


Year 3 Home Learning

Music - The History of the Piano

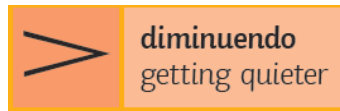
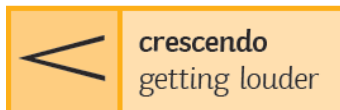
Activity 1: Dynamics

The special thing about a piano, in comparison to keyboard instruments that existed before it, is that the player has control over the **dynamics**.

In music, **dynamics** refers to how loud or quiet the sound is. Changing the **dynamics** can change the way the music makes the listener feel.


1.  Watch [this clip](#) of a conductor controlling the **dynamics** of the orchestra.

These Italian words are used to describe **dynamics**.



<i>ff</i>	fortissimo very loud
<i>f</i>	forte loud
<i>mf</i>	mezzo forte medium loud
<i>mp</i>	mezzo piano medium quiet
<i>p</i>	piano quiet
<i>pp</i>	pianissimo very quiet



2.  Now watch [this clip](#) to find out more about dynamics.
3. Listen carefully to these three pieces of music*. Describe the dynamics in each piece. Try to use the Italian words listed above.

You can write your ideas on the sheet or tell an adult.



Track A: *Gymnopedies No. 1* by Erik Satie



Track B: *Symphony No. 5* by Ludwig van Beethoven



Track C: *In the Hall of the Mountain King* by Edvard Grieg

Extra challenge: Describe the effect you think the **dynamics** are meant to have on the listener. How might it make them feel?

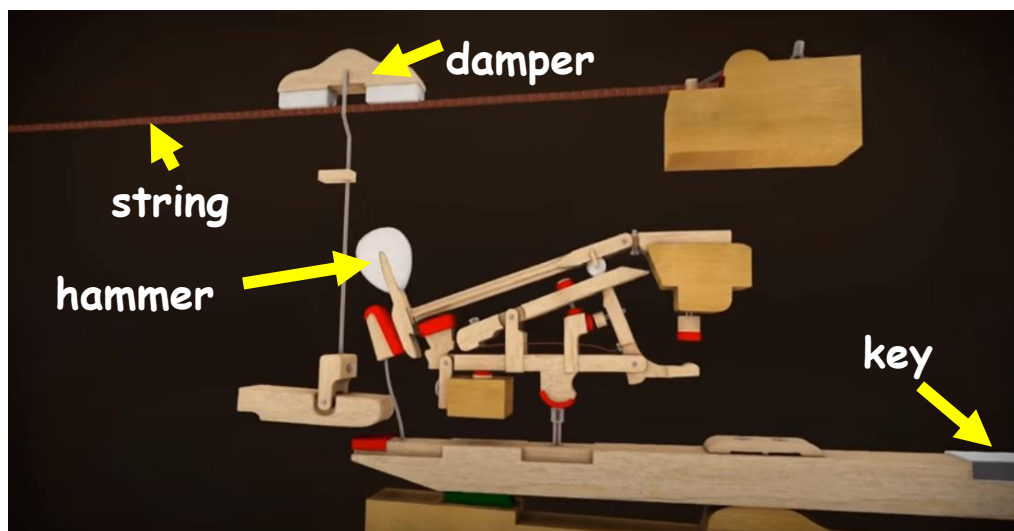
*Listen to at least the first two minutes of each piece.

Activity 2: How Does a Piano Work?

Most of the mechanism of a piano is hidden inside it.

1. Watch [this animation](#) showing the mechanism inside a grand piano.

This diagram shows you the **four main parts** of this mechanism.



2. Watch the animation again and match each part of the mechanism to its role.

key	stops the sound from the string when the key stops being pressed
hammer	is pressed to select which string to strike
damper	strikes the string when the key is pressed
string	vibrates when struck by the hammer to make a sound

3. Write out four sentences in your exercise book to explain the role of each part.
4. Check your understanding. Can you explain the mechanism of a piano to someone in your household?

Activity 3: Listen and Appraise

Since the piano's invention, it has been an important instrument in a variety of different genres of music.

It's time to **listen and respond** to six pieces of music. Each piece is a different style of music, but they all include a piano.

Questions you might want to consider*:

- What does the music remind you of?*
- What does the music make you feel?*
- How has the composer used dynamics?*
- How would you describe this piece of music?*
- Do you like this music? Can you explain why/why not?*



It's totally up to you how you record your responses. You might want to draw pictures, write words, use musical symbols or perhaps all three. You can use the sheet for Activity 3, but you don't have to.



1. *Étude op. 26 no.3* by Louise Farrenc (**Classical**)
2. *Maple Leaf Rag* by Scott Joplin (**Ragtime**)
3. *Take the A Train* by Duke Ellington (**Jazz**)
4. *China Gates* by John Adams (**Minimalism**)
5. *Klavierstücke* by Karl Stockhausen (**Avant-garde**)
6. *Read All About It* by Emeli Sandé (**Pop**)

*You don't have to answer all these questions. They are intended as a starting point to inspire your response to the music.

Other Activities

Watch [this performance](#) to see how experimental Sarah Nicholls has been with her piano compositions and performances. She calls it **The Inside Out Piano**.

If you have a piano at home (or any musical instrument), have a go at composing a piece of your own. Think carefully about how you can use **dynamics** in your piece.

