

Examiners' Report/  
Lead Examiner Feedback

**June 2016**

NQF BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Firsts in  
**Music**

Unit 8: Music and Production Analysis  
(20375F)

## **Edexcel and BTEC qualifications**

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com) or [www.btec.co.uk](http://www.btec.co.uk) for our BTEC qualifications.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at [www.edexcel.com/contactus](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).

If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you can speak directly to the subject team at Pearson.

Their contact details can be found on this link: [www.edexcel.com/teachingservices](http://www.edexcel.com/teachingservices).

You can also use our online Ask the Expert service at [www.edexcel.com/ask](http://www.edexcel.com/ask). You will need an Edexcel username and password to access this service.

## **Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere**

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your learners at: [www.pearson.com/uk](http://www.pearson.com/uk)

June 2016

Publications Code 20375F\_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2016

## Grade Boundaries

### What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Level 1 fallback).

### Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

### Variations in external assessments

Each test we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each test, because then it would not take into account that a test might be slightly easier or more difficult than any other.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

### Unit 8: Music and Production Analysis (20375F):

Grade	Unclassified	Level 1 Pass	Level 2		
			Pass	Merit	Distinction
Boundary Mark	0	17	24	31	39

## **Summary**

This was the fifth sitting of the unit 8 Music and Production Analysis test paper and numbers have increased slightly in comparison to the January 2016 test.

Evidence shows that an increasing number of learners were more prepared for the paper and able to achieve the higher distinction level. There is evidence that exam technique is given priority in some centres and learner's approach to questions supports this, however this is not consistent.

There continues to be a number of learners who do not demonstrate understanding of the specification content and are unaware of key musical vocabulary, in particular musical devices. The responses given in this paper showed that learners were providing answers for questions targeting Learning Aim A when providing answers relating to Learning Aim B e.g. in question 3b) which asks for a 'musical device' a significant number of responses seen were 'Reverb.' This unit requires learners to demonstrate knowledge of the key terms and processes of music and music production. Knowledge must therefore be balanced and centres are encouraged to ensure learners have the necessary understanding to be able to answer regarding both music and music production.

The use of accurate spelling continues to be a cause for concern, particularly significant was the misspelling of musical devices and other key musical terms. Where possible, learners were credited if the response was legible.

Centres are advised to make use of all support materials available in preparing learners for this test through accessing past question papers, Lead Examiner's reports and online training materials.

**Q01**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

Learners were reasonably confident in identifying the BPM and a good number scored accurately.

**Q02**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

There were mixed responses to this question as not all learners had focused on the question clearly. Some had provided an example of percussive instruments. Marks were only awarded for identifying the family of instruments and not specific instruments.

Some also referred to 'non -tuned instruments' as examples and this was not acceptable.

The example below was a correct response:

- 2 Identify the family of instruments used during the opening part of this piece from 0:00 to 0:18.

Percussion

(Total for Question 2 = 1 mark)

This example was not creditable:

- 2 Identify the family of instruments used during the opening part of this piece from 0:00 to 0:18.

NON tuned instruments

(Total for Question 2 = 1 mark)

**Q03a**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

A high number of learners achieved credit for this question. Of those who were unsuccessful, the responses were incorrect instruments.

The below shows an accurate response:

3 (a) Identify the instrument that enters at 0:19.

(1)

bass guitar

Q3b

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

Learners' response to this question was very poor on the whole. It was clear that a significant number had not focused on the aim of the question in full and had responded by providing a range of non-musical devices, which were incorrect.

Others provided answers relating to the structure and production techniques such as delay or described the tone of the voice. It was evident that learners were unsure of musical devices.

A high proportion of learners had not read the question properly and assumed this was referring to the production effects. Most answers given were reverb and delay.

