Sample assessment task

Year level	9
Learning area	The Arts
Subject	Music
Title of task	Blues composition

Task details

Description of task	Students individually compose a melody based on the 12-bar blues. They need to include a suitable piano/keyboard part and a walking bass line, and will be asked to incorporate notes from the corresponding blues scales and syncopation. Compositions need to also include dynamic and expressive devices, such as accents. Students will use a combination of practical and written activities to compose the melody, piano/keyboard part and walking bass line. The final composition may be presented on manuscript or available technologies, such as Sibelius.
Type of assessment	Formative and summative
Purpose of assessment	• To inform progression of learning in a unit • To assess students' understanding of form, blues scales, syncopation, dynamics and expressive devices at the end of a learning cycle
Assessment strategy	Written final composition, using conventional notation.
Evidence to be collected	• Composition task sheet • Anecdotal notes throughout the process
Suggested time	Four sessions (240 minutes)

Content description

Content from the Western Australian Curriculum	**Composing and arranging** Use and application of composition models to shape and refine arrangements and original works; improvising, combining and manipulating the elements of music; applying compositional devices, stylistic features and conventions to reflect a range of music styles Use of a range of invented and conventional notation, appropriate music terminology and available technologies to organise, record and communicate music ideas The specified content listed under the **Elements of music** for the relevant year level will be integrated throughout

Task preparation	
Prior learning	Students have completed a range of aural, theoretical, analytical and practical activities exploring blues tonality and scale structure. They have also completed a variety of rhythmic activities, developing an understanding of syncopation, ties, accents and rests. Students have composed or improvised short melodic ideas over the 12-bar blues as part of practical lessons, and are able to communicate melodic and rhythmic ideas, using traditional notation.
Assessment differentiation	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. Where appropriate, teachers may either scaffold or extend the scope of the assessment tasks.
Assessment task	
Assessment conditions	Students will individually complete the composition and present using traditional notation or available technology.
Resources	• Worksheet • Pencil and eraser • Instruments applicable to context (keyboards, guitars etc.) • Music software (if available)

Instructions for teacher

- Students will need about 240 minutes or four class session to complete the task, depending on the number of students and instruments in the class and available technology.
- It should take approximately 30 minutes for teachers to explain and discuss the task. Teachers should provide rhythmic and melodic ideas and examples for students.
- Time should be spent ensuring students have a clear understanding of the 12-bar blues chord progression and walking bass line patterns.
- Students should spend time improvising and composing melodic and rhythmic ideas with their teacher, and seek assistance, where needed.
- Sessions could be organised with specific task goals or students could be left to complete the task at their discretion.

Instructions to students

Year 9: Blues composition and arranging task

Name:_____   **Total mark   /32**

Your task is to arrange a 12-bar blues progression for double bass/bass guitar and piano/keyboard, then compose a melody that fits the progression. The key of C has been chosen for you. If you wish to use another key, please see your teacher for guidance.

The task has been broken into two main parts, and guidelines for each part have been provided for you.

Would you like it to be a minor or major progression? _____

Major?   Don't forget to make the chords and walking bassline major! (bassline: 1 3 5 ♭7)

Minor?   Don't forget to make your piano/keyboard chords minor!   (bassline: 1 ♭3 5 ♭7)

(You can change your mind later; just remember to alter the chords and walking bass line. You can use your ear to decide what fits best.)

Part One: 12-bar Blues Progression – Laying the foundation!

Step 1: Using **bass clef,** write out each blues scale below.

C Blues

Note names: _____

F Blues

Note names: _____

G Blues

Note names: _____

Walking bass – Using the 12-bar blues chord progression, use crotchets on the scale degrees 1-3-5-7 from the **blues scale** to form the walking bass*. Complete the table below to help with which notes to use for each chord.

	1	3	5	7
C Blues				
F Blues				
G Blues				

*Options – alter ascending/descending patterns

Notate your walking bass line on the manuscript provided. Space the crotchets out evenly and use accidentals, where required.

Step 2: Piano/keyboard writing

Voice the chords for piano/keyboard on the manuscript provided. Refer to your notes, if needed.

Remember to use the 12-bar blues progression and alter it to fit a minor key, if needed. It is a good idea to use syncopation!
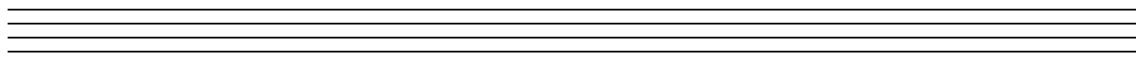
Part Two: Melody

Instrument/voice: _____

If you choose voice, you will need to decide on lyrics and/or scat sounds. If you choose a transposing instrument, you need to be careful about the key you write the melody in, to fit with the other instruments in the ensemble.
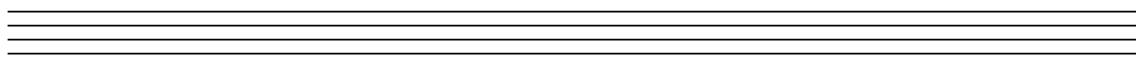
Step 1: Using the appropriate clef, write out the three blues scales your melody will be based on.
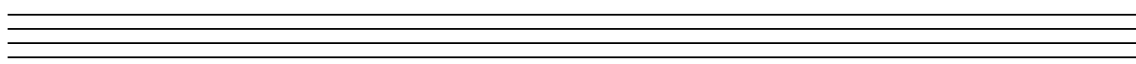
C Blues

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Note names: _____

F Blues

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Note names: _____

G Blues

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Note names: _____

Step 2: Brainstorm some four-beat rhythmic ideas below. Be sure to include syncopation and articulation, such as accents and staccato.

