

Theory Guidelines for Festival Exams



Level 1

Identify high/low notes on the staff

Know musical alphabet, forwards and backwards

Identify and Label white keys on the keyboard

Identify line (L) notes and space (S) notes

Identify note direction – up, down, or same

Know finger numbers, Right Hand (RH) and Left Hand (LH)

Terms & Symbols



Piano



Forte



Bass Clef



Treble Clef



Repeat Sign



Quarter Note



Half Note



Whole Note

Level 2

Know all the above plus the following:

Identify and write steps and skips on the staff

Name and write line/space notes on the grand staff (bass C to treble C).

Fill in missing bar lines for 3/4 and 4/4 time signatures, using quarter notes and rests, half notes and rests, whole notes and rests, and dotted half notes

Identify correct placement of stems on notes and rests on the staff

Identify the parts of the grand staff using a word bank

Terms & Symbols



mezzo-forte



mezzo-piano



dotted half note



staccato



legato



tie



half rest



whole rest



quarter rest

grand staff

  treble/bass clef signs bar line brace double bar line

Level 3

All the above plus the following:

Notes on the grand staff (low G – high F, also middle ledger lines D and B)

Simple intervals (all white keys, no quality)

Half/Whole steps

Scales and key signatures in C, F and G (ascending and descending)

Tonic and dominant chords in C, F, and G

Add time signature or bar lines to 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 rhythmic examples

Complete measures with notes and/or rests

Note and rest values used are: quarter, half, whole, dotted half and eighth note pairs

Terms and Symbols

 flat  sharp  natural  accent  fermata

 *8va* octave higher  eighth rest  eighth note ritardando (rit.)

allegro andante D.C. al Fine 

 crescendo (cresc.)  diminuendo (dim.) or decrescendo

Level 4

All the above plus the following:

Write and identify:

Notes on the grand staff including two ledger lines above, below and middle of staff

Major scale intervals (up to 2 sharps/flats), melodic and harmonic (Major or Perfect)

Chromatic (C – C#) and Diatonic (C – D flat) Half steps and Whole steps

Major key signatures and scales up to 2 sharps and flats, ascending and descending

Tonic (I) and Dominant (V) triads, root position in keys up to 2 sharps and flats

Change major triads into minor

Add time signature or bar lines in 3/8, 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 meter

Complete measures with missing notes and/or rests

Note and rest values used: quarter, half, whole, dotted half, eighth note pairs, dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note

Terms and Symbols

All the above plus the following:

	tonic	dominant	subdominant
dolce	cantabile	molto	poco a poco
meter	 common time	time signature	key signature
rallentando	a tempo	adagio	vivace

Level 5

All the above plus the following:

Write and identify:

Notes on the staff to include 3 ledger lines above, below and between staves

Major scales and key signatures up to 4 sharps/flats (ascending & descending)

Minor scales and key signatures up to 3 sharps/flats (ascending & descending)

Tonic, dominant & leading tone degrees of the scale

I, IV, V(V7) triads in root or cadence position in keys up to 4 sharps

I, iv, V(V7) triads in root or cadence position in keys up to 3 sharps

Change root position triads from Major to minor and/or from minor to Major

Minor scale intervals (M2, m3, P4, P5, m6, M7, P8) up to 3 sharps/flats

Interval inversions

Enharmonic tones, Whole steps, Chromatic & diatonic half steps

Add time signatures or bar lines to rhythmic examples in 3/8, 6/8, 9/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4 meter

Note and rest values used: quarter, half, whole, dotted half, eighth note pairs, dotted quarter/eighth, 4 sixteenths, triplet

Transpose a melody into the other clef

Terms and Symbols

leading tone	transpose	agitato	animato	maestoso
ostinato	 D.S. (Dal Segno)	 sfz	sforzando	 
con moto	lento	espressivo		

<i>pp</i> pianissimo	<i>ff</i> fortissimo
 sixteenth note	 sixteenth rest

Level 6

All the above plus the following:

Write and identify:

