



Music Composition



MUSIC COMPOSITION is the process of creating a new piece of music. The composer (student submitting entry) is a person who expresses their own thoughts and ideas through the use of sound.

The student composer may submit an entry performed by an individual or group and/or make use of a sound library generated performance of their composed score. Student composers are not required to perform their compositions. Middle and high school grade divisions require either a music score/notation (either traditional or tablature) **OR** a technical reflective statement that provides a musically technical explanation of how the music was created (100 words or less).

See Music Composition FAQ on next page for more information.

Consider the following musical styles and instruments to portray your **original** composition: A Cappella, Blues, Choral, Country, Electronic, Hip Hop, Jazz, Latin, Musical, Orchestral, Pop, R&B, Religious, Rock, Symphonic/Concert Band, and Traditional. All instruments, sounds, styles, and combinations are accepted.

Whether an entry displays formal composition technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality, and creativity. **Consider structure, melody, rhythm, instruments, lyrics, emotion, etc. to show a clear relation to the theme in the artwork and in the artist statement.**

Digital technology and/or software may be used to produce an audio recording that does not include commercially pre-programmed imported MIDI or other source files. *Entries containing algorithmic composition techniques are not accepted.* Use of AI Software is prohibited. **Entrants must use the “Additional Details” field to provide a brief description of the tools and methods used in the creation process.**

Copyright: Use of copyrighted material is prohibited. Plagiarized entries will be disqualified.

Suggestions for Audio Quality:

- Do not place the recording device on top of an instrument(s) or speakers.
- Turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.).
- Record a short test and listen to it. If needed, change the record volume or microphone location.
- Make sure the music is audible on the recording.
- Allow for two seconds of silence at the beginning and end of your recording.



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Notation/Score OR Technical Reflective Statement: (Required for Middle School & High School Divisions Only)

- Written music score/tablature/notation/reflective statement (choose one) required for Middle School and High School divisions.
- If submitting a reflective statement, it does not replace the required entry artist statement. The reflective statement must be distinct from the artist statement and must provide a technical musical explanation of how the music was created. Whereas the artist statement emphasizes the Reflections theme, a reflective statement emphasizes the musical elements in the creative process.
- Single files in PDF format are accepted for notation/score.
- Notation software may be used to create a score.
- Whether the score is handwritten or computer-generated, notation is required for ALL vocal and instrumental parts included in the audio recording.
- See FAQs for details on what to include in a technical reflective statement. It must be 100 words or less and will be typed on the Entry Form.

Submission Requirements:

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Audio files only. No videos allowed.
- Audio recording must not exceed 5 minutes in length and 1GB (one gigabyte) in file size.
- **Accepted audio file formats include: MP3, M4A.**

How to Submit:

All entries must be submitted online at www.utahpta.org/ref. All judging will be conducted online.



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Frequently Asked Questions



Can I include notation AND a technical reflective statement?

No. Include notation **OR** a reflective statement.

Can I turn in a video?

No. Turn in an audio recording of your song. Make sure to complete and upload notation **OR** a technical reflective statement if you are competing in the Middle or High School divisions.

Can I sing one of my favorite songs?

No. You must write a new song for Reflections.

Can my mom, dad, friend, or somebody else write an accompaniment for me?

No. All Parts must be composed by the student.

What is traditional notation?

Traditional notation is the familiar 5-line staff with clefs, time and key signatures, and note symbols.

What is tablature?

Tablature uses numbers and symbols that indicate the finger positions rather than pitches. It is commonly used for fretted stringed instruments such as guitars and ukuleles.

Do I have to include notation?

If you are competing in the Middle or High School divisions, you must include notation **OR** a technical reflective statement.

Can someone help me notate?

Someone can teach you how to notate, but you must do the work to notate your song by yourself.

Can my notation be chord names with my lyrics underneath?

No. You must also include notation for the melody line of your song.

Can I use notation software?

You may use notation software as long as it creates traditional notation.

What types of things should be included in a technical reflective statement?

What creative and musical decisions did you make to achieve the final version of the piece? How were the musical elements developed? What equipment was used (if any)? What sounds and/or musical ideas were used to represent certain ideas or emotions? How were your creative and musical decisions influenced by your expertise, context, and expressive intent?

Is AI art allowed? No. All entries must be the original work of one student only. We will not accept entries created by Artificial Intelligence programs.