



How to prepare and present your audio examples

The preparation of the audio examples to be presented in a viva voce is often left to the last minute. It's important to remember that your whole viva will be centred around these examples and you need to make sure they are clear, easily accessible and illustrate the points you are making. Here are some basic tips to remember when...

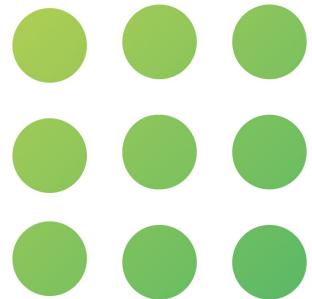
Preparing your audio examples...

- **Don't leave it until the last minute!** All of these things below, take time. You should have your audio examples ready to be able to practice your viva, at least a week before it's due - but hopefully, much earlier!
- Decide on how you'll present them. CD, laptop, tablet and phone are all acceptable options but make sure any device you use is in **flight mode** first!
- **Leave a few seconds of audio BEFORE the section you are trying to highlight.** This allows the marker to understand the 'context' of the example and prepare their ears to hear it.
- **Keep the excerpts to an appropriate length.** Anywhere from 5 seconds to 15 seconds should be enough. If you need to use 20 seconds or more of audio, ask yourself what you are trying to demonstrate. Is it worth losing that much of your 'talking time' to do it? You only have 10 minutes to show off how much you know.
- Each time you choose a selection of music to play, ask yourself if it would be better for you to demonstrate it yourself, on your instrument. **Nothing demonstrates knowledge better than doing it yourself.**
- Add a quick **fade in and fade out** to your examples. This will make it a lot more listener-friendly and show that you have put thought into your preparation.
- Try to **arrange them in a sensible order** so that they are easy to access quickly. **Create a playlist** that only has the examples you are using.
- Keep a copy of the full songs or pieces at the end of the playlist or CD. If the need arises, you've got them there as a backup.



During the Viva Voce...

- Make sure the system you are using is loud enough for the markers to hear the music clearly. **Do a sound check** prior to your viva, just like you would for a performance.
- **'Set up' the example** by describing what the markers are listening for in the upcoming excerpt and...
- **Never talk over your excerpts!** You may have heard it a million times but it is possible that the markers are hearing it for the first time. If necessary, use body language, conducting patterns, solfege, or any other other method to communicate your point.
- **Know EVERYTHING about the excerpts you have chosen.** Just because you play one to demonstrate a descending melody for example, doesn't mean the markers won't ask about what's happening in the bass line, or the rhythmic patterns in the drums.
- **ASK FOR HELP!** Not everyone has experience in cutting audio into smaller excerpts so ask for help if you need it. This process can be confusing and take a lot of time if you don't know where to start. There are lots of different options and each school will have a different approach. Just a few of the options include GarageBand (Mac, iPad), Audacity (free for Windows and Mac), Pro Tools, FL Studio, Logic Pro, and Ableton Live.
- **NOTE:** Another option is the **'Viva Voce' app** in the Apple App Store if you have an iPhone or iPad. The app is designed specifically for Music 1 students doing a Viva Voce for their assessment. It automatically adds the fade in/out for you and enables you to edit the example by simply dragging your finger across the audio. All you need is to have the piece of music on your device. You can also save multiple viva voces if you're doing more than one.



And finally... the best vivas are those that **use the musical examples to support the observations** the student is making, **and then also use them to direct the discussion**. Try to find examples that show more than one of your points. It can be a good way to lead the conversation and take control of your viva. For example...

"If you listen carefully, you can hear the tuba playing repeated staccato quavers. This happens for 2 bars but then changes to long, held semibreves, releasing all of the tension that has built up in this section"

**Plays example*

*"So, you could hear how the tension was released there. You might also have heard that the dynamic level changed significantly too **which is what I'd like to talk about next...**"*