



## Sample assessment task

|                      |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Year level</b>    | 8                                |
| <b>Learning area</b> | The Arts                         |
| <b>Subject</b>       | Music                            |
| <b>Title of task</b> | Theme and variations composition |

## Task details

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Description of task</b>      | <p>Students will compose a set of three variations based on a given theme. The theme provided (<i>Au clair de la lune</i>) can be substituted for an alternative example that might be better suited to the context being studied, provided that it is of a similar standard. Students will select two elements of music to be the basis of each variation, and provide a description of the different ways each element has been varied. They will be given two weeks to complete the task, which will include three 45 minute class sessions.</p> <p>The composition must be written on the score provided, with no computer software to be used. The final compositions will be performed to the class, with each student identifying the elements of music they chose to vary and describing how they varied them for each variation. All students will identify the elements used for each variation for all compositions, providing a brief explanation of the variation techniques and evaluating the resulting performance, according to given criteria before the explanation is provided by the composer.</p> |
| <b>Type of assessment</b>       | Formative and summative   |
| <b>Purpose of assessment</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assess skill development and plan further teaching if required</li> <li>To assess students' development in creative application of form and compositional skills, and inform reporting at the end of a learning cycle</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Assessment strategy</b>      | Written composition using conventional notation on worksheet provided.<br>Performance of a compositional idea.  |
| <b>Evidence to be collected</b> | Composition task sheet<br>Anecdotal notes summarising process   |
| <b>Suggested time</b>           | Three class sessions (180 minutes)  |

## Content description

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|---|---|
| <b>Content from the Western Australian Curriculum</b> | <p><b>Composing and arranging</b><br/>Use of given compositional frameworks to structure arrangements and create original works, improvising and combining the elements of music to trial, refine and shape music ideas<br/>Use of invented and conventional notation, appropriate music terminology and available technologies to plan, record and communicate music ideas</p> <p><b>Aural and theory</b><br/>Aural recognition of one or more music elements in short excerpts (not all content may be relevant to the selected context)</p> <p><b>Analysis and context</b><br/>Identification of, and discussion about, the use and treatment of specific elements of music in a range of works, using defined frameworks, identified criteria and appropriate music terminology</p> |
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|-----------------------------------|---|
|                                   | <p><b>Performance</b><br/>Development and improvement of technique and exploration of expressive possibilities and stylistic features when practising, rehearsing and performing a variety of music</p> <p><b>Response and Evaluation</b><br/>use of specific criteria and given frameworks to evaluate performances<br/>The specified content listed under the <b>Elements of Music</b> for the relevant year level will be integrated throughout.</p>   |
| <b>Task preparation</b>           |   |
| <b>Prior learning</b>             | Students have listened to and analysed a variety of theme and variation examples, including simple aural tasks and aural and visual analysis tasks based on works such as; Mozart: <i>Twelve variations on 'Ah, vou dirai-je, Maman'</i> K. 265; Mozart: <i>Clarinet quintet in A Major K. 581. 4<sup>th</sup> movement</i> ; Haydn: <i>Emperor string quartet, op. 76, No. 2 in C major, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement</i> ; Haydn: <i>Symphony No. 101, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement</i> ; Copland: <i>Appalachian Spring</i> .  |
| <b>Assessment differentiation</b> | Teachers should differentiate their teaching and assessment to meet the specific learning needs of their students, based on their level of readiness to learn and their need to be challenged.<br>Where appropriate, teachers may either scaffold or extend the scope of the assessment tasks.  |
| <b>Assessment task</b>            |   |
| <b>Assessment conditions</b>      | Students will require about 180 minutes to complete this task. They will plan their compositions, completing the elements of music tables and composing three variations for the given theme in the booklet provided. (Year 8: Theme and variations composition.) They will then practise and perform their compositions.<br>Each student will also submit an evaluation and summary sheet for all performances. They will identify the elements of music used as the basis for each variation and describe how they have been varied, and evaluate the performance and resulting composition, using given scaffolded criteria. |
| <b>Resources</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pencil and eraser</li> <li>• Manuscript paper for planning and drafts</li> <li>• Year 8: Theme and variations composition assessment booklet</li> <li>• Instruments for practising and performing compositions</li> <li>• Peer and self-evaluation sheet</li> </ul>  |

### Instructions for teacher

- Students will need about 180 minutes to complete the task depending on the number of students in the class.
- It should take about 20 minutes for teachers to sight-sing/play the theme as a class, and revise different ways to vary a theme. Teachers will discuss different types of variation techniques with the class using a summary table on the board to determine different ways that the elements of music can be varied, referring to previous examples analysed in class.
- Students will then be given 40 minutes to plan their three variations, selecting two elements of music and completing the table provided for each, discussing how they will vary each element in each variation. They will also need to complete the writing of the first variation in this time on the score provided.
- Students will then be given 60 minutes to complete the second and third variations and commence practising all three variations to perform to the class.
- A final 60 minutes will be provided for students to perform their compositions. During the performance, all students will complete the evaluation form, identifying the elements of music that were selected as the basis for each variation and judging the overall effectiveness of the composition.

