Unit 1: General listening skills

Context
This unit is ongoing and should be seen as integral to all areas of the course.

Outline
This unit describes some teaching strategies for developing general listening skills throughout all areas of the course.

Syllabus reference	Suggested teaching activities	Learning resources
Rudiments Melody and Rhythm Harmony Ensembles and instruments/voices Instrumental and/or vocal effects Structure Compositional devices Texture	There are certain combinations of musical features that allow us to identify music as coming from different points in time or from different places in the world, and these are explored in Units 2–6. However, no matter where or when it comes from, virtually all music consists of melody, rhythm, structure and texture and is performed by ensembles and instruments or voices. Much of the music your students will be listening to will also contain examples of the harmony, instrumental and/or vocal effects and compositional devices that are listed in the syllabus, and students should be given regular practice throughout the course in identifying these in a range of music from different times and places. Developing these general listening skills could form an integral part of every listening lesson. For example, you could start each lesson by focussing on the main melody of the music that you are going to be exploring. You could play this melody to the class, either in its original form from a recording, or just the melody line on its own played on an instrument. You could ask your students to describe the melodic shape and metre – does it move mostly by step or leap? Do the intervals ascend or descend? How many beats are there in each bar/measure? This could then lead into regular practice of melodic or rhythmic dictation (in preparation for Section C of the examination). You could write out the main melody but leaving some notes out. As a **basic** activity, just leave out one or two notes at a time in a passage which moves by step or contains repeated notes. As your students become more proficient at this exercise, you can make the exercises more **challenging** by leaving out more notes and including larger intervals. You can do the same with rhythms. Look at Section C of 2011 Paper 1 for an example of the type of dictation question that your students should expect to encounter. Compositional devices should be explained and then reinforced as and when examples of them occur in the music you are listening to; the link with students' own compositions should be made explicit. You could	Past question paper: 2011 Paper 1 and CD (available from Cambridge Publications) Key signature chart: http://musicmattersblog.com/wp-files/KeySignatureChart.pdf

Syllabus reference	Suggested teaching activities	Learning resources
	also make a link to performing by asking students to bring in pieces they are learning, listening to the music as a class and then identifying its compositional devices. Likewise, instrumental and/or vocal effects, structure and texture could be discussed as they occur in the repertoire your students are listening to, performing or composing. A knowledge of the rudiments of music may be tested in any section of the paper, and students should be given regular practice in identifying keys and cadences, suggesting tempo and expression markings, and in recognising different types of articulation and ornaments. In Section C, they may be required to name intervals. Again, all of these skills could be an integral part of every lesson – an approach of 'little and often' to this type of work will usually lead to the best results. Look at Sections A–C of 2011 past Paper 1 for examples of the types of question that your students should expect to encounter. A link to a useful key signature chart is included in the **Resources** section of the Overview for this scheme of work and the Learning resources column opposite.	Key signature chart: http://musicmattersblog.com/wp-files/KeySignatureChart.pdf