Below is an example of an accurate response to this question:

(b) Identify which musical device is used in the lead vocal at:

0:30 to 0:36 *'Into the distance a ribbon of black'*

and

0:53 to 0:58 *'A fatal attraction is holding me fast'*

(1)

Syncopation

A high majority of learners responded referring to production effects:

(b) Identify which musical device is used in the lead vocal at:

0:30 to 0:36 *'Into the distance a ribbon of black'*

and

0:53 to 0:58 *'A fatal attraction is holding me fast'*

(1)

Reverb

**Q3c**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim B1**

This was very well answered with most learners being able to identify a range of effects. Reverb and distortion were the most popular answers.

This learner responded with 'delay' which was an accurate response:

(c) Identify **one** effect used by the solo electric guitar from 1:16 to 1:27.

(1)

One effect used is delay. (echo used on guitar.)

This response referred to a musical device inaccurately:

(c) Identify **one** effect used by the solo electric guitar from 1:16 to 1:27.

(1)

Riff

**Q04**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

This was a Pass level question and a good number of learners were able to identify sustained block chords as the correct response.

**Q05**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A3**

This was very accessible with a high percentage of learners scoring the full 3 marks. Those who did not achieve marks had placed the sections in the incorrect order. Whilst the question provides the learners with the three answers, some did not follow the guidelines which required learners to use the given sections. Where this was the case, learners were not penalised providing the response was accurate. However, centres are encouraged to spend time working on examination technique in preparation for the test and to draw attention to this type of question where there is helpful guidance.

Below is an example of an accurate response gaining the full 3 marks and using the given sections:

5 Below is a grid showing the structure of this piece. Some sections are missing.

Complete the grid using the following:

- Outro
- Instrumental break
- / Verse

1	Intro
2	Verse
3	Chorus
4	Short instrumental
5	verse
6	Chorus
7	Instrumental Break
8	Verse
9	Chorus
10	outro

(Total for Question 5 = 3 marks)

This learner had not identified the correct structure and gained only 1 mark:

Q01

	<b>Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A2</b>
Q01	
	<b>Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A2</b>
Q01	
	<b>Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A2</b>
Q01	
	<b>Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A2</b>
Q01	
	<b>Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A2</b>



5 Below is a grid showing the structure of this piece. Some sections are missing.

Complete the grid using the following:

- Outro
- Instrumental break
- Verse

1	Intro
2	Verse
3	Chorus
4	Short instrumental
5	Verse
6	Chorus
7	Outro
8	Verse
9	Chorus
10	Instrumental break

(Total for Question 5 = 3 marks)

**Q06**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

This was a very successful question as a significant number of learners were able to identify this as 4/4, however, many were unable to write the time signature in the correct format. Very few identified this incorrectly and these responses included 2/3, 3/4 and descriptions of the pace of the music which was not creditable.

**Q07a**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A4**

Learners were able to access this question well with a wide variety of responses. It is evident that learners have practised and developed exam technique to respond to this type of question. Several responses referred to the change in texture and many identified the mood change as sci-fi and spacey. These responses were awarded the additional explanation mark for identifying the change in mood. Many learners provided more

than one point and some examples were very detailed showing a real grasp of the musical features.

There continues to be evidence that learners were not reading the question in full and missed marks. In this instance, many gave valid points but failed to include details relating to the mood. This prevented the award of the additional mark.

Marks were not awarded for responses which only referred to the mood.

This response identified two valid points, supported with an explanation for the full 4 marks:

- 7 (a) Explain **two** ways in which the section from 2:12 to 3:08 has a different mood to the rest of the piece.

(4)

1 The vocals drop out going into an instrumental section giving the mood of anticipation

2 A <sup>spoken</sup> voice over comes in (enters) which gives a mood of suspense and excitement as this voice over is very dramatic <sup>to</sup> since you wouldn't expect it.

This response did not provide an explanation and did not achieved the additional marks:

- 7 (a) Explain **two** ways in which the section from 2:12 to 3:08 has a different mood to the rest of the piece.

(4)

1 different drums sound are used

2 the vocals are dropped

**Q07b**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim B1**

Most learners were able to identify the panning as left to right. Some provided answers relating to production techniques which were inaccurate. Credit was not given where learners had identified one side only. Letters were also accepted if accurate e.g. L to R. Panning was not accepted by itself.

