Y 2017 Part 3
<https://youtu.be/3ddijyItpw>

Sample Paper Y 2017 Part 4
<https://youtu.be/HAlgRkgxsrU>

Sharon Bill's books are all available in Paperback and eBook from Amazon

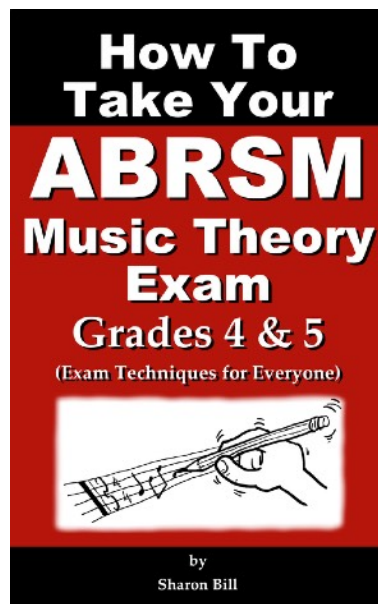


Taking your ABRSM Music Theory exam can be nerve wracking and nerves can prevent you doing your best in any exam. Good preparation and planning is always the answer to this problem. In this exam guide I give you tried and tested technique, not only how to prepare before the exam but also the best procedure for actually in the exam room.

I've been entering pupils for ABRSM Music Theory exams for nearly thirty years and it is not unusual for them to pass with **DISTINCTION**, some even scoring 100%!

Follow these simple steps and improve *your* chances of gaining **TOP MARKS**.

How To Take Your ABRSM Grades 1, 2 & 3 and 4 & 5





They say that truth is stranger than fiction. Nearly 30 years of teaching at the piano keyboard has taught me that this is an undeniable fact. My dear Gran said that the world would be a boring place if we were all the same and teaching piano and flute in various cupboard like practice rooms, week in and week out over the years, reassures me that there is no threat of humanity becoming dull. If I present a wry viewpoint of various past pupils it is only fair to say that I also take an equally droll approach to myself.

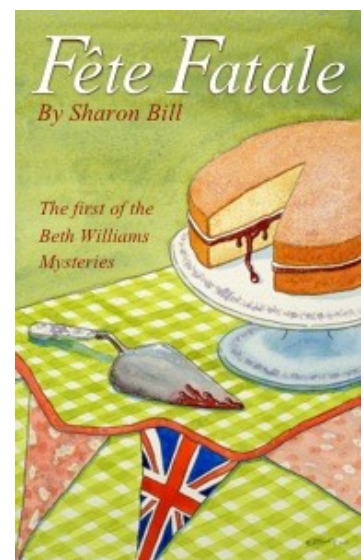
Letters From the Broom Cupboard was the given title to an actual correspondence from my piano teacher during her own periods of incarceration in the privation of various school practice rooms which served to fill the looming periods of pupil absenteeism. This literary offering continues the legacy and I now write to you, dear reader, in my own hour of need.

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A summer fête in rural Cheshire, organised by the Women's Institute of Mossleigh, holds the promise of an idyllic day out in the best British tradition. Everyone is enjoying the festivities until a beloved neighbour is found dead among the bins and refuse of the village hall which saddens the holiday mood. However, it is only when Beth Williams and her twin brother Detective Chief Inspector Benedict James join forces that it becomes evident that all isn't as innocent as it at first seemed.

Beth is a piano tutor and a member of the local WI. As such she has her finger on the pulse of the undercurrents of the village and is ideally placed to find all of the seemingly inconsequential domestic details which could give her brother the insight he needs. Together, if they each pool their own particular fields of expertise, they're bound to get to the bottom of the business. Sordid crime might prevail amid the pastries and preserves for a time but, in the end, the culprit will get their just desserts.





Mere hours after a Constable watercolour sketch is featured in a presentation at a meeting of Mossleigh Women's Institute the original is stolen from the Whitworth Art Gallery. It seems that the cultured veneer of the art world shields a much seedier underworld where theft is just the icing on the cake. Beth and her twin brother, DCI Benedict James, join forces to get to the bottom of the affair. Although DCI James must pursue the official lines of enquiry Beth finds that a more abstract approach draws the threads of the mystery together.

Beth is a piano tutor and member of her local WI and is aptly placed to tap into seemingly insignificant details to get right to the heart of the affair. When all hope fades and the Old Masters look to be forever tainted by sordid crime Beth, with the help of her unassuming friends, restores the balance of justice and the intrinsic beauty of artistic endeavour.

