MUSIC THEORY 1

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Overview: Music Theory I is a foundation course for grades **9–12** that develops fluent **music literacy, aural skills, analysis, and beginning composition/arranging**. Students learn to read and write **standard notation**, internalize **rhythm and meter**, understand **pitch/scale/key relationships**, and apply **functional harmony** (triads, sevenths, cadences, and introductory voice-leading). Learning experiences blend **singing/solfège, keyboard skills, dictation/transcription, score study, and technology** (notation and DAW tools). Repertoire and listening examples reflect **multiple genres and cultures**, emphasizing how musical systems communicate ideas and identities.

Required Materials:

- **Charged Chromebook** (or school-issued device) + **power cord**
- **1"–1.5" 3-ring binder** with **5 tab dividers** labeled: Notes, Worksheets, Dictation, Composition, Assessments
- **Staff paper** (manuscript notebook or loose-leaf in binder)
- **Pencils only** for theory work (2–3 sharpened or mechanical **0.5/0.7 mm**) + large **eraser**
- **Fine-tip black pen** (for final copies/clean notation only)
- **Highlighters (2 colors)** for analysis (form, function, tendency tones
- **Wired headphones/earbuds** compatible with Chromebook

Grading Policy:
There are four categories that make up the Music Theory 1 grade:
25% Minor Assessments
25% Major Assessments
25% Classwork/Homework
25% Class Participation

Unit 1 - MUSIC NOTATION Overview

This unit introduces students to the foundations of reading and writing music, focusing on the function and usage of clefs, note values, staff systems, and standard notation symbols. Through both traditional and digital means, students will engage in reading, writing, and listening exercises that reinforce the symbolic language of music. Students will develop fluency in interpreting musical ideas through written notation and demonstrate understanding through performance and short compositions. Instructional design integrates visual, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies to support diverse learning styles. Multiple perspectives will be addressed through the study of historical notational systems and non-Western notation practices. Students will also explore how music notation serves as a universal language that bridges cultures and communities. Assessment will include analysis tasks, notation accuracy checks, and creative notation-based projects. Rubrics will be used to guide

and assess performance-based evidence.

Essential Questions:

- How does understanding music notation enhance our ability to perform and compose?
- In what ways does musical notation act as a universal language across cultures?
- How can we use written symbols to convey musical ideas with clarity and intention?
- How has the evolution of notation influenced the development of Western music?

Note: Questions used to prompt learning in particular lessons will be more specific to content and skill development.

Learning Targets & Standards

Learning Targets should reflect goals for all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

- Students will identify and interpret clefs, note and rest values, accidentals, and musical symbols.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to notate rhythms and melodies on the staff.
- Students will compare Western notation with historical or alternative notational systems.
- Students will develop fluency in reading and writing simple and compound rhythmic patterns.

Standards Addressed:

- 1.1C.12prof.Cr2a
- 1.3C.12prof.Pr4a
- 1.3C.12prof.Pr6a
- 1.4C.12prof.Re7a
- 1.4C.12prof.Re9a

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Assessments:

Formative Assessments:
- Daily exit slips identifying notation elements
- Peer-reviewed notation exercises
- Use of music software for real-time feedback on notation tasks

Summative Assessments:
- Written quizzes on symbols, clefs, and note values
- Performance-based rhythm and melody reading
- Creative project: Compose and notate an 8-measure melody using accurate notation

*Rubrics will assess clarity, accuracy, use of appropriate symbols, and creativity where applicable.

Instructional Strategies & Unit Resources:

- Use of online notation platforms (e.g., Noteflight, Flat.io) for interactive composition
- Modeling notation on whiteboard and projection software
- Group decoding exercises using flashcards and digital games
- Listening and visual analysis of score excerpts
- Use of classroom percussion instruments to reinforce rhythmic dictation
- Frequent feedback through Google Classroom and peer critiques
- Text: Music in Theory and Practice (Benward & Saker), The Complete Musician (Laitz)

Vocabulary

Tier 2: decode, interpret, demonstrate, organize, evaluate
Tier 3: staff, clef, ledger line, measure, bar line, whole note, sixteenth note, treble clef, bass clef, accidentals

Accommodations & Modifications

- Use of color-coded notation examples for visual learners
- Audio playback of examples for auditory reinforcement
- Graphic organizers for notational hierarchy
- Modified assessments with word banks and extended time
- Enrichment: notate a short folk tune using different notation software

- ELL support through multilingual glossaries and visual supports

- General Education
- IEP
- 504
- Multilingual Learners
- Students at-risk
- Gifted and Talented

