

## Parameters for Session Skills – Improvising Initial-Grade 8 for all instruments

- ✔ If you choose Improvising, you will be asked to improvise in a specified style over a backing track that you have not seen or heard before.
- ✔ You will be given a chord chart and have 30 seconds to study it or to try out any sections. The examiner will then play the recorded backing track, which consists of a passage of music played on a loop.
- ✔ You should improvise in the given style over the backing track, which will be played four times through before fading out. A count-in will be given at the beginning of the recording, and a backing rhythm will be played throughout.
- ✔ Guitar and keyboards candidates can choose whether to play a lead melodic line, rhythmic chords, or a combination of the two.
- ✔ In the exam you will have two chances to play along with the track:
  - first time – for practice
  - second time – for assessment.

(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total bars	Time signatures & rhythm	Harmonic changes	Solo break	Keys	Chords	Styles
Initial	4	$\frac{4}{4}$	1 chord per bar		D major E minor	I, IV and V chords simple major and minor chords only	Simple rock Pop
1					C major G major	diatonic chord on any degree of the scale (not diminished or augmented)	Ballad Heavy rock
2		$\frac{3}{4}$			F major D minor		Country
3	8	swung quavers			B minor G minor	7th chords	Blues
4		$\frac{6}{8}$ ; syncopation	some use of two chords per bar		E major C minor	major 7th and minor 7th chords	Reggae R 'n' B
5	12	$\frac{12}{8}$			B major F minor	sus 4 chords	Funk Shuffle Disco
6	16	$\frac{9}{8}$		up to 2 bars	any key	power chords added 6th chords (major and minor) slash chords	Latin Metal
7		$\frac{5}{4}$ , $\frac{7}{8}$	more varied rate of harmonic change			major and minor 9ths diminished and augmented chords	Jazz Boogie-woogie Boogie-style rock
8		$\frac{2}{2}$ ; time signature changes		up to 4 bars		any common chords	any common style including hybrid styles (eg jazz funk, Latin soul, samba)

(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total bars	Time signatures & rhythm	Harmonic changes	Solo break	Styles
Initial	4	$\frac{4}{4}$	1 chord per bar		Simple rock Pop
1					Ballad Heavy rock
2		$\frac{3}{4}$			Country
3	8	swung quavers			Blues
4		$\frac{6}{8}$ ; syncopation	some use of two chords per bar		Reggae R 'n' B
5	12	$\frac{12}{8}$			Funk Shuffle Disco
6	16	$\frac{9}{8}$		up to 2 bars	Latin Metal
7		$\frac{5}{4}$ , $\frac{7}{8}$	more varied rate of harmonic change		Jazz Boogie-woogie Boogie-style rock
8		$\frac{2}{2}$ ; time signature changes		up to 4 bars	any common style including hybrid styles (eg jazz funk, Latin soul, samba)

(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total bars	Time signatures & rhythm	Harmonic changes	Solo break	Keys	Chords	Styles
Initial	4	$\frac{4}{4}$	1 chord per bar		D major A minor	I, IV and V chords simple major and minor chords only	Simple rock Pop
1					C major E minor	diatonic chord on any degree of the scale (not diminished or augmented)	Ballad Heavy rock
2		$\frac{3}{4}$			A major D minor		Country
3	8	swung quavers			F major G major	7th chords	Blues
4		$\frac{6}{8}$ ; syncopation	some use of two chords per bar		E major C minor	major 7th and minor 7th chords	Reggae R 'n' B
5	12	$\frac{12}{8}$			B major F minor	sus 4 chords	Funk Shuffle Disco
6	16	$\frac{9}{8}$		up to 2 bars	any key	power chords added 6th chords (major and minor) slash chords	Latin Metal
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(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total bars	Time signatures & rhythm	Harmonic changes	Solo break	Keys	Chords	Styles	Format
Initial	4	$\frac{4}{4}$	1 chord per bar		C major G major	I, IV and V chords simple major and minor chords only	Simple rock Pop	notation and chord symbols
1					A minor E minor	diatonic chord on any degree of the scale (not diminished or augmented)	Ballad Heavy rock	
2		$\frac{3}{4}$			F major D major D minor		Country	chord symbols
3	8	swung quavers			G minor	7th chords	Blues	
4		$\frac{6}{8}$ ; syncopation	some use of two chords per bar		A major C minor	major 7th and minor 7th chords	Reggae R 'n' B	
5	12	$\frac{12}{8}$			E major F minor	sus 4 chords	Funk Shuffle Disco	
6	16	$\frac{9}{8}$		up to 2 bars	any key	power chords added 6th chords (major and minor) slash chords	Latin Metal	
7		$\frac{5}{4}$ ; $\frac{7}{8}$	more varied rate of harmonic change			major and minor 9ths diminished and augmented chords	Jazz Boogie-woogie Boogie-style rock	
8		$\frac{2}{2}$ ; time signature changes		up to 4 bars		any common chords	any common style including hybrid styles (eg jazz funk, Latin soul, samba)	

(NB all requirements are cumulative)

Grade	Total bars	Time signatures & rhythm	Harmonic changes	Solo break	Keys	Chords	Styles
Initial	4	$\frac{4}{4}$	1 chord per bar		any major key	I, IV and V chords simple major and minor chords only	Simple rock Pop
1					any major or minor key	diatonic chord on any degree of the scale (not diminished or augmented)	Ballad Heavy rock
2		$\frac{3}{4}$					Country
3	8	swung quavers				7th chords	Blues
4		$\frac{6}{8}$ ; syncopation	some use of two chords per bar			major 7th and minor 7th chords	Reggae R 'n' B
5	12	$\frac{12}{8}$				sus 4 chords	Funk Shuffle Disco
6	16	$\frac{9}{8}$		up to 2 bars		power chords added 6th chords (major and minor) slash chords	Latin Metal
7		$\frac{5}{4}$ $\frac{7}{8}$	more varied rate of harmonic change			major and minor 9ths diminished and augmented chords	Jazz Boogie-woogie Boogie-style rock
8		$\frac{2}{2}$ ; time signature changes		up to 4 bars		any common chords	any common style including hybrid styles (eg jazz funk, Latin soul, samba)