

FVA All-State Musicianship Examination High School Terms Study Guide

1. A tempo- return to the original tempo after some deviation
2. A cappella- without instrumental accompaniment
3. Accent mark- symbols that indicate a note is strongly played or sung
4. Accidentals- symbol used to raise or lower a given pitch by 1 or 2 semi-tones, or to cancel a previous sign or part of a key signature
5. Al fine- to the end, generally used after a repetition
6. Allargando- slowing of tempo, usually with increasing volume; most frequently occurs toward the end of a piece
7. Allegretto- slightly slower than allegro, often implying lighter texture and character as well
8. Allegro con spirito- fast tempo with spirit
9. Amabile- sweet, loveable
10. Andante- rather slow, at a moderate walking speed
11. Arpeggio- the notes of the chord played in succession to one another, rather than simultaneously; a broken chord
12. Atonal- music that lacks a tonal center; absence of key
13. Augmented- raised or enlarged. Generally refers to the raising of a pitch by one half-step
14. Bel canto- “beautiful singing”; an Italian Opera term
15. Binary form- AB- form of a composition that has two distinct sections
16. Cadenza- an improvised or written-out ornamental passage performed by a soloists usually near the final cadence
17. Caesura- grand pause; an interruption or break in the line
18. Cantabile- in a singing style; singable
19. Chromatic- motion by half steps; also describes harmony or melody that employs some of the sequential 12 pitches (semi-tones) in an octave
20. Coda- a passage that brings a piece of music to its conclusion; an ending
21. Concerto- composition for instruments in which a solo instrument is set against an orchestral ensemble
22. D. C. or Da Capo- repeat from the beginning of the composition
23. Diminished- lowered, or reduced; generally refers to the lowering of a pitch chromatically by one half step
24. Diminuendo- gradually reduce volume, getting softer
25. Divisi- performers singing the same part are divided to sing different parts.
26. Dolce- sweetly, usually also softly
27. Espressivo- to play or sing with expression
28. Falsetto- type of vocal phonation that enables the singer to sing notes beyond the normal vocal range.
29. Fermata- a pause or hold
30. Fortissimo- very loud
31. Grave- solemn, with dignity
32. Grazioso- graceful
33. Half-step- a semi-tone. There are 12 half-steps in an octave

34. Harmonic minor- a minor scale with a raised 7th
35. Interval- the relationship between two pitches, the distance between an upper and a lower pitch
36. Key signature- sharps or flats at the beginning of each staff to indicate which pitches are to be raised or lowered from their natural state during the piece
37. Largo- very slow and broad
38. Legato- to play or sing in a smooth, connected manner
39. Leading tone- the seventh degree of the diatonic scale, when it is only a half-step below the tonic, gives the feeling of wanting to move up to the tonic
40. Leggiero- lightly
41. Lunga- a long pause that is determined by the performer or director
42. Marcato- marked, stressed
43. Meno mosso- less motion
44. Meter- indicated by a time signature, can be simple or compound
45. Mezzo forte- medium loud
46. Mezzo piano- medium soft
47. Misterioso- play or sing in a mysterious manner
48. Motif- a short musical idea or melodic theme, usually shorter than a musical phrase
49. Niente- dying away to nothing
50. Octave- an interval eight diatonic scale degrees a pitch. Two notes an octave apart have the same letter name, and form the most consonant interval possible.
51. Opera- a major vocal work that involves theatrical elements
52. Opus- a creative work, numbered to designate the order of the composer's works
53. Oratorio- large scale musical composition on a sacred subject.
54. Pesante- heavy, ponderous
55. Perdendosi- gradually dying away, softer and softer
56. Phrase- a single musical idea or element which is often defined as a repeated, rhythmic pattern, or a melodic contour
57. Poco pui mosso- a little more motion
58. Portamento- special manner of singing where the voice glides from one tone to the next through all the intermediate pitches
59. Presto- very fast; faster than allegro
60. Premo- first or upper part
61. Rallentando- gradually slowing down
62. Rondo form ABACA- form of a composition that has a recurring "A" section
63. Rubato- Making the established pulse flexible by accelerating and slowing down the tempo; an expressive device
64. Senza- without
65. Sequence- the repetition of a phrase at different pitch levels using the same or similar intervals
66. Sforzando- strongly accented; forced
67. Simile- continue to perform in a similar manner
68. Slur- curved line that indicates to sing or play in a legato manner; without separation
69. Solfege- a system used for teaching sight-singing (Do-Re-Mi)

70. Sotto voce- Softly; with subdued sound; performed in an undertone
71. Sostenuto- in a sustained manner
72. Staccato- detached; crisply played
73. Strophic- describes a song where the stanzas are all sung to the same music
74. Subito- suddenly; quickly
75. Tempo primo- the original speed
76. Tenuto- fully sustained; occasionally even a bit longer than the note value requires.
77. Tessitura- most widely used range of pitches in a piece of music
78. Triad- three note chord consisting of the root, third, and fifth
79. Tutti- in a choral work, would indicate all voices
80. Vivace- lively; briskly