

Music Composition Guidance

All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation.

Music: Pay close attention to sound levels on the recording. Notation is required for middle and high school entries. Entries may not include any imported MIDI or other source files or use algorithmic composition software (rhythm or beat boxes). The student must be the author of both the music and lyrics (if any) submitted. Students DO NOT present the artist's statement to begin the recording.

MUSIC COMPOSITION is the process of arranging sounds. The **composer** (the student submitting the entry) is a person who expresses their original thoughts and ideas through the use of sound changes over time. The composer may submit an entry performed by an individual or group and/or make use of a sound library generated performance of a score composed in its entirety by the student. Composers are not required to perform their composition themselves.

All instruments, sounds, styles, and combinations are accepted. Software may be used to produce an audio recording that does not include commercially pre-programmed imported MIDI or other source files. Entries containing algorithmic composition techniques are not accepted. Whether an entry displays formal composition technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality, and creativity. Use of copyrighted material is prohibited.

Presentation & Format: The grade division determines whether musical notation is required:

- **Primary, Intermediate, and Special Artist divisions** do not require musical notation. The student may choose to submit iconic ("made-up"), traditional, or tablature notation, if desired.
- **Middle School and High School divisions** require notation, either traditional or tablature.
- Notation software may be used to create a score.
- Whether the score is handwritten or computer-generated, appropriate instrumentation and voicing are required for the performance.
- For electronic copies of notation, accepted file type is PDF.

Tips for Audio Quality

- Do not place the recording device on top of an instrument(s) or speakers.
- Turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.).
- Record a short test and listen to it. If needed, change the recording volume or microphone location.
- Record two seconds of silence before and after performing your composition.

Submission Instructions:

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.

- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Performance must not exceed 5 minutes in length or 1 GB (one gigabyte) in file size.
- Record using a CD, DVD, or flash drive. Save as a data file, not an audio CD or DVD movie. Video files are not accepted.
- Accepted file formats include: MP3, WMA, WAV, ACC, FLAC.
- Label the CD/DVD/flash drive with name, title of artwork, arts category, and division.
- Provide score/notation (required for middle and high school) on 8.5 x 11 paper (one-sided only). Do not mount or bind. If provided electronically, provide in PDF format.
- Number each score/notation page and write name of the student on the back of all pages
- Place CD/DVD/flash drive, score/notation (if required), and student entry form in a full-page closeable manila envelope. Label the manila envelope with name, title of artwork, arts category, and division.