

Features – ABRSM Aurals – Grades 5-7

At grades 5 to 7 in ABRSM practical exams, you will be asked to describe the features of a piece of music that is played to you. Listen to as much music as you can from the four periods below and try to become familiar with them. The following is a list of possible features for each period, but there will be others and remember, feature will sometimes overlap from one period to others.

Baroque	Romantic
<p>Ground bass Contrapuntal texture Ornamentation Limited range of keyboard Clear/crisp articulation</p> <p>Use of imitation Simple harmony Regular phrase length Imitation across parts</p>	<p>Rich/thick chords Rich harmonies Warm chordal textures Wide range of keyboard Dramatic bold contrasts of dynamics</p> <p>Lyrical/cantabile melody Melodic decoration Sustaining pedal for sonority Flowing melody with extended phrases Irregular phrases</p> <p>Flexible tempo (rubato) Chromatic harmony</p>
Classical	20th Century
<p>Balanced phrases Lilting rhythms Melodic Melody dominated texture Repetition of ideas</p> <p>Phrases punctuated with cadences Predictable cadences Simple harmony Decorated melody Reliance on primary chords</p> <p>Arpeggiated accompaniment Alberti bass / broken chords Crescendo / diminuendo Moderate pitch range Light sonority</p>	<p>Colourful harmonies Clashing harmonies Uneven phrase lengths Lack of defined key Modal / pentatonic melody</p> <p>Embellishment / decoration / improvisation Sonorous Latin groove / rhythm Energetic rhythms Syncopation</p> <p>Jazz chords Bluesy melody / chords Percussive accents Abrupt changes of mood Contrasting articulations</p>