Interdisciplinary Connections & 21st Century Themes & Skills

- Mathematics: Division and subdivision of beat units (fractions in rhythm)
- World History: Historical evolution of notation (Gregorian chant to modern notation)
- Literacy Standards: NJSLSA.R4 (Interpret words and phrases), NJSLSA.W4 (Produce clear and coherent writing)
- 21st Century Standards: 9.2.12.C.1 (Analyze personal interests to create educational goals), 9.4.12.IML.1 (Assess data and media representations of information)

Unit 2 - RHYTHM AND METER Overview

This unit develops rhythmic literacy and internal pulse through intensive work with simple, compound, and mixed meters; subdivision; tuplets; syncopation; hemiola; and polyrhythm basics. Students perform, transcribe, compose, and analyze rhythms from diverse traditions (classical, jazz, Latin, West African, popular music). Daily dictation, body percussion, and ensemble exercises cultivate fluency. Students use notation and DAW tools to visualize groove, grid, and quantization. Assessment emphasizes accuracy, steadiness, expressive timing, and notational clarity, culminating in an original short rhythmic étude and performance.

Essential Questions:

How do meter and subdivision shape musical feel and groove?
In what ways do **syncopation** and **hemiola** create tension and release?
How do different cultures organize rhythm, and how can those systems inform our compositions?
When is rhythmic complexity effective, and when does it obscure musical intent?

Note: Questions used to prompt learning in particular lessons will be more specific to content and skill development.

Learning Targets & Standards

Learning Targets should reflect goals for all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

- Perform and conduct in **simple (2/4, 3/4, 4/4)** and **compound (6/8, 9/8, 12/8)** meters with accurate subdivision.
- Read, write, and **transcribe** rhythms involving **eighths, sixteenths, triplets, dotted values, ties**, and **syncopation**.
- Analyze rhythmic design (motivic development, ostinati, displacement, hemiola) in repertoire from multiple cultures.
- Compose an **8–12 bar rhythmic étude** demonstrating contrast (on-beat vs. off-beat, additive layers, meter change).

Standards Addressed (selected High School performance expectations)

- **Creating:** 1.3B.12prof.Cr1a, 1.3B.12prof.Cr2a–b, 1.3B.12prof.Cr3a–b; 1.3C.12prof.Cr1a–Cr3b; 1.3E.12prof.Cr1a–Cr3b
- **Performing:** 1.3C.12prof.Pr4a–c, Pr5a, Pr6a–b; 1.3D.12prof.Pr4a–c, Pr5a, Pr6a; 1.3E.12prof.Pr4a–c, Pr5a–6a
- **Responding:** 1.3B.12prof.Re7a–b, Re8a, Re9a–b; 1.3C.12prof.Re7a–b, Re8a, Re9a; 1.3D.12prof.Re7a–b, Re8a, Re9a; 1.3E.12prof.Re7a–b, Re8a–9a
- **Connecting:** 1.3B.12prof.Cn10a, Cn11a; 1.3C.12prof.Cn10a, Cn11a; 1.3E.12prof.Cn10a, Cn11a

Assessments:

Formative

- Daily **rhythmic dictation** (simple → compound → syncopated).
- **Call-and-response** body percussion; metronome and subdivision drills.
- Quick writes: identify meter, subdivision, and syncopation in short excerpts.
- DAW grid exercises: quantize vs. humanized timing reflection.

Summative

- **Sight-reading performance** in simple and compound meters (rubric: accuracy, steadiness, dynamics).
- **Transcription project**: 16 bars from a culturally diverse recording, with notation and commentary.
- **Original rhythmic étude**: 8–12 bars featuring at least one meter change and syncopation; perform or render via DAW.

Instructional Strategies & Unit Resources:

Progressive **counting systems** (Kodály, Takadimi), conducting patterns, and movement.
Layered ostinati ensembles; bucket-drumming/body percussion.
Score and waveform analysis (accent shapes, swing feel, quantization strength).
Tools: Musictheory.net Rhythm Trainer, **Auralia** (rhythm), **Noteflight/Flat/MuseScore**, **Soundtrap/BandLab**.
Texts/References: *Alfred's Essentials of Music Theory*; rhythmic chapters in Benward/Saker; curated world-music examples.

Vocabulary

Tier 2: subdivision, displacement, consistency, fluency, contrast

Tier 3: simple/compound meter, tuplets, syncopation, hemiola, ostinato, polyrhythm, groove, quantization, swing

Accommodations & Modifications

Visual meter maps; color-coded subdivisions; slowed audio for dictation.
Alternative demonstrations (clap/tap/step; small percussion; DAW patterns).
Chunked notation tasks; extended time; peer modeling; bilingual glossaries.
Extensions: additive meters (5/8, 7/8), mixed-meter studies; layering polyrhythms.

