



Monthly “Create a Composition” Prompts / Assignments

Activity Instructions:

Use the steps outlined below as a template for each month’s Create a Composition assignment, applying a different creative writing prompt each month. Compositions can be as simple as a short 8-bar melody, or as in-depth as a full score or arrangement with lyrics. Use Finale or the Compose app in SmartMusic to notate your composition, and the Sharing feature to submit your composition to your teacher.

Step 1: Creative Meditation

Spend a few minutes in silence with your eyes closed, taking deep breaths, and clearing your mind. Having a calm, undistracted mind will help you access your natural creativity. For a free guided meditation for creativity, visit [Headspace](#).

How many minutes did you spend meditating? _____

Step 2: Seek Inspiration (Imagine)

Read the composition prompt. The creative ideas, concepts, and feelings that influence musicians’ work emerge from a variety of sources. Does the prompt remind you of a song, movie, piece of art, book, person, place, or memory? What sounds, colors, or words move you? Engage yourself in whatever activity brings inspiration. What ideas come to mind?

Step 3: Develop an Idea (Plan and Make)

Choose an idea that resulted from the previous step and consider ways of communicating it through music notation. Your creative choices are influenced by your musical knowledge and expressive intent. What musical elements will help bring your ideas to life? Are there any keys, melodic patterns, dynamics, rhythms, or harmonies that support your idea?

Step 4: Compose (Create)

Create a new blank document in Finale or the Compose app in SmartMusic. Enter the notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics that help bring your ideas to life. ‘

Step 4: Reflection (Evaluate and Refine)

Musicians evaluate and refine their work through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria. Listen to your composition using the playback in Finale or Compose. Consider any musical edits or changes that might help improve the quality of your work.

Please answer the following questions:

- What was the main source of inspiration for this work?
- What creative decisions did you make that helped bring the idea to life?
- Upon listening and reflecting, what changes did you make to the composition (if any)?

Step 5: Share your creation (Present)

To submit your composition to your teacher, click the blue Sharing icon on the left side of the page in SmartMusic. Or, in Finale, click **File > Share...**

You will be prompted to name your composition, and save it to your SmartMusic account. Next, select **Share File Privately** and enter your teacher's email address, or select **Public Share Link** to be taken to the Content Manager where you can copy a public access link to send to your teacher.

Ideas for Prompts:

1. **January:** Create a composition that captures an emotion or feeling. What does curiosity sound like? Excitement?
2. **February:** Compose a love song.
3. **March:** Compose a theme song for your favorite sports team, board game, or video game.
4. **April:** Create a composition that incorporates a ii-V-I progression, or a melody using notes from the blues scale.
5. **May:** Create a melody or composition in your favorite key. Do you prefer sharps or flats? Is it major or minor? Try using the entire range of your instrument!
6. **June:** Create a composition inspired by your favorite color. What does the color red sound like? Or yellow, green, or blue?
7. **July:** Create a theme song for your favorite place to visit on vacation.
8. **August:** Create a composition or melody that borrows ideas from your favorite composer or songwriter. Make it your own!
9. **September:** Compose a melody that sounds like autumn. What do leaves falling from a tree sound like?
10. **October:** Create a composition that sounds haunted. Consider using dissonant intervals or harmonies.
11. **November:** Create a composition using an original, creative rhythmic pattern. Try composing in different time signatures and consider various grooves.
12. **December:** Give the gift of music! Create a composition as a gift for a friend or family member with original lyrics.