Major/minor scales and key signatures up to 5 sharps/flats (ascending & descending)

I, IV, V(V7) chords in Major/minor keys up to 5 sharps/flats in root or cadence positions

Dominant 7th chords, root position

Chord inversions and naming root, 1st inversion only

Major, minor, diminished triads

Major, minor, perfect, diminished intervals

Diatonic and chromatic half steps, enharmonic notes (without double flats or double sharps)

Chromatic scale (ascending & descending)

Add time signatures and/or bar lines to rhythm examples of increasing difficulty

Terms and Symbols

meno mosso	piu mosso	presto	largo	subito
syncopation	32 nd notes	32 nd rests	opus	tenuto
con brio	leggiero	non legato	accelerando	
risoluto	transpose			

Level 7

All the above plus the following:

Write and identify:

Major and minor keys signatures and scales up to 5 sharps/flats, using key signatures or accidentals

3 forms of minor scales ascending and descending, adding accidentals as needed

Triads in root and all inversion positions

Identify secondary chord tones by Roman numeral

Identify half, authentic, plagal and deceptive cadences

Augmented, Major, minor, diminished intervals and triads and inversions (may include double sharps/flats)

Enharmonic notes (may include double sharps/flats)

Dominant 7th chords and 1st inversion

Add time signatures and/or bar lines to rhythmic examples in 9/8, 12/8, 2/2, 3/2 meters using note and rest values:

quarter, half, whole, dotted half, eighth note pair, dotted quarter/eighth, triplet, 4 sixteenths, quarter note triplet, 2 sixteenths/eighth

Transpose a melody

Terms and Symbols

 supertonic	leading tone	cantabile	tritone giocoso	
 double flat	double sharp	mediant	pesante	alla breve
simile	sostenuto	senza	marcato	con brio

Level 8

All the above plus the following:

Identify and write:

All Major and minor key signatures

All Major and 3 forms of minor scales (ascending & descending)

Augmented, Major, minor, diminished triads in all inversions

Identify scale degrees by name (tonic, supertonic, mediant, etc.)

Identify triads of the scale by Roman numeral or scale degree (I-tonic, ii-supertonic, iii-mediator, etc.)

Dominant 7th chords in all inversions

Transpose a melody

Half, authentic, plagal and deceptive cadences

Time signatures and bar lines to 9/8, 3/2, 6/4, and other unusual meters using more complex rhythms

Terms & Symbols

scherzando

rubato sotto voce

una corda

tre corda

portato

animato

giocoso

pesante

tranquillo

Level 9

All the above plus the following:

Identify and write:

Major 7th chords, Dominant 7th chords, minor 7th chords and their inversions

Authentic, Deceptive, Half, and Plagal cadences; be able to name key, label chords and type of cadence

Use Roman numerals to label chords in a progression

Transpose a short melody from Major to minor or vice versa

Use Roman numerals to label secondary dominants in a chord progression

Add time signatures and/or missing bar lines or notes to incomplete measures in meters that include, but are not limited to: 5/4, 3/2, 6/8, 9/8 Other time signatures and more complex rhythms are to be expected.

Terms & Symbols

homophonic

polyphonic

modulation

ornaments

motive

imitation

sequence

repetition

binary form (AB)

ternary form (ABA)
Recapitulation)

Rondo form (ABACA)

Sonata-Allegro form (Exposition, Development,

Level 10

All the above plus the following:

Could include:

Changing meter in rhythmic examples

Parallel major/minor scales

Identify non-chord tones (passing tones/neighbor tones) in a melody

Definite use of figured bass

Maj. 7ths, Dom. 7ths, Min. 7ths, Half dim. 7ths, and Dim. 7ths and inversions

Figured bass for 7th chords

7ths built on all degrees of the major scale

Secondary dominants/modulation

Transpose up or down to any interval within the octave

Terms & Symbols

Common French and German terms, i.e.,

avec

cedez

douce

sans

lebhaft

langsam

schnell

tres vif

en retenant

leicht

plus

lent

lustig

assez

ralentir

mit