- General Education
- IEP
- 504
- Multilingual Learners
- Students at-risk
- Gifted and Talented

Interdisciplinary Connections & 21st Century Themes & Skills

Math: *ratios/fractions in division and tuplets; periodicity.*
PE/Dance: *kinesthetic entrainment and movement phrasing.*
Literacy: *NJSLSA.R4, SL.11-12.1 (analyzing technical vocabulary; collaborative discourse).*
Career Readiness: *9.2.12.C.1;* ***Life Literacies/Key Skills:*** *9.4.12.CI.1–3, 9.4.12.TL.3, 9.4.12.IML.1.*

Unit 3 - Fundamentals of Pitch Overview

Students build pitch fluency through intervals (quality & quantity), solfège, scales, key signatures, the circle of fifths, and introductory intonation concepts. They construct and aurally identify major, natural minor, harmonic minor, melodic minor, and explore modes (Ionian → Locrian) for extension. Keyboard/singing reinforce audiation; notation software supports clarity. Assessment blends written construction, ear-training, and applied performance.

Essential Questions:

How do interval quality and size shape melody and harmonic implication?
How do **scales** and **key signatures** organize pitch space and inform musical expression?
What are the functional differences among **natural, harmonic, and melodic minor**?
How can solfège and keyboard skills strengthen internal pitch hearing (**audiation**)?

Note: Questions used to prompt learning in particular lessons will be more specific to content and skill development.

Learning Targets & Standards

Learning Targets should reflect goals for all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Learning Targets

- Build and identify **all major/minor scales** and **key signatures**; apply circle-of-fifths relationships.
- Identify, notate, and sing/play **all simple intervals** within the octave; introduce compound intervals.
- Use **movable-Do** solfège (la-based minor option) to sing scales and intervals in tune.
- Analyze pitch collections in repertoire; compose short melodic studies that demonstrate scalar/intervallic intent.

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Standards Addressed (selected High School performance expectations)

- **Creating:** 1.3B.12prof.Cr1a–Cr3b (pitch materials → drafts → refined melodic work)
- **Performing:** 1.3C.12prof.Pr5a (refine technique), 1.3C.12prof.Pr4a–c, Pr6a; 1.3D.12prof.Pr4a–c, Pr6a (keyboard/harmonizing applications)
- **Responding:** 1.3B.12prof.Re7a–b (analysis), Re8a (intent), Re9a–b (evaluation)
- **Connecting:** 1.3B.12prof.Cn10a, Cn11a (contexts & cross-discipline)
- **Technology (as used):** 1.3E.12prof.Pr4b, Re7a (structure and selection in digital tools)

Assessments:

Formative

- Daily **interval ear-training** (ICD sheets or Auralia); solfège call-and-response.
- Quick construction drills: keys, accidentals, and scale forms.
- Keyboard check-ins (hands-separate major/minor scales two octaves, moderate tempo).

Summative

- **Written exam**: interval spelling/ID; scale/key signature mastery; circle-of-fifths applications.
- **Aural quiz**: interval recognition; scale identification from audio.
- **Melodic composition**: 8–12 measures in a chosen key using target intervals and at least one modulation/tonicization cue (advanced option: modal variant).

Instructional Strategies & Unit Resources:

Anchor charts for interval stacks, enharmonics, and signatures; spiral practice.
Solfège with Curwen hand signs; drone/tonic references for intonation.

Keyboard rote patterns and **scalar fingering**; melodic dictation (do-mi-sol patterns → stepwise lines).
Tools: MuseScore/Noteflight/Flat; Auralia; MusicTheory.net; tuning apps (drone/oscillator).
Texts: Benward/Saker; *Tonal Harmony* (Kostka/Payne) excerpts on scale systems.

Vocabulary

Tier 2: construct, distinguish, modulate, resolve, tonicize
Tier 3: interval (M2, m3, P4, TT, etc.), scale degrees, key signature, accidentals, modes, solfège, circle of fifths

Accommodations & Modifications

Enlarged staff paper; color-coded accidentals; slowed playback; alternate solfège (fixed-Do option).
Scaffolded intervals (start with unison–P5) for emerging learners; extended time.
Extensions: modal melody, synthetic scales (whole-tone, pentatonic), simple tonicization (V/V).

