

In this section the examiner will ask you to play a selection of exercises drawn from each of the three groups shown below. Groups A and B contain examples of the scales and arpeggios you can use when playing the pieces. In Group C you will be asked to prepare the bassline 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 on the starting notes indicated. 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

One octave prepared on the starting notes G, B \flat , C and D in the two specified fingerings.

1. Major scale (G major scale shown)

2. Major pentatonic scale (B \flat major pentatonic scale shown)

3. Natural minor scale (C natural minor scale shown)

4. Minor pentatonic scale (D minor pentatonic scale shown)

Two systems of musical notation for the D minor pentatonic scale. Each system consists of a bass clef staff with notes and a corresponding tablature staff with fret numbers. The first system shows an ascending and descending scale. The second system shows a different fingering pattern for the same scale.

5. Blues scale (C blues scale shown)

Two systems of musical notation for the C blues scale. Each system consists of a bass clef staff with notes and a corresponding tablature staff with fret numbers. The first system shows an ascending and descending scale. The second system shows a different fingering pattern for the same scale.

6. Harmonic minor scale (B \flat harmonic minor scale shown)

Two systems of musical notation for the B \flat harmonic minor scale. Each system consists of a bass clef staff with notes and a corresponding tablature staff with fret numbers. The first system shows an ascending and descending scale. The second system shows a different fingering pattern for the same scale.

Group B: Arpeggios

One octave prepared on the starting notes F, B \flat , C and D

1. Major arpeggio (G major arpeggio shown)

A single system of musical notation for the G major arpeggio exercise. It consists of a bass clef staff with notes and a corresponding tablature staff with fret numbers. The exercise shows an ascending and descending arpeggio.

2. Minor arpeggio (B^b minor arpeggio shown)

3. Dominant⁷ arpeggio (C dominant⁷ arpeggio shown)

4. Major⁷ arpeggio (D major⁷ arpeggio shown)

5. Minor⁷ arpeggio (G minor⁷ arpeggio shown)

Group C: 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.

♩=100 Funk

Gm⁷ Cm⁷

Ebmaj⁷ Dm⁷

[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 development of the bassline. 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 following keys: F major or G major, or E minor or G minor. The examiner will allow you 90 seconds to prepare it and will set the tempo for you. The tempo is ♩ = 85-95.

♩ = 90 *Funk*
Gm⁷

5 3 1 3 0 0 5 5 3 3 5 3 1 3 0 3 0 0 3 3

Cm⁷ Bbdim⁷ Am⁷ Gm⁷

Develop bassline

5 3 1 3 0 1 3 0 0 5

[5]

In Grade 5, the improvisation and interpretation tests contain a small amount of sight reading. This consists of a two bar section of notation at the beginning of each test. You will be asked to play the notated bassline and complete the test using an improvised line as indicated. This is played to a backing track of no more than eight bars. The test will be given in one of the following four keys: A major or G major, or E minor or G minor. You have 30 seconds to prepare 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.

♩=95 Blues

Develop bassline

Develop bassline

(6)

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 F major pentatonic or D 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 $\text{♩} = 90$.

$\text{♩} = 90$

Test 2: Harmonic Recall

The examiner will play you a tonic chord followed by a two bar chord sequence in the key of G major played to a guitar and 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 root notes of the chord sequence to the drum backing in the rhythm shown in the example below. You will then be asked to identify the chords. This rhythm will be used in all examples of this test given in the exam. 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 and you will then play the root notes of the chords to the drum backing. You should then identify the chords including the chord type (major or minor). The tempo is $\text{♩} = 80$.

$\text{♩} = 80$

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 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 bass
- The function of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- 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 bass, the *Rockschool Bass Companion Guide* and on the Rockschoool website: www.rockschool.co.uk.

Bass Guitar Notation Explained

THE MUSICAL STAVE shows pitches and rhythms and is divided by lines into bars. Pitches are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet.

TABLATURE graphically represents the bass guitar fingerboard. Each horizontal line represents a string, and each number represents a fret.

Definitions For Special Bass Guitar Notation

HAMMER ON: Pick the lower note, then sound the higher note by fretting it without picking.

PULL OFF: Pick the higher note then sound the lower note by lifting the finger without picking.

SLIDE: Pick the first note and slide to the next. If the line connects (as below) the second note is *not* repicked.

GLISSANDO: Slide off of a note at the end of its rhythmic value. The note that follows is repicked.

SLAP STYLE: Slap bass technique is indicated through the letters T (thumb) and P (pull).

TAPPING: Sound note by tapping the string - circles denote a picking hand tap, squares a fretting hand tap.

DEAD (GHOST) NOTES: Pick the string while the note is muted with the fretting hand.

NATURAL HARMONICS: Lightly touch the string above the indicated fret then pick to sound a harmonic.



(accent) ■ Accentuate note (play it louder).



(staccato) ■ Shorten time value of note.



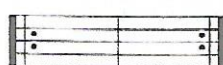
■ Fermata (Pause)

D.%. al Coda

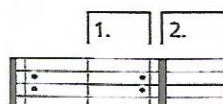
■ Go back to the sign (§), then play until the bar marked **To Coda** ⊕ then skip to the section marked ⊕ **Coda**.

D.C. al Fine

■ Go back to the beginning of the song and play until the bar marked **Fine** (end).



■ Repeat bars between signs.



■ When a repeated section has different endings, play the first ending only the first time and the second ending only the second time.