Step 3: Using the blues scales and your rhythmic ideas notated above, begin to compose your melody.

Remember to use notes from the C Blues over the C chord, F Blues over the F chord and G Blues over the G chord.

With a partner playing the chords, play your melody, making changes where you see fit. Add articulation, dynamics and other expressive devices and don't forget a funky title!

Before submitting your final copy, look carefully at the checklist below.

Checklist

1. Title   ☐
2. Tempo   ☐
3. Walking bass is in bass clef with correct notes   ☐
4. Piano/keyboard is correctly voiced and shows 12-bar blues progression   ☐
5. Rhythms in the melody are interesting and varied. There is some syncopation.   ☐
6. Melody uses notes from the blues scale and fits the chord progression.   ☐
7. Dynamics and articulation   ☐
8. Make sure your work is accurately and neatly presented on manuscript or printed out using a music software program.   ☐
9. Optional – Add lyrics to your melody.

You will be marked according to the following criteria:

- Writes blues scales with correct clefs and notes for both Part One and Part Two   (3 marks)
- Correctly outlines notes belonging to blues chord progressions in table

(2 marks)

Part 1: Walking bass and piano/keyboard parts

- Walking bass line is stylistically appropriate and supports the melody.   (3 marks)
- Walking bass line follows the correct chord progression and uses correct notes.   (3 marks)
- The piano/keyboard part maintains stylistic consistency and supports the melody.   (3 marks)
- The piano/keyboard part follows the correct chord progression and uses correct notes and chord voicings.

(3 marks)

Part 2: Melody writing

- The melody uses a variety of rhythms and incorporates syncopation.   (3 marks)
- The melody outlines the chord changes and correctly uses notes from the blues scale.   (3 marks)
- The melody demonstrates effective contour and is stylistically appropriate.

(4 marks)

Overall presentation

- Effective use of dynamics, expressive devices and articulation   (3 marks)
- Presents a neat and accurate score   (2 marks)

Total mark   /32 marks

Year 9 – Blues composition and arranging task

_____   **Composer: _____**

Sample marking key			
Criteria	**Standards of achievement**	**Marks**	**Score**
Blues scales	Writes all blues scales with correct clefs and notes for both Part One and Part Two (Clef and notes must be correct for each scale for 1 mark. The final mark out of 6 is to be divided by 2 for a final mark out of 3.)	1–3	3
Blues progression	Correctly outlines the notes for each of the chords in the blues progression.	2	
	Outlines the notes for each of the chords in the blues progression, but makes some errors, or provides some incomplete chords.	1	2
Part One: Walking bass line and keyboard/piano part			
Walking bass line is stylistically appropriate and supports the melody line	Composes a stylistically appropriate walking bass line that effectively supports the melody.	3	
	Composes a generally stylistically appropriate walking bass line that provides some support for the melody.	2	
	Composes a walking bass line that is stylistically inconsistent and provides minimal support for the melody.	1	3
Walking bass line follows the correct chord changes and uses correct notes	Composes a walking bass line that correctly outlines the chord progression.	3	
	Composes a walking bass line that generally outlines the chord progression, but uses some incorrect notes.	2	
	Composes a walking bass line that does not follow the chord progression, and uses several incorrect notes.	1	3
The piano/keyboard part maintains stylistic consistency and supports the melody	Composes a piano/keyboard part that maintains stylistic consistency and effectively supports the melody.	3	
	Composes a piano/keyboard part that generally maintains stylistic consistency and provides some support for the melody.	2	
	Composes a piano/keyboard part that is stylistically inconsistent and provides minimal support for the melody.	1	3
The piano/keyboard part follows the correct chord progression and uses correct notes and chord voicings	Composes a piano/keyboard part that outlines the correct chord progression, and uses correct notes and chord voicings.	3	
	Composes a piano/keyboard part that mostly follows the correct chord progression, but uses some incorrect notes and/or chord voicings.	2	
	Composes a piano/keyboard part that does not follow the correct chord progression, and uses several incorrect notes and chord voicings.	1	3

Part Two: Melody writing			
Accurately uses a variety of rhythms and incorporates syncopation	Uses a wide variety of accurately grouped rhythms, and includes some effective syncopation.	3	
	Uses a variety of mostly accurately grouped rhythms, and minimal syncopation.	2	
	Uses a limited range of rhythms, with several errors in grouping, and ineffective or no syncopation.	1	3
The melody outlines the chord changes and correctly uses notes from the blues scale	Composes a melody that correctly outlines the chord changes and uses notes from the blues scale.	3	
	Composes a melody that generally outlines the chord changes and uses some incorrect notes.	2	
	Composes a melody that inconsistently outlines the chord changes and uses several incorrect notes.	1	3
The melody demonstrates effective contour and is stylistically appropriate	Composes a melody that demonstrates effective melodic contour and is stylistically appropriate.	4	
	Composes a melody that demonstrates satisfactory melodic contour and is generally stylistically appropriate.	3	
	Composes a melody that demonstrates inconsistent melodic contour and a sometimes ineffective overall style.	2	
	Composes a melody that demonstrates limited melodic contour and a generally ineffective overall style.	1	4
Overall presentation			
Appropriate tempo, dynamics and articulation	Demonstrates effective use of tempo, dynamics and articulation to convey a suitable blues style.	3	
	Demonstrates mostly effective use of tempo, dynamics and articulation and blues style.	2	
	Demonstrates minimal or no use of tempo, dynamics and/or articulation and a generally ineffective blues style.	1	3
Neat and accurate score	Produces a neat and accurate score.	2	
	Produces a generally neat score with some inconsistencies and errors in scoring.	1	
	Produces an untidy and poorly presented score with several errors.	0	2
Total			**32**