- General Education
- IEP
- 504
- Multilingual Learners
- Students at-risk
- Gifted and Talented

Interdisciplinary Connections & 21st Century Themes & Skills

Science/Physics: *frequency ratios, overtone hints in consonance/dissonance.*
Math: *cyclic patterns (mod 12 thinking), transposition arithmetic.*
Literacy: *NJSLSA.R3, R4, SL.11-12.2 (technical reading & summarizing).*
Career Readiness/Key Skills: *9.2.12.C.4; 9.4.12.CT.1, 9.4.12.TL.3, 9.4.12.IML.1.*

Unit 4 - Harmony Overview

Students enter the vertical dimension of music: triads, seventh chords, doublings, inversions, figured bass, and functional harmony. They analyze and write authentic/half/deceptive cadences; practice Roman numeral analysis; and apply voice-leading conventions (avoid parallels, resolve leading tones, spacing/range). Keyboard harmony supports part-writing; repertoire study includes chorales, common-practice excerpts, and selected popular/jazz examples. Unit culminates with four-part harmonization of a given melody and a short analysis project.

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Essential Questions:

How does harmonic function (tonic, predominant, dominant, applied chords) shape musical form and emotion?
What makes **voice-leading** "smooth" or stylistically appropriate?
How can Roman numerals and **figured bass** clarify analysis and guide composition?
When do composers **deviate** from conventions, and to what expressive effect?

Note: Questions used to prompt learning in particular lessons will be more specific to content and skill development.

Learning Targets & Standards

Learning Targets should reflect goals for all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Learning Targets

- Build and identify **major/minor triads** and **seventh chords** in root/1st/2nd/3rd inversion; apply **figured-bass symbols**.
- Analyze harmonic progressions using **Roman numerals**; identify cadence types (PAC, IAC, HC, DC).
- Write **four-part textures** observing voice ranges, spacing, tendency-tone resolution, and parallel motion avoidance.
- Recognize and apply **basic tonicization** (V/V) and **non-chord tones** (passing, neighbor, suspension) as an extension.

Standards Addressed (selected High School performance expectations)

- **Creating:** 1.3B.12prof.Cr2a–b (assemble/organize harmonic ideas), 1.3B.12prof.Cr3a–b (refine/share); 1.3C.12prof.Cr3a–b
- **Performing:** 1.3C.12prof.Pr4a–c (theoretical/structural awareness in performance), Pr5a (rehearsal strategies), Pr6a (convey intent)
- **Responding:** 1.3B.12prof.Re7a–b (analyze elements/form), Re8a (interpret intent), Re9a–b (evaluate technique/expressivity)
- **Connecting:** 1.3B.12prof.Cn10a, Cn11a (contextual links: style, culture, function)
- **Technology:** 1.3E.12prof.Pr4b (context & digital tools), Re7a (analysis as models for composition)

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Assessments:

Formative

- Daily harmonic ID openers; part-writing mini-tasks (cadential 6–4, leading-tone resolution).
- Short Roman-numeral drills; error-spotting in model four-part textures.
- Keyboard harmony checks (blocked → broken chords; soprano/bass realization).

Summative

- **Chord-spelling & inversion quiz** (triads & sevenths with figures).
- **Four-part harmonization** of 8–12 bar melody (rubric: function, spacing, independence, conventions).
- **Analysis project**: annotate harmony and cadences in a Bach chorale or classical excerpt; brief written rationale.

Instructional Strategies & Unit Resources:

- Board modeling → guided practice → independent part-writing; SATB on staff paper and in notation software.
- **Schema practice:** T–PD–D–T progressions; cadential patterns; sequential motion.
- Keyboard **realization** of figured bass; singing inner voices to check spacing and tendency tones.
- **Tools:** MuseScore/Noteflight; Roman-numeral plugins; Auralia (harmonic dictation); MIDI keyboard.
- **Texts:** Tonal Harmony (Kostka/Payne), chorale collections; jazz/pop harmony excerpts for comparative analysis.

Vocabulary

Tier 2: function, prolongation, resolve, embellish, independence
Tier 3: Roman numerals, figured bass, inversion, cadence (PAC/IAC/HC/DC), leading tone, tonicization, non-chord tones (PT, NT, SUS)

Accommodations & Modifications

- Sentence frames for analysis; curated chord banks; color-coded voices; slower tempo realizations.

- Scaffolded textures (3-part → SATB); extended time; peer/small-group coaching; bilingual glossaries.
- **Extensions:** secondary dominants, mixture, simple **harmonic rhythm** choices; comparative analysis with jazz/pop reharmonization.