This was an accurate response:

(b) Identify the stereo placement of the voice-over in this section (2:12 to 3:08).

(1)

*It's been panned from left to right*

**Q08**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A2**

This question was very well answered with most learners able to identify one of the many idiomatic techniques used in the guitar solo. Those who did not score had provided answers relating to production techniques or provided long descriptions that were not specific in identifying a precise idiomatic technique.

The examples below were two contrasting accurate responses:

**8** Identify **one** idiomatic playing technique used in the guitar solo from 4:07 to 4:51.

*The guitarist is using vibrato*

**8** Identify **one** idiomatic playing technique used in the guitar solo from 4:07 to 4:51.

*Hammer ons / hammer offs*

**Q09**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

There were a variety of responses to this question and most learners had identified the correct texture for this section as thin. Several also identified the later change to a thicker section. Whilst most were able to identify the

texture, some did not offer descriptions of the change. Best responses referred to the thin percussive part at the beginning of the section and the absence of the guitar.

This response was awarded the full two marks available as the learner had described the change:

9 Describe **one** change in the texture from 4:53 to 5:12.

It changes from being very dense to being very sparse as it lessens down to mainly using the Drums and Guitar.

(Total for Question 9 = 2 marks)

Q10a

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim B2**

This question discriminated well. Most learners were able to provide a response and identify the sound of the audience at the beginning and end of the piece. However, very few provided an explanation and were unable to access the additional explanation mark. Some provided more than one point but no explanation.

A full 2 marks was awarded for the example below as the learner had provided a valid explanation which referenced the ambience:

10 (a) Explain **one** way you can recognise that this piece was recorded at a live performance.

at the beginning of the song you hear a live audience scream. ~~throughout~~ throughout the song you can hear a certain arena echo that creates the live performance sound.

The learner below achieved 1 mark as the point had not been explained for the additional mark:

10 (a) Explain **one** way you can recognise that this piece was recorded at a live performance.

(2)

At the beginning of the song there is the sound of cheering, clapping audience. This is also at the end of the song, suggesting that the song is recorded live.

Q10b

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim B4**

This question discriminated well and most were able to identify two ways in which a sound engineer could achieve high quality sound in a live recording. A good number of learners achieved the full 4 marks available by providing two examples supported with valid explanations. However, some learners were able to identify two ways but unable to support this by providing examples.

Some referred to 'after' the recording. These responses were not credited as the question asks for during a live recording.

This learner had achieved the full 4 marks:

(b) Explain **two** ways a sound engineer could achieve high sound quality in a **live** recording.

(4)

1. ~~If the producers~~ <sup>they</sup> could add ~~an~~ a noise gate effect which will get rid of background noises when the musicians are playing which will give a clearer and purer sound

2. If the recording equipment is closer to the musicians so that they can pick up and record every part which will give a more accurate sound

**Q11**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

Most learners were able to identify this genre accurately as Reggae.

**Q12**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

This was an accessible question with most learners able to identify one musical device used by the organ. The most popular responses provided were riff and repetition. Some had mistaken block chords as arpeggios which was inaccurate.

An example of an accurate response but with a spelling error:

**12 Identify one musical device used by the organ throughout the piece.**

repetition

This example was inaccurate:

**12 Identify one musical device used by the organ throughout the piece.**

Call and response with the vocals.

**Q13**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A3**

This was a very accessible question where a significant number of learners scored the full 3 marks available.

Those who did not achieve marks had used organ or piano despite the instruction in the question. Centres are also reminded that 'vocals' is not accepted as an instrument for this paper as instructed in previous reports:

**13** Identify **three** instruments used in this piece apart from the organ and piano.

Instrument 1: ~~guitar~~ bass

Instrument 2: vocals

Instrument 3: drums

This response gained the full 3 marks:

**13** Identify **three** instruments used in this piece apart from the organ and piano.

Instrument 1: Bass guitar

Instrument 2: Bongos

Instrument 3: electric guitar

**Q14**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

There was a mixed response to the question where most learners were able to identify the type of voice. Some did not identify the 'type' of voice and had answered by describing the tone, genre, texture or offered the female range such as alto. Jamaican was also offered by some which was inaccurate. Some responses referred to the placement in the mix:

**14** Identify the lead singer's type of voice.

Tenor

**14** Identify the lead singer's type of voice.

alto

**14** Identify the lead singer's type of voice.

behind the track

**Q15**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

This was a challenging question for many learners and discriminated well. Some had provided descriptions of the rhythm and not read the question clearly where it asked for a 'name' of the device. Centres are encouraged to remind learners of this point when developing exam technique. Some had provided production techniques which was incorrect.

This response demonstrated a good understanding of the device which specifically related to the style and genre of the piece:

**15** Identify the name of the rhythmic device used by the piano from 0:14 to 0:40.

Skank

This was also an accurate response:

**15** Identify the name of the rhythmic device used by the piano from 0:14 to 0:40.

Playing Syncopated Rhythm

**Q16**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A4**

This discriminated well with the most successful responses providing clear explanations of the way in which the music communicated the mood of the lyrics. Many referred to the major key creating a happy mood supporting the lyrics 'don't worry' whilst others gave more sophisticated answers relating to the organ, hi hat and backing vocals.

There were several learners who were not adequately prepared to answer this type of question and others who provided an analysis of the meaning of the lyrics. Some found difficulty in identifying the musical features for this section to gain the first point.

There were also many examples of learners not attempting this question at all, which was disappointing.



This response gained the full 4 marks as both valid points were explained:

- 1 The guitar does a nice call & response with the vocals. It agrees, creating a feeling like 'we are all in this together'. The guitar is & saying to Bob 'I'm with you'
- 2 All of the instruments (including backing vocals) are creating a harmony with the way Bob sings these lyrics or are playing off beat creating a chilled laid-back feel.

This response did not receive credit as the first answer relates to mood only and the second describes the lyrics with no musical point given to achieve the first mark:

- 1 The song gives off a happy and pleasant mood
- 2 The song kind of tells you no matter how bad things may look it'll be fine in the end.

**Q17**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A1**

There was a wide range of responses here with a significant number achieving one mark for identifying a vocal technique. There were many who referred to the addition of the backing vocals, but as this is not a technique it was not creditable.

The most popular responses were call and response and ad-lib. Descriptions were not accepted and a specific technique was required to achieve credit.

The following two examples were accurate responses:

17 Identify **one** vocal technique used by the lead singer from 2:01 to 2:15.

improvisation.

17 Identify **one** vocal technique used by the lead singer from 2:01 to 2:15.

adlib.

This response was inaccurate:

17 Identify **one** vocal technique used by the lead singer from 2:01 to 2:15.

~~word~~ Word painting

**Q18**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim B1**

This was generally well-answered and most learners understood the question. Some provided descriptions of the dynamics as opposed to the production effect whilst others explained the fade-out process which was credited.

This was an accurate response:

18 Identify the audio effect used to end the piece from 2:48 to 2:57.

fade out

**Q19a**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim B2**

On the whole this question discriminated well. However, a high level of learners did not embrace the question accurately when referring to the disadvantages of recording in one take in a production context. Several gave reasons relating to performance errors and deficiencies, whilst others explained some unfortunate events that occur in a recording situation which was not the aim of the question.

This was an accurate response:

- 1 If one thing or person goes wrong the whole band have to restart the song.
- 2 If the levels aren't correct there's no changing it meaning something might be washing something else out.

The response below was not creditable:

- 1 You could make a mistake.
- 2 It may not be your best performance of the song.

**Q19b**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim B2**

This was a very well attempted question with the majority of learners able to provide a first valid point, however of those, quite a few were unable to provide an explanation of the disadvantage of using tape to record music. Quite a few compared tape to digital recording, but comparisons were not creditable where an explanation of the point was required.

Some learners provided several points but no explanations. Credit was given to one valid point followed by the additional mark for an explanation only and not multiple reasons.

Several referred to bad quality of sound. This was inaccurate.

