

## Description and Guidelines for: *The Musical Links Investigation*

*From the IBO handbook:*

### **Musical links investigation—SL and HL**

**Weighting: 20%**

The musical links investigation will be externally assessed using the external assessment criteria (see “External assessment criteria—SL and HL” in this guide).

The musical links investigation requires the student to engage in a sustained investigation that is self-directed. It is designed to allow the student the opportunity to investigate the musical connections between pieces from two distinct musical cultures by exploring one (or more) musical piece(s) from each musical culture. Through comparative exploration, analysis and examination of these pieces, the student is required to demonstrate two or more significant musical links—that is to say, links concerning **musical elements**.

These musical links must be stated both on the musical links investigation coversheet and at the beginning of the script.

In order to demonstrate musical links through convincing arguments the student should engage in accurate description, analysis and examination of differences and similarities between one (or more) musical piece(s) from each of two identifiable and distinct musical cultures. The student should take care to maintain an even balance of attention between the two musical cultures when writing the musical links investigation.

The two musical cultures chosen for study should be sufficiently distinct: the musical pieces chosen should therefore be clearly definable as belonging to distinct musical cultures. (Students are advised **not** to choose two pieces where one has influenced the other—for example, the Beatles’ music reflecting Indian influences).

The student should investigate the compositional features found in the music: duration, pitch, timbre/tone color, texture, dynamics, form/structure. Where a musical work includes text it should be considered in relation to the music.

The student should also note that large-scale pieces, such as a whole opera or symphony, are unlikely to be analysed in sufficient detail in the scope of an investigation. Therefore, in certain cases it is acceptable to analyse a section or a fragment of a whole opera or symphony. Nevertheless, the section/fragment should be long enough to support the arguments presented by the student. Similarly, the use of too many pieces of music may produce a less convincing argument.

If the same topic is chosen for different assessment components, that topic must be treated completely differently—otherwise it may be considered as a breach of regulations. Students who choose to write an extended essay in music should focus on a research question that has no common ground with the material of their musical links investigation. (Please refer to the *General regulations: Diploma Programme*.) The current prescribed works may not be chosen for the musical links investigation.

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### Format

The musical links investigation must be submitted as a **media script** of no more than **2,000** words. Mass media communication in the 21st century has many formats, such as radio, television, CD-Rom, Internet, printed article, or lecture. The musical links investigation should be conceived for any form of mass media communication. A range of possibilities could include straightforward narration, interview or dramatization. However, **the focus must be on the music itself** and **not** on peripheries such as biography or social discourses that may detract from the musical links investigation. Scripts that concentrate on such peripheries at the expense of content will not successfully fulfill the assessment requirements.

The length of the media script, not including quotations and citations of sources, must be no more than **2,000** words at both SL and HL. The variety of styles of media script may affect the length of the student's musical links investigation. For example, a student who presents similarities and differences in a tabular form as part of a website could achieve the same outcome in fewer words than a student who writes in a more narrative form, such as a magazine article or a radio show. Both approaches are equally acceptable for the musical links investigation. Therefore, there is a degree of flexibility in the number of words used.

If students exceed **2,000** words, the examiner's assessment must be based on the first 2,000 words. In case of doubt, examiners are instructed to determine when the word limit has been exceeded. The following elements should **not** be included in the word count.

- Quotations (the actual text taken from a source and used in the body of the script)
- Citations of sources
- Bibliography
- Discography

A computer word-count tool is to be discouraged because of these parameters: a manual count is required.

**For the purposes of external assessment, students must submit a paper copy of the media script, regardless of the medium chosen.** For example, if a student chooses to present the information as a website, the screenshots must be printed out in order for the submission to be examined. If students have the opportunity to submit the musical links investigation in an electronic format, schools will be notified in advance of the examination session.

Relevant supporting materials may include a CD recording of musical extracts illustrating points raised (five minutes maximum) and/or papers, such as musical notation, photographs and diagrams.

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### Sources

In the written media script, the student must cite both primary and secondary sources used. Sources of information must be acknowledged and a consistent format used (for example, the Harvard author–date system).

In accordance with the style manual used, Internet sources must be accurately and completely cited. It is not enough to simply cite the web address. Students must cite the author, title of the article or entry, and date of access to the site.

Primary sources must be used and may include live performance and recordings, website streaming, musical notation, interviews and discussion with practitioners in the field. Secondary sources may include textbooks, documentaries and articles (either in paper or electronic form).

As the sources must be acknowledged, if the choice of media script does not lend itself to the inclusion of references within the text, footnotes should be used.

Students will receive credit for their own work, which must include an apt selection of references and quotations, intelligent and persuasive links, and effective questioning. Care must be taken to ensure that the majority of the script represents the student's own ideas and not a summary of other sources. A bibliography and discography are required.

### Advice

During the process of completing the musical links investigation, the student should submit a comprehensive draft of the final version to enable the teacher to give appropriate feedback. As part of this process, teachers can give advice to students on this draft only. This advice can be either verbal or written, and can indicate the way in which the work could be improved. If the advice is written, the teacher must not heavily annotate or edit the student's draft. The next version handed to the teacher after the first version must be the final one.

### Discussion and support

Students must not be penalized for seeking guidance. However, if a student could not have completed the musical links investigation without substantial support from the teacher, this should be recorded on the appropriate form from the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.

### Academic honesty

Teachers must ensure that material submitted is the student's own work. Students are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all work submitted for assessment is authentic, with the work or ideas of others fully and correctly acknowledged. Every student must also sign a declaration on the coversheet that is attached to their work. In addition, teachers are also required to sign the musical links investigation coversheet to confirm that, to the best of their knowledge, the work of each student is his or her own work and constitutes the final version of that work. For further information about academic honesty, teachers should refer to the latest edition of the IB publication *Academic honesty*.