

PRAXIS II: Music Concepts & Processes

General Music Sample Questions (Suggested Time is 30 minutes to answer this question)

Briefly describe an instructional sequence that would teach major and minor modes (tonalities) to students in a general music class.

In the space provided in your test book, respond to the following THREE tasks.

Task I: At the top of the [response page], indicate the grade or grade range for which your instructional sequence is intended.

Task II: On pages [X and X], briefly describe an appropriate and logical instructional sequence for the grade level you have indicated that would teach major and minor modes to students in a general music class. Your instructional sequence should include

- ONE or more participatory experiences and
- TWO musical selections. The musical selections you include should come from different cultural origins or musical traditions.

You may structure the sequence in any manner you prefer—it may, for example, be for a single class period or it may occur over a span of several class periods.

Task III: On page [X in test booklet], briefly describe an additional activity that reinforces what you taught about major and minor modes in Task II.

Sample Answer that Scored a 5

(source: *The Praxis Series Study Guide: Music*, ETS, 2003).

Task I (grade/grade range): 7th grade

Task II: Briefly describe....

1. Have students listen as you play a major scale on the piano. Then have them listen as you play a minor scale.
2. Ask the students if the two scales were the same or different. See if they can describe how they were different. Expect answers such as major = happy, minor = sad.
3. Provide a handout with a major and minor scale reproduced on a staff. Ex. C Major or C Minor.
4. Have students in pairs locate all of the whole steps and half steps in each scale. Have pairs share answers with class.
5. Explain to students which scales are major and minor based on the half step and whole step pattern.

6. Once they have identified the pattern of both scales have them create a major scale using a staff on the board.
7. Ask volunteers to see if they can alter the scale to make it minor. ****Play through each of the scales throughout the lesson to familiarize the students with the tonalities****
8. Play a variety of musical selections that are in both major and minor keys. Give students a call chart and have them listen and decide whether each piece is in major or minor. Some selections to include may be:
 - a. Major: The Ashgrove, The Star Spangled Banner, Frere Jacques
 - b. Minor: Scarborough Fair, The Canoe Song, When Johnny Comes Marching Home
9. Listen to each song again giving the correct answers, or asking students to share their results.
10. Collect call charts and use for assessment.

Task III: Additional activity....

1. Print out the names of specific keys on slips of paper. Ex. A major, A minor, C major, C minor, etc.
2. Have each student draw a slip of paper and create a scale based on what key they pick.
3. Give students the opportunity to use the piano and other instruments to create a melody using only the notes on their particular scale. The melody should be a specified length, 8 to 16 measures.
4. Have students hand in composition at the end of class.
5. After teacher has looked over compositions and located any errors she will return the melodies to the students.
6. Students will then have the opportunity to make any necessary changes.
7. Let students perform melodies for the class.
8. When not performing the students should decide whether the melody being played is major or minor.

Scoring Commentary: *This response begins with an appropriate preparatory activity wherein students are asked to listen to and compare the differences between a major and minor scale played on the piano. The instructional sequence proceeds logically and smoothly, as students identify the whole- and half-step pattern of a major and minor scale, create major and minor scales, and then identify each piece as major or minor. The test taker should have identified the order of the whole and half steps for each scale for clarity, but overall the test taker demonstrates a full understanding of the processes involved in teaching the concepts. The test taker also demonstrates familiarity with various musical traditions by citing examples of folksongs of English, French, and Native American cultures, and American patriotic songs. The additional activity reinforces the concept of major and minor tonality as students first create assigned scales, then compose melodies based on those scales. Although 8 to 16 measures may be rather long for such an assignment, the assignment itself is an excellent activity to acquaint the students with the tones that constitute the major and minor scales. Sharing their compositions allows the students another opportunity to hear and identify major and minor melodies.*

This response demonstrates a full understanding of the concepts and processes, and it receives a score of 5.

Try these on your own: (two samples follow, one with tips to guide you)

Sample 1

Briefly describe an instructional sequence that would teach major and minor modes (tonalities) to students in a general music class.

- Task I
Indicate the grade or grade range for which your instructional sequence is intended. (e.g., 4th grade or MS General Music)
 - *TIP: Pick a grade level that you work with, even if it is band, choir, or orchestra exclusively. DO NOT PICK SOMETHING YOU DO NOT WORK WITH.*

- Task II
 - Briefly describe an appropriate and logical sequence for the grade level you have indicated that would introduce the concept of texture to students in a general music class. Your instructional sequence should include:
 - ONE or more participatory experiences, and
 - TWO musical selections. The musical selections you include should come from different cultural origins or musical traditions.
 - You may structure the sequence in any manner you prefer-it may, for example, be for a single class period or it may occur over a span of several class periods.
 - *TIPS:*
 - *Do a quick list of terms of what texture means to you. Do not worry what order they are in: fugue; more instruments, less instruments; terraced dynamics; homophony; monody; polyphony.*
 - *Make a list of songs/chants/games and activities you know that may be used for literature.*

- Task III
 - Briefly describe an additional activity that reinforces what you taught about texture in Task II.
 - *TIPS: Begin with a review of the concept here; perhaps a quick assessment activity. Next what can be added to the concept to expand its understanding; in other words, how can the students manipulate the concept of texture to demonstrate their understanding? Compose an ostinato, create a form, etc.*

Sample 2

- Briefly describe an instructional sequence that would introduce the concept of syncope to students in a general music class.
- Task I: Grade/grade range
- TASK II: Briefly describe an appropriate and logical sequence for the chosen grade level that should include:
 - ONE or more participatory exercises and

- TWO musical selections that come from different cultural origins or musical traditions.
- You may structure the sequence in any manner you prefer over one class period, or several classes.

TASK III: Briefly describe an additional activity that reinforces what you taught about texture in Task II.

TIPS IN ANSWERING ESSAY QUESTIONS

- ✚ Be brief, but thorough and specific when answering a question; do not be verbose or argue the validity of the question. Attend to the question, in other words.
- ✚ Be sequential in outlining a lesson (general music)
- ✚ Check your answer to see if you provided the information requested. For example, if a question asks for three (3) possible causes and (3) remedial techniques, then check to see you have a remediation for each question, and they relate to fixing the ensemble's problem.
- ✚ You can make a list when answering a question on this test. It is not necessary to have complete sentences and a flowing essay. An instructional sequence is what they are looking for.
- ✚ Research several folk songs for use when answering the general music essay. Make sure these songs can fit a multitude of concepts: form, texture, harmony, syncopation, tonality, etc. Also, have literature that is varied (world, ethnic, pop, folk, etc).
- ✚ Use terminology correctly and spell musical terms correctly—this does count.