- General Education
- IEP
- 504
- Multilingual Learners
- Students at-risk
- Gifted and Talented

Interdisciplinary Connections & 21st Century Themes & Skills

Math: *intervallic spacing, inversion symmetry, proportion in phrase design.*
History/SS: *stylistic conventions across eras; cultural contexts of functional harmony.*
Literacy: *NJSLSA.W6, R9 (evidence-based musical writing & comparative reading).*
Career Readiness/Key Skills: *9.4.12.CT.1 (problem-solving in constraints), 9.4.12.CI.2–3, 9.4.12.TL.3.*

Pacing Guide by Unit (days & weeks)

- **Unit 1: Music Notation — 30 days (Weeks 1–6)**
- **Unit 2: Rhythm & Meter — 50 days (Weeks 7–16)**
- **Unit 3: Fundamentals of Pitch — 50 days (Weeks 17–26)**
- **Unit 4: Harmony — 50 days (Weeks 27–36)**

Daily spiral (all year): 5–10 minutes of aural work (counting/chanting, quick dictation, solfège, or keyboard fluency).

Week-by-Week Guide (36 weeks)

Weeks 1–6 (30 days) — Unit 1: Music Notation

- W1: Staff, clefs (treble/bass + intro to alto/tenor), ledger lines; note/rest values; classroom routines & materials.
- W2: Accidentals, enharmonics; beaming/stem rules; basic articulation & dynamics; neat, readable notation.
- W3: Notational conventions (slurs vs. ties, repeats, DC/DS, codas); layout on staff paper; proofreading marks.
- W4: Expressive/tempo markings; decoding score symbols in short excerpts; intro to notation software (class account setup).
- W5: Reading/writing short melodies; peer review for clarity; mini-composition (4–8 bars) in one clef.
- W6: Unit 1 summative (written + performance read-through) and notation portfolio check.

Weeks 7–16 (50 days) — Unit 2: Rhythm & Meter

- W7: Beat vs. subdivision; counting systems (Takadimi/Kodály); conducting patterns; rhythm warm-up routine.
- W8: Simple meters (2/4, 3/4, 4/4) reading, writing, and clapping; rhythmic dictation basics.
- W9: Compound meters (6/8, 9/8, 12/8); dotted values; ties across the barline; two-voice clapping.
- W10: Syncopation & anacrusis; accent patterns; reading & creating syncopated lines.
- W11: Hemiola & displacement; ostinato layering; ensemble coordination drills.
- W12: Tuplets (triplets vs. duple/compound feel); tempo control; metronome strategies.
- W13: Transcription project (choose a short excerpt from diverse repertoire); write and justify meter/subdivision choices.
- W14: DAW grid labs: quantize vs. humanized timing; reflect on “feel”; compose a short rhythmic étude (8–12 bars).
- W15: Sight-reading practical (simple → compound); ensemble performance check.

- W16: Unit 2 summative (written + performance) and skills benchmark; flex/reteach buffer.

Weeks 17–26 (50 days) — Unit 3: Fundamentals of Pitch

- W17: Intervals (quantity/quality); reference songs; ear-training starters.
- W18: Major scales & key signatures; circle of fifths; tonic/dominant focus in melodies.
- W19: Natural minor; relative major/minor; la-based minor solfège option; minor key signatures.
- W20: Harmonic & melodic minor; common melodic patterns; interval hearing in minor.
- W21: Intro to modes (Ionian→Aeolian; optional Dorian/ Mixolydian preview); modal contour exercises.
- W22: Chromatic, pentatonic, and whole-tone collections; color and mood in melody.
- W23: Solfège + Curwen handsigns; keyboard scale routines (hands separate); intonation with drone practice.
- W24: Melodic dictation (stepwise → skips/leaps); transposition basics (up/down M2, m3).
- W25: Mini composition: 8–12-bar melody demonstrating target intervals and clear key center; peer feedback.
- W26: Unit 3 summative (written + aural) and portfolio update.

Weeks 27–36 (50 days) — Unit 4: Harmony

- W27: Triads (quality & spelling) in major/minor; chord stacks on staff and keyboard.
- W28: Inversions & figured-bass basics; doubling conventions; range/spacing awareness.
- W29: Cadence survey (PAC/IAC/HC/DC); phrase endings in short excerpts.
- W30: Roman-numeral basics; I–IV–V–I progressions; tonic/predominant/dominant roles.
- W31: Non-chord tones (passing/neighbor/suspension) in melody and simple textures.
- W32: Voice-leading foundations (avoid parallels; resolve tendency tones); three-part to SATB scaffolds.

- W33: Harmonization project: 8–12-bar melody (at least two cadence types), perform/read at keyboard if possible.
- W34: Analysis mini-project: annotate harmony/cadences in a short chorale or lead-sheet-style excerpt.
- W35: Comprehensive review; final skill checks (intervals, keys, chords, meter).
- W36: Unit 4 summative (written + performance/portfolio), showcase/capstone, and reflection.