

Aural Tips - Grade 2

- Some tests allow for a second attempt or for an additional playing by the examiner, if needed.
- The examiner will prompt if needed, although this may affect the assessment.
- Marks are not awarded for each individual test or deducted for mistakes; instead they reflect the candidate's **overall response** in this component.

A. Clap the pulse of a piece played by the examiner & identify whether it is in 2, 3 or 4 time. Give a louder clap on the 'strong' beats

- The pulse is like the steady musical heartbeat. It is regular and does not change/speed up or alter rhythm.
- When the examiner starts to play, work out if it is in 2 or 3 or 4 time
- Start clapping as soon as you feel the pulse (not the rhythm of the tune!)
- Remember to clap louder on the first beat. Make it really obvious.

4 TIME

- 4 time goes in units of four beats; you can count 1 2 3 4 and feel a strong beat each time you say 'One'.
- 4 time sounds quite a lot like 2 time, so it can be quite difficult to tell the difference unless you have listened to lots of examples.
- Concentrate on the left hand/lower part. This might be where the most clues are.

B. Sing as echoes 3 phrases played by the examiner (major Key)

- You might feel unsure about singing -everyone does but it's such a small part of the exam.
- You can sing any sound (such as 'La la' of 'Do do') or you could hum or whistle if you prefer.
- The phrases will be two bars long
- There will only be 4 different notes included at most
- Sing back the echo without a pause & keep in time.
- Try playing 4 random neighbouring notes near the middle of the piano in a random order and repeating them.
- **The phrases are a little more challenging to remember than the Grades 1 and 2 tests.**

C. Identify when a change in either pitch or rhythm occurred during a phrase played by the examiner.

- I call this the "spot the difference" test.

- The key to this one is to be able to remember the first phrase accurately
- Sing along in your head on the 2nd playing and try to notice what the change is.
- The phrase will be two bars long and in a major key
- Only 1 part will change
- State whether the change was in pitch or rhythm.
- **Describe it by singing or clapping - use words like - dotted rhythm/shorter or longer or higher or lower note/ near the beginning or end etc.**
- If necessary, the examiner will play both versions of the phrase again (although this may affect the mark).
- If you really have no idea, make a guess - you still have a 50/50 chance.

D. Listen to a piece played by the examiner and answer some questions about listen to a piece played by the examiner and answer some questions about dynamics or articulation

They might ask a couple of questions from the following:

- **Articulation**
 - Were the notes smooth or detached?
 - Were the quieter parts smooth or detached?
 - At the beginning/end were the notes smooth or detached?
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- **Dynamics**
 - Was the music loud or soft?
 - Where was the quietest/loudest part of the music?
 - Were the quieter parts smooth or detached?
 - Did it start quiet/loud?
 - Did it stay quiet/loud throughout?
 - Where in the piece did it change? (beginning/middle/end)
 - Did it change suddenly or gradually?
 - What was quieter - beginning or end?
 - Towards the end, did the music get louder or quieter?
 - The music began loudly/quietly - did it stay that way?