

In this section the examiner will ask you to play a selection of exercises drawn from each of the four groups shown below. Groups A, B and C contain examples of the scales, arpeggios and chords you can use when playing the pieces. In Group D you will be asked to prepare the riff exercise and play it to the backing track in the exam. You do not need to memorise the exercises (and can use the book in the exam) but the examiner will be looking for the speed of your response. The examiner will also give credit for the level of your musicality.

Groups A and B should be prepared in two octaves in two positions. The first position is to be prepared on the E string from the starting notes of F, G and A. The second position is to be prepared on the A string from the starting notes of B, C and D. You may have to make adjustments for open strings in your fingerings of some scales.

Before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test. The tempo is $\text{♩} = 80$.

Group A: Scales

1. Major scale (F major shown, root on E string)

2. Natural minor scale (B natural minor shown, root on A string)

3. Harmonic minor scale (A harmonic minor shown, root on E string)

4. Minor pentatonic scale (G minor pentatonic shown, root on E string)

Technical Exercises

5. Major pentatonic (D major pentatonic shown, root on A string)

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The exercise is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes. The fretboard diagram below shows the fingering for the D major pentatonic scale, starting on the A string (5th fret) and ending on the A string (5th fret).

Fretboard diagram (T, A, B strings):

Fret	T	A	B
5		5	7
7		4	7
4		4	7
7		5	7
5		7	5
7		5	7
10		7	5
7		5	7
5		7	5
7		5	7
4		7	4
7		4	7
4		7	4
7		5	7
5		7	5

6. Blues scale (C blues scale shown, root on A string)

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The exercise is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The melody consists of eighth notes. The fretboard diagram below shows the fingering for the C blues scale, starting on the A string (3rd fret) and ending on the A string (3rd fret).

Fretboard diagram (T, A, B strings):

Fret	T	A	B
3		3	6
6		3	4
4		5	3
5		3	5
4		4	6
6		7	8
8		6	8
6		8	6
8		7	6
7		6	4
4		5	3
5		3	5
4		5	4
3		6	3
6		3	6
3		6	3

Group B: Arpeggios

1. Major arpeggio (G major arpeggio shown, root on E string)

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The exercise is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth notes. The fretboard diagram below shows the fingering for the G major arpeggio, starting on the E string (3rd fret) and ending on the E string (3rd fret).

Fretboard diagram (T, A, B strings):

Fret	T	A	B
3		3	2
2		5	5
5		4	3
3		3	3
3		4	5
5		5	5
5		2	3
3		3	2

2. Minor arpeggio (C minor arpeggio shown, root on A string)

2. Minor arpeggio (C minor arpeggio shown, root on A string)

The exercise is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The melody consists of eighth notes. The fretboard diagram below shows the fingering for the C minor arpeggio, starting on the A string (3rd fret) and ending on the A string (3rd fret).

Fretboard diagram (T, A, B strings):

Fret	T	A	B
3		3	6
6		5	5
5		8	8
8		8	8
8		8	8
8		5	5
5		6	3
3		3	6

Group C: Chords

Major and minor triads played in three inversions on the top three strings in the key of C. To be played in a continuous sequence.

1. Major and minor triads in three inversions

Chord sequence: C, Am, Em, F, Dm, G, C.

Tablature fingerings (T, A, B strings):

- C: T=3, A=5, B=5
- Am: T=5, A=5, B=5
- Em: T=3, A=5, B=4
- F: T=5, A=6, B=5
- Dm: T=5, A=6, B=7
- G: T=3, A=3, B=4
- C: T=3, A=5, B=5

Group D: Riff

In the exam you will be asked to play the following riff to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in bars 3, 5 and 7. The tempo is ♩ = 100.

Tempo: ♩ = 100 Funk

Chords: E7, A7

Tablature fingerings (T, A, B strings):

- Bar 1: T=0, A=7, B=5
- Bar 2: T=5, A=7, B=5
- Bar 3: T=0, A=7, B=5
- Bar 4: T=0, A=7, B=5

Sight Reading

In this section you have a choice between either a sight reading test or an improvisation and interpretation test (see facing page). At this level there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar ending. The piece will be composed in the style of rock, funk or blues and will have chord symbols throughout. The test is eight bars long and is in one of the four following keys: F major or G major, or E minor or G minor.

