

GRADE 4 QUESTIONS - Sample questions and answers

Musical Knowledge

These questions test the candidate's understanding of their chosen pieces, the context of their performance and their knowledge of their instrument and its technical demands, including best practice for rehearsal and performance.

Five questions, each worth 2 marks, will normally be asked. Questions will include discussions on most of the areas mentioned below, but not all parameters will be relevant to all disciplines and pieces, and examiners will select questions as appropriate.

As for previous grades, and additionally:

- 1 Identify/explain any main key encountered throughout the pieces played, though no detailed knowledge of modulatory processes will be expected.
- 2 Name the tonic and the dominant (and the 3 notes of their triads) of any of the keys in which the pieces are written.
- 3 The full name of any interval (within an octave) between any two successive notes appearing in the pieces played. (e.g. 'major second' not 'second'). Intervals may be asked from a lower to a higher note or vice versa.
- 4 Comment on any particular technical or musical challenges encountered in the preparation of the pieces played.

Modulation to closely related keys:

e.g. **Question:** What key does this music change to? **Answer:** 'E minor'

Tonic and dominant triads:

e.g. **Question:** Name the notes of the tonic triad **Answer:** A C E

Intervals (full names)

e.g. **Question:** What is the interval between these notes? **Answer:** see below for examples

Technical challenges

e.g. **Question:** Show me the most challenging part of the piece and tell me why

Answer: Here [*the candidate indicates*] e.g. because of the large leap

MILONGA

KEY = A minor

no key signature

Tonic A minor - A C E

Dominant is E major - E G# B

Technical challenge: playing the slurs accurately in time - practice with slurred scales and slur studies (pieces that are made up of a lot of slurs)

NIGHT PIECE

KEY = E minor

E minor has 1 sharp (F#) in the key signature

Tonic E minor - E G B

Dominant is B major - B D# F#

Technical challenges:

- 1) maintaining a steady swing rhythm - practice scales with a metronome in this rhythm.
- 2) Changing from one section to another. Practice the transitions in 'loops' - repeated slow practice of the two bars of the transition

ANDANTINO

KEY = A minor

no key signature

Tonic A minor - A C E

Dominant is E major - E G# B

Technical challenge: chords at bar 8. Every finger has to change string and fret - practice with other chord studies (pieces that are made up a lot of chords)

Modulation to closely related keys: - BAR 11 to C major (relative major)

[C major=C E G. G major G B D is dominant of C major]

INTERVALS

minor 2nd - one semitone i.e. B to C, E to F, C to C sharp etc

major 2nd - two semitones i.e. B to C#, E to F#, C to D etc

minor 3rd - three semitones i.e. B to D, E to G, C to D# etc

major 3rd - four semitones i.e. B to D#, E to G#, C to E etc

perfect 4th - five semitones i.e. B to E, E to A, C to F etc

augmented 4th (or diminished 5th) - six semitones B to F, E to A#, C to F#

perfect 5th - seven semitones i.e. B to F#, E to B, C to G etc

minor 6th - eight semitones i.e. B to G, E to C, C to G# etc

major 6th - nine semitones i.e. B to G#, E to C#, C to A etc

minor 7th - ten semitones i.e. B to A, E to D, C to A# etc

major 7th - eleven semitones i.e. B to Asharp, E to D#, C to B etc

Identify scale and arpeggio patterns in the pieces.

Reasons and method for the instrumental warm up:

- To establish good coordination between the left and right hands, i.e. the synchronisation of the pressing of the string and the plucking of the note.
- To warm up muscles and loosen up fingers.
- To focus on relaxation of whole body and establish good playing posture
- To focus on the techniques used in the pieces one is working on...i.e. arpeggios or scales or chords or slurs

Scales and arpeggios are especially useful, especially if they relate to the pieces one is working on.

Sounding pitch of guitar

The guitar is a transposing instrument which sounds an octave lower than written. (Often, in guitar music, the treble clef has a small "8" attached to the lower loop to show this)

TULIP SWING

Key - A major

A major has 3 sharps F#, C# and G# in the key signature. The piece was written using notes from the A major scale

- Tonic A major - A C# E
- Dominant is E major - E G# B

Technical Challenges:

- 1) sustaining the crotchet bass notes whilst keeping the tune flowing in a steady swing rhythm.
- 2) barré at bar 13
- 3) chords at the end

STUDY no 6 from Etudes Simple (simple studies - technical pieces written for students)

Key - not in a key but has a pedal A - so its t centred on A. May be described as modal

Technical Challenges:

- 1) the change of arpeggio pattern - especially the rhythm and meter of last two lines
- 2) enabling all arpeggio notes to ring out - keeping left hand fingertips accurately on strings.

ON JOE'S DECK

KEY = G major

1 sharp in key signature

Tonic G major - G B D

Dominant is D major - D F# A

Technical challenge: the chord at bar 12. It is a big leap - practice with chord studies (pieces that are made up a lot of chords)

Modulation to closely related keys: - BAR 9 to E minor (relative minor)

[E minor=E G B. B major B D# F# is dominant of E minor]