Musical symbols and notation

Treble Clef	Bass Clef	Sharp	Flat

Treble Clef Notes

E G B D F   F A C E

Bass Clef Notes

G B D F A   A C E G

Notes of the keyboard

C# / Db   D# / Eb   F# / Gb   G# / Ab   A# / Bb

C D E F G A B
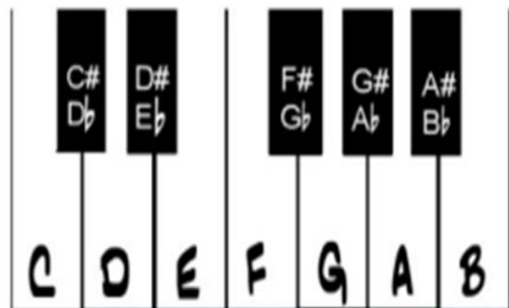
Musical Elements

| TEXTURE	How many instruments are playing, thick or thin, lots or few.
TIMBRE	The quality of sound produced, the instruments that you hear.
DYNAMICS	The volume of a piece of Music, loud or quiet.
PITCH	How High or low a note is.
TEMPO	The speed of a piece of Music, how fast or slow.

Key Words

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY	Using a device, tool or machine to create music.
SAMPLING	Pre-recorded sound/sample 'recycled' in other music.
GROUND THEME	Background music in a game.
CHARACTER THEME	Music linked to a specific character.
MOTIF	Short, repeated musical idea.

Early Computer and Video Game Music

Early video game music consisted primarily of **SOUND EFFECTS** (an artificially created or enhanced sound used to emphasize certain actions within computer and video games), **CHIPTUNES** or **8-BIT MUSIC** (a style of electronic music which used simple melodies made for programmable sound generator (PSG) sound chips in vintage computers, consoles and arcade machines) and early sound **SYNTHESISER** technology (an electronic musical instrument that generates audio signals that may be converted to sound). **SAMPLING** (the technique of digitally encoding music or sound and reusing it as part of a composition or recording) began in the 1980's allowing sound to be played during the game, making it more realistic and less "synthetic-sounding".

How Computer and Video Game Music is used within a Game
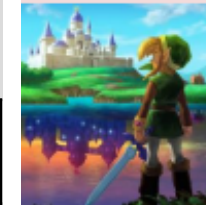
Music within a computer or video game is often used for **CUES** (knowing when a significant event was about to occur).
Video game music is often heard over a game's title screen (called the **GROUND THEME**), options menu and bonus content as well as during the entire gameplay. Music can be used to **INCREASE TENSION AND SUSPENSE** e.g. during battles and chases, when the player must make a decision within the game (a **DECISION MOTIF**) and can change, depending on a player's actions or situation e.g. indicating missing actions or "pick-ups".

Character Themes in Computer and Video Game Music

Characters within a video game can also have their own **CHARACTER THEMES** or **CHARACTER MOTIFS** – like **LEITMOTIFS** within Film Music. These can be manipulated, altered and changed – adapting the elements of music – **ORCHESTRATION** (the act of arranging a piece of music for an orchestra and assigning parts to the different musical instruments), **TIMBRE, SONORITY, TEXTURE, PITCH, TEMPO, DYNAMICS** – depending on the character's situation or different places they travel to within the game.

Musical Elements | Technology | Motif