The improvised ending will use chord patterns that have been used in the sight reading part of the test. The examiner will allow you 90 seconds to prepare it and will set the tempo for you. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

♩ = 90 *Funk*

System 1:

- Bar 1: Chord Gm^7 . Bass line: 0 0 0 3 0
- Bar 2: Chord F . Bass line: 0 3 0 3
- Bar 3: Chord Gm^7 . Bass line: 0 0 3 3 0
- Bar 4: Chord F^7 . Bass line: 1 1 3 0

System 2:

- Bar 5: Chord F . Bass line: 0 0 0 3 3 0
- Bar 6: Chord Gm . Bass line: 3 2 3 0
- Bar 7: Chord Gm^7 . (Improvised ending)
- Bar 8: Chord F^7 . (Improvised ending)
- Bar 9: Chord Gm^7 . (Improvised ending)

Develop melody

In Grade 5, the improvisation and interpretation test contains a small amount of sight reading. This consists of a two bar section of rhythm notation at the beginning of the test. You will be asked to play the chords in the rhythms indicated and complete the test using an improvised line made up of chords and lead lines where indicated. This is played to a backing track of no more than eight bars. The test will be given in one of the four following keys: A major or G major, or E minor or G minor. You have 30 seconds to prepare and then you will be allowed to practise during the first playing of the backing track before playing it to the examiner on the second playing of the backing track. This test is continuous with a one bar count-in at the beginning and after the practice session. The tempo is ♩ = 90–100.

♩ = 100 *Funk*

Chords in rhythm shown

Em⁷ Am⁷ Em⁷ D

Improvise rhythmic chords

Improvise melody

Em⁷ C Am D G

There are two ear tests in this grade. The examiner will play each test to you twice. You will find one example of each type of test printed below.

Test 1: Melodic Recall

The examiner will play you a two-bar melody with a drum backing using either the D major pentatonic or A minor pentatonic scales. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be descending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice.

Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, root note, count-in, melody. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and root note for the third time followed by a *vocal* count-in and you will then play the melody to the drum backing. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

Test 2: Harmonic Recall

The examiner will play you a tonic chord followed by a four bar chord sequence in the key of G major played to a drum backing. The sequence will be drawn from the I, IV, V and vi chords and may occur in any combination. You will be asked to play the chord sequence to the drum backing in the rhythm shown in the example below. This rhythm will be used in all examples of this test given in the exam. You will then be asked to identify the sequence you have played to the examiner. You will hear the test twice.

Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, tonic, count-in, chords. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and tonic for the third time followed by a *vocal* count-in then you will play the chords to the drum backing. You should then name the chord sequence, including chord types (i.e. major or minor). The tempo is ♩ = 80.

General Musicianship Questions

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument.

Music Knowledge

The examiner will ask you the four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked. The scale question at the end of the list of subjects is mandatory.

In Grade 5 you will be asked to identify/explain:

- The names of pitches
- The meaning of accidentals: ♯ (sharp), ♭ (flat) and ♮ (natural) signs
- The meaning of the time signature, key signature and swing time markings
- Repeat marks, first and second time bars, D.C., D.S., al Coda and al Fine markings
- Hammer-ons, pull-offs, accents and vibrato markings
- The construction of minor⁷, major⁷ or dominant⁷ chords
- One type of scale that can be used appropriately in the solo section of the piece you have played

Instrument Knowledge

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 5 you will be asked to identify/explain:

- Any part or control on your guitar
- The function of the volume and tone controls on your guitar
- The tone settings for the piece you have played on the amp and why you have chosen these settings

Further Information

Tips on how to approach this part of this exam can be found in the *Syllabus Guide* for guitar, the *Rockschool Guitar Companion Guide* and on the Rockschoo! website: www.rockschool.co.uk. The Introduction to Tone, a comprehensive explanation of guitar tones, can be found at the back of each grade book and the tone guide to each piece is in the appropriate Walkthrough.