

# General Viva Voce Tips

## Avoid generalised statements

Terminology is important! If you mention a musical term, you need to be able to discuss it in more depth and understand exactly what it means. For example, don't mention 'melisma' if you don't know what it means. Have an audio example ready or better still, demonstrate it yourself!

## Sound check

You sound check for a performance, so make sure you do the same for a viva. Your audio should be loud enough for everyone in the room to hear it clearly. You also need to remember to sound check guitars, microphones, or any technology that you might need to use. AND TUNE YOUR INSTRUMENT!



## Talking over musical examples

Avoid talking over the examples whenever possible. Occasionally it is necessary to indicate the timing of a particular characteristic or event within the example and there is obviously no problem with this but make sure it compliments the audio and doesn't result in the marker either not hearing the music, or your explanation. Body language, tapping, clapping or even conducting patterns can be appropriate ways to get your point across.

## Demonstrate whenever possible

There is no better way to compliment the point you are making than with a demonstration of your own. This shouldn't just be used when you can't find an appropriate audio example to present. Use it to show that you not only understand what you are discussing, but that you can apply it in a practical context. And yes, the voice is an instrument and you don't have to be a singer to use it!

## Passion

You have chosen to study Music, so there must be something you love about it. There's an endless list of genres, artists and instruments you can focus your studies on but why have you settled on your chosen topic? Do you have a passion for some aspect of it? Why? The markers love to see that you are connected with the research you have worked so hard on and want to pass some of that passion on to someone else.

## Lead the conversation

Two things:

1. Don't rely on the markers to ask you questions. It's their job to ask you questions and they will, but if you see an opportunity in the conversation to offer more information or lead the conversation in a different direction, go for it.
2. Have paths in mind. It's a good idea to practice starting from different points within your viva. You may find that by making one observation about texture for example, it can lead you to connect to another point you want to make about tone colour. Linking between different points not only shows that you're well prepared but it also shows you have a deep understanding of your content.

## 2min, 5min, 7min rehearsals

In the same way that you focus on smaller parts of a performance in the early stages of preparation, you can do the same with your viva. This method will also help you have a better sense of how much time has passed in a 10 minute viva as you gain a better sense of time.



## Know your examples

Do a complete aural analysis of each example that you have collected. Remember that the markers could ask you anything about any part of what you present. This is particularly true if your Viva lacks depth or runs short on time. Just because you are referring to the drums in a particular excerpt, doesn't mean they can't ask you about the chord progression or a melodic line. Have full versions of each piece at the end of your CD or playlist, just in case.

## Know what is expected of you

Below is a description of what a Viva Voce in the 'top box' might look like. Ensure that you are familiar with the marking criteria and guidelines as every viva in the state is measured using these.

**Most musical concepts explored in great depth • Ability to discuss musical statements at length, using appropriate terms and supported with examples • Focused and relevant discussion • Detailed responses which included evidence of wide listening • Always focuses appropriately on the music • Well chosen examples and when referring to scores clearly understands the notation.**