### Year 8: Theme and variations composition

#### Instructions to students

1. The following melody is the theme to be used as the basis of a set of three variations which you will compose. Read the following instructions to complete your composition.



*Au clair de la lune* (18th century). French folk song

- (a) You must include at least two variation techniques in each variation, based on two different musical elements as discussed in class. For example, you might modulate to the relative minor and alter the tempo and/or rhythm.
- (b) You need to make sure that the variation maintains a strong and clear relationship with the original theme.
- (c) You need to include dynamics and a suitable tempo indication for each variation.
- (d) Include relevant articulation and/or bowing indications for the instrument you are writing for, and provide text if you are writing for voice.
- (e) You must also provide a written description of each variation, describing how the original theme has been varied and outlining the variation techniques you employed in each.
- (f) Your final theme and variations compositions will be performed to the class.
- (g) You will also submit an evaluation and summary record sheet for all performances. You will be asked to identify the elements of music used as the basis for each variation, describe how they have been varied, and evaluate the performance and resulting composition, using given scaffolded criteria.

### Variation 1

| Element of music | Variation techniques and difference from original theme |
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## Variation 2

| Element of music | Variation techniques and difference from original theme |
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### Variation 3

| Element of music | Variation techniques and difference from original theme |
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## Year 8: Theme and variations composition

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark: /60

| Total Composition Mark              |                                      |           |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Composition (Variations 1–3)</b> | Total mark for all three variations. | <b>45</b> |
| <b>Performance of composition</b>   | Total performance mark.              | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                        |                                      | <b>50</b> |

### Composition marking key

#### Variation 1

|                                       | Assessment criteria  | Marks     |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Music ideas and elements</b>       | Demonstrates excellent skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape.   | 4         |
|                                       | Demonstrates sound skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape, with only a few inconsistencies.                                    | 3         |
|                                       | Demonstrates some skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape with several inconsistencies.   | 2         |
|                                       | Demonstrates little or no evidence of developing, establishing and maintaining a sense of tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape.   | 1         |
| <b>Relationship to original theme</b> | Effectively incorporates two appropriate variation techniques, maintaining a strong and clear relationship with the original theme.  | 3         |
|                                       | Incorporates two appropriate variation techniques but demonstrates an inconsistent relationship with the original theme, being at times ineffective and/or inappropriate.            | 2         |
|                                       | Incorporates only one appropriate variation technique, or inappropriately and ineffectively incorporates two variation techniques, bearing little resemblance to the original theme. | 1         |
| <b>Variation techniques</b>           | Correctly names and describes two appropriate variation techniques.  | 2         |
|                                       | Correctly names and describes only one variation technique, which is evident in the composition.   | 1         |
|                                       | Does not name or describe any variation techniques.  | 0         |
| <b>Expressive elements</b>            | Demonstrates effective use of dynamics and articulation.   | 3         |
|                                       | Demonstrates an inconsistent and sometimes ineffective application of dynamics and articulation.   | 2         |
|                                       | Demonstrates little and/or inappropriate use of dynamics and articulation.   | 1         |
| <b>Tempo indication</b>               | Includes an appropriate tempo indication.  | 1         |
|                                       | Does not include a tempo indication and/or provides an inappropriate tempo indication.   | 0         |
| <b>Presentation of score</b>          | Presents a clear and accurate score.   | 2         |
|                                       | Presents a mostly clear and accurate score with only a few minor errors.   | 1         |
|                                       | Produces a mostly incomplete and/or inaccurate score.  | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>                          |  | <b>15</b> |