The learner below achieved the full 2 marks awardable:

You could end up with tape hiss on the recording, which would reduce the sound quality as the hiss could overpower any subtle and quiet sounds.

This response was inaccurate:

The disadvantage of using tape is that tapes are one sided and may not have the quality that the new technology has

**Q20**

**Targeted Specification Area: Learning Aim A8**

This question require the learners to compare the texture of both pieces and follows the same format as in all previous questions set in section C.

Most learners were able to access the question and provide relevant responses. However, a significant number did not read the question carefully and several responses included general discussions of each piece instead of referring to the textural aspects.

As seen in previous sessions, learners tend to use the previous questions on the paper as prompts for answers. This is unadvisable as it leads to irrelevant responses that do not fulfil the specific focus of the question.

A more thorough approach to exam technique would help the learners immensely in this question, where this was in evidence, learners scored well and were able to access the higher marks.

This is a good example where the learner had scored in the higher mark boundary:

'Three little Birds' by Bob Marley and 'Learning to Fly' by Pink Floyd are very contrasting when it comes down to texture.

The overall texture of 'Three little Birds' is fairly thin and sparse. There is a fair amount of ~~layered~~ layered instruments in the chorus, however in the verse all of these instruments play less/drop out leaving the vocal as the main element of the piece.

Although there is a slight difference between the verse and the chorus of 'Three little birds', the overall texture basically stays the same. It is consistent throughout. The only main features that are important to the chorus in particular are the backing vocals that are used in a call and response way, when Bob Marley sings one line, they reply with another. As well as the arpeggios from the organ, these could be seen as a hook within the song. It's a polyphonic piece.

The overall texture of 'Learn to Fly' by Pink

Floyd varies throughout. Un-wee 'three little birds', this Pink Floyd song has a lot of contrast.

10



ring sections. The piece begins fairly thin but almost immediately turns thick. The vocals come in at this point and there is a very thick sound with lots of sound layers/effects at once. However, when the vocal sections of the verse cut out and the instrumental starts, the texture completely changes as bits of the instrumental sounds that were originally there dropout, leaving a thinner texture to the piece. This happens again later on in the song as the guitar solo comes in. So it's almost like the song is alternating between it's thick layered sound and sparse sound throughout the song. The only consistent

features that really stay in the piece throughout are the drums, bass and the synthesizers. Everything else is creating contrast in different sections of the song. One of the main features that gives the piece a thicker texture in some parts, are the added riffs and notes from both the acoustic guitar and the electric. Overall, Three Little Birds is consistent; Learn to Fly is consistently contrasting.

(Total for Question 20 = 8 marks)

There continues to be a number of learners who prefer to respond by means of two columns as an answer frame. Whilst this may be helpful for some, it does restrict fuller responses and an ability to provide comparisons:

Pink Floyd:	Bob Marley
- thing gets slowly becomes thick	- thick has lots of devices behind it.
- instruments gradually come in	goes thin on and off the song.
- thin in and out with instruments	- always something playing in the background.
- Synthesizer constantly playing to give another layer.	guitar doing off beats filling in the gaps gives it a feel of thickness.
- Samples filling up the gaps	- having the organ playing also gives another layer but when stops goes thin.

The following example demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding of the textural aspects of both pieces:



The texture is definitely thicker in Learning to Fly. At the start of Learning to Fly the texture is very thick ~~with~~ with the bass and snare drum compared to Three little Birds which has mostly an organ playing at the beginning.

Three little birds also feels a lot lighter than Learning to Fly.

The ending of three little birds keeps repeating the chorus and gets ~~quieter~~ quieter and then fades out. However Learning to Fly is very up in your face with the guitar and bass at the end and then finishes with a big double power chord.

So to conclude Learning to Fly is definitely the song with the thicker texture as it seems there are more people on the rhythm with bass guitars and drumkits as Three Little Birds does have bass and drums but they aren't as loud or as bold compared to Learning to Fly.

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit  
[www.edexcel.com/quals](http://www.edexcel.com/quals)

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828  
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

