# Scheme of work: Riffs, ostinato and loops

Introduction

This SOW offers a route through the GCSE Music (8271) specification.

The subject content of the four areas of study focuses strongly on the musical elements. We recommend that the three components (understanding music, performing and composing) are taught holistically.

This scheme of work is designed to strengthen the connection between listening, performing and composing. It highlights how many of the musical elements are universal and can be applied across different genres and styles of music.

You can adapt this scheme of work to suit a variety of circumstances. It covers:

* All four areas of study.
* How to integrate listening, performing and composing to support progression through the activities.
* The relationship between the area of study and the musical elements to demonstrate universality.
* Musical elements taken from the area of study musical elements tables in the specification.

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**Focus: Riffs, Ostinati and Loops**

**Area of study 1: Musical language/elements**

* Melody: conjunct, scalic, arpeggio, passing notes, diatonic, ostinato Harmony: diatonic, perfect, imperfect
* Tonality: major, minor, modulation Structure: theme and variations Sonority: string timbre, arco
* Texture: homophonic, contrapuntal, imitation , canon Tempo, Metre, Rhythm: simple, triplet
* Dynamics/Articulation: pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff, crescendo, diminuendo Phrasing: legato, staccato

**Area of study 2: Musical language/elements**

* Melody: riff, pitch bend, vibrato, improvisation, blue notes Harmony: power chords, I,VI, V progression
* Tonality: minor structure: twelve bar blues, drum fill Sonority: electric/slide guitar, distortion, harmonica (harp) Texture: homophonic
* Tempo, Metre, Rhythm: backbeat, offbeat, BPM, anacrusis Dynamics/Articulation: ff, crescendo

**Area of study 3: Musical language/elements**

* Melody: riff, ostinato Harmony: I,V progression Tonality: major Structure: song form,
* Sonority: Hammond organ
* Texture: homophonic, vocal close harmonies Tempo, Metre, Rhythm: offbeat, skank, bubble Dynamics/Articulation: staccato

**Area of study 4: Musical language/elements**

* Melody: ostinato, motifs Harmony: dissonance Tonality: tonal ambiguity Structure: repeated, loop Sonority: marimba
* Texture: imitative, layering, canon Tempo, Metre, Rhythm: syncopation

**Duration of scheme of work: 5 weeks**

**Week 1: Riffs in Rock 1 (AoS 2/3)**

* Listen to and evaluate opening of Led Zeppelin’s ‘When the levee breaks.’(70’s rock)
* Perform through improvisation
* Discuss links between Rock (AoS2) and Blues (AoS3)
* Composing – one bar riffs, slow tempo, one chord, minor tonality.

**Week 2: Riffs in Rock 2 (AoS2)**

* Listen to and evaluate ‘Seven Nation Army, White Stripes, pop/rock 2003
* Technology performance of SNA through Garageband
* Composing – two bar riffs, medium tempo, three chords, minor tonality.

**Week 3: Riffs in Caribbean (AoS3)**

* Listen to and evaluate Bob Marley’s ‘Three Little Birds’
* Class performance from music
* Composing – Three note bass riff, melodic counter-riff, skank beat, extended melody.

**Week 4: Ostinati in Minimalism (AoS4)**

* Listen to and evaluate Steve Reich’s ‘Nagoya Marimbas’
* Whole class/small group performance of Steve Reich’s ‘Clapping Music’
* Composing – Technology composing – Layering, Phasing/canon, contrapuntal textures, additive process.

**Week 5: Ostinato and Variation (AoS1)**

* Listen to and evaluate the opening of the 2nd movement, (Allegretto) from Beethoven’s 7th Symphony
* Performance – class melodic improvisation based on the rhythm of Beethoven’s ostinato
* Composing – Extended ostinato, extended.