## Variation 2

|                                       | Assessment criteria  | Marks     |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Music ideas and elements</b>       | Demonstrates excellent skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape.   | 4         |
|                                       | Demonstrates sound skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape, with only a few inconsistencies.                                    | 3         |
|                                       | Demonstrates some skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape with several inconsistencies.   | 2         |
|                                       | Demonstrates little or no evidence of developing, establishing and maintaining a sense of tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape.   | 1         |
| <b>Relationship to original theme</b> | Effectively incorporates two appropriate variation techniques, maintaining a strong and clear relationship with the original theme.  | 3         |
|                                       | Incorporates two appropriate variation techniques but demonstrates an inconsistent relationship with the original theme, being at times ineffective and/or inappropriate.            | 2         |
|                                       | Incorporates only one appropriate variation technique, or inappropriately and ineffectively incorporates two variation techniques, bearing little resemblance to the original theme. | 1         |
| <b>Variation techniques</b>           | Correctly names and describes two appropriate variation techniques.  | 2         |
|                                       | Correctly names and describes only one variation technique, which is evident in the composition.   | 1         |
|                                       | Does not name or describe any variation techniques.  | 0         |
| <b>Expressive elements</b>            | Demonstrates effective use of dynamics and articulation.   | 3         |
|                                       | Demonstrates an inconsistent and sometimes ineffective application of dynamics and articulation.   | 2         |
|                                       | Demonstrates little and/or inappropriate use of dynamics and articulation.   | 1         |
| <b>Tempo indication</b>               | Includes an appropriate tempo indication.  | 1         |
|                                       | Does not include a tempo indication and/or provides an inappropriate tempo indication.   | 0         |
| <b>Presentation of score</b>          | Presents a clear and accurate score.   | 2         |
|                                       | Presents a mostly clear and accurate score with only a few minor errors.   | 1         |
|                                       | Produces a mostly incomplete and/or inaccurate score.  | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>                          |  | <b>15</b> |

### Variation 3

|                                       | Assessment criteria  | Marks     |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Music ideas and elements</b>       | Demonstrates excellent skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape.   | 4         |
|                                       | Demonstrates sound skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape, with only a few inconsistencies.                                    | 3         |
|                                       | Demonstrates some skills in developing, establishing and maintaining tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape with several inconsistencies.   | 2         |
|                                       | Demonstrates little or no evidence of developing, establishing and maintaining a sense of tonality, musical ideas and melodic shape.   | 1         |
| <b>Relationship to original theme</b> | Effectively incorporates two appropriate variation techniques, maintaining a strong and clear relationship with the original theme.  | 3         |
|                                       | Incorporates two appropriate variation techniques but demonstrates an inconsistent relationship with the original theme, being at times ineffective and/or inappropriate.            | 2         |
|                                       | Incorporates only one appropriate variation technique, or inappropriately and ineffectively incorporates two variation techniques, bearing little resemblance to the original theme. | 1         |
| <b>Variation techniques</b>           | Correctly names and describes two appropriate variation techniques   | 2         |
|                                       | Correctly names and describes only one variation technique, which is evident in the composition.   | 1         |
|                                       | Does not name or describe any variation techniques.  | 0         |
| <b>Expressive elements</b>            | Demonstrates effective use of dynamics and articulation.   | 3         |
|                                       | Demonstrates an inconsistent and sometimes ineffective application of dynamics and articulation.   | 2         |
|                                       | Demonstrates little and/or inappropriate use of dynamics and articulation.   | 1         |
| <b>Tempo indication</b>               | Includes an appropriate tempo indication.  | 1         |
|                                       | Does not include a tempo indication and/or provides an inappropriate tempo indication.   | 0         |
| <b>Presentation of score</b>          | Presents a clear and accurate score.   | 2         |
|                                       | Presents a mostly clear and accurate score with only a few minor errors.   | 1         |
|                                       | Produces a mostly incomplete and/or inaccurate score.  | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>                          |  | <b>15</b> |

### Performance of composition

|  | Assessment criteria  | Marks    |
|--|--|----------|
| <b>Performance of theme and variations composition</b> | The overall performance effectively communicates compositional ideas.    | 5        |
|  | The overall performance generally communicates compositional ideas.      | 3–4      |
|  | The overall performance inconsistently communicates compositional ideas. | 1–2      |
|  | The overall performance does not communicate compositional ideas.        | 0        |
| <b>Total</b>   |  | <b>5</b> |



3. Is there anything that you would change in your composition after hearing it performed?

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**Peer evaluation**

1. Choose another composition that you liked and give two reasons why you thought it was effective.

Composition: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why you thought the composition was effective:

(i) \_\_\_\_\_

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(ii) \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Choose one of their variations and list the two elements of music they chose to vary in that variation. Describe how they varied the elements of music and explain why it was so effective.

| Element of music | Variation techniques and difference from original theme |
|------------------|---|
|                  |   |
|                  |   |

3. Rate the performance of their composition by placing a tick in the appropriate box in the table below.

| <b>Performance of Theme and variations composition</b> | The overall performance effectively communicates compositional ideas    |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | The overall performance generally communicates compositional ideas      |  |
|  | The overall performance inconsistently communicates compositional ideas |  |
|  | The overall performance does not communicate compositional ideas        |  |