

Taking the Listening Paper: *Strategies for a successful performance in section B*

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A successful performance on the Listening Paper is based on a critical understanding of the music and on solid perception skills. However, due to the time constraints of the test, an appropriate strategy to demonstrate these skills is also an essential ingredient for a successful exam. Here are some suggestions:

Step 1

Plan on dividing your available time evenly: 25 minutes each question.

Step 2

Divide the allocated time for each question among the areas of the question. That is Musical Elements, Structural Elements, Technical Language, and Context. Here is one suggestion:

Area	Time Allocated
Musical Elements	10 minutes
Structural Elements	10 minutes
Context	5 minutes
Technical Language	Included above

Step 3

Provide a plan allowing students to begin working immediately: a plan that prevents cases where students do not know where to start. Here are some suggestions:

Musical Elements

Items to be Covered	
M – R – H	Melody – Rhythm - Harmony
T – T – A	Texture – Tempo – Articulation
M – D	Mode - Dynamics
I - O	Instrumentation - Orchestration
T	Technical Words

Structural Elements

Time/Measure	Label/Section	Description of the event(s)

Contextual Elements

1 st Level	2 nd Level	3 rd level	4 th Level	5 th Level	6 th Level
Western Art	Period Style Genre Country	Composer Name of the piece	Other composition/composers	Other historical/cultural aspects of this period/country/style	Compare and contrast with other periods/composers
World Music	Region Country Culture	Composer Name of the piece	Other composition/composers	Other historical/artistic/religious aspects of this culture	Compare and contrast with other cultures
Pop	Region Country Culture	Composer Name of the piece	Other composition/composers	Other historical/cultural aspects of this country/style	Compare and contrast with other cultures/composers
Jazz	Region Country Culture	Composer Name of the piece	Other composition/composers	Other historical/cultural aspects of this country/style	Compare and contrast with other cultures/composers
Other	Region Country Culture	Composer Name of the piece	Other composition/composers	Other historical/cultural aspects of this country/style	Compare and contrast with other cultures/composers
Hybrid	Styles Regions Countries Cultures	Composer Name of the piece	Other composition/composers	Other historical/cultural aspects of this countries/styles	Compare and contrast with other cultures/composers

Technical Elements

Set a minimum number of words that could qualify as technically “sophisticated”. Insure that your students are using your minimum number. Some suggestions for that list could be words such as: homophonic, imitation, polyphonic, counterpoint, fugue, polyrhythmic, atonal, serialism, cluster, organum, pentatonic, modal, etc.