

# CREATE YOUR OWN VARIATIONS!

**WELCOME** to the world of composition! By the end of this unit you will have created several different types of variations, all of which you will be able to share with other students. There are only three rules:

1. Each variation must be written with proper notation
2. You must play the notes before you write them to hear how they sound and make sure the piece is playable
3. You are not allowed to say “I don’t like my composition”. . . If there is something about it you do not like, you have the power to change it! Take pride in your variations and work on them until you are 100% happy with them!

**NOTATION** is important because people need to be able to read and understand your musical ideas and be able to bring them to life (possibly for decades to come)! Always ask your teacher if you need help writing rhythms. Complete the following sentences and follow your teacher’s instructions to start writing music on manuscript paper.

1. The symbol at the beginning of each line that defines the possible range of notes is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Noteheads must be the correct \_\_\_\_\_ for performers to read them and not confuse them with other notes.
3. Stems must extend \_\_\_\_\_ from the notehead.
4. Noteheads on or above the third line have stems that go \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ side. Noteheads below the third line have stems that go \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ side.
5. The line connecting stems to create eighth or sixteenth notes is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Accidentals go \_\_\_\_\_ the note.

**DEFINE** the following terms.

1. A theme is

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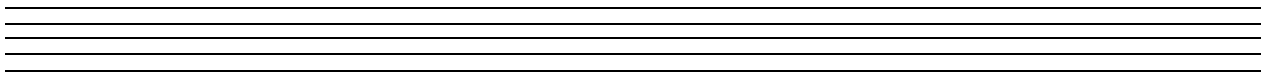
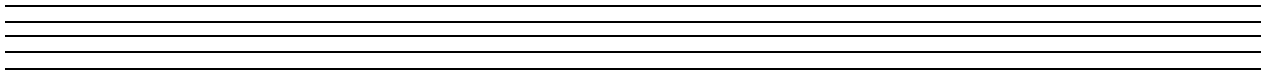
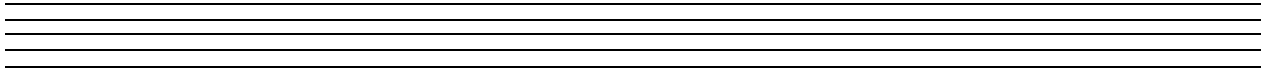
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2. A variation is

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**WRITE THE THEME** below after figuring out how to play it on your instrument. You may use manuscript paper to write a rough draft. Have it checked by your teacher before writing the final draft below. Be sure to include a clef and use proper notation.

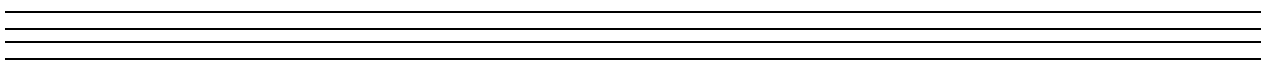
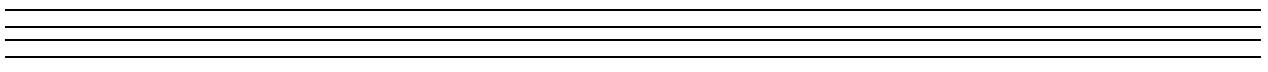
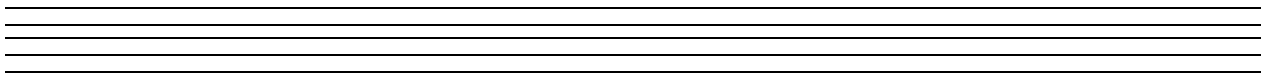


**MODAL VARIATIONS** are variations where pitches are changed with either key signatures or accidentals. Keep the letter names of the notes the same, but try altering some of the pitches with accidentals. Play the notes before writing, write it with good notation, and be sure you are 100% happy with it! The staves below are for the final draft of your modal variation.

*Theme Example:*



*Variation Example:*



**ORNAMENTAL VARIATIONS** are variations where extra notes are added to the theme (without changing the meter). Keep the original notes the same, but embellish the theme with extra eighth, triplet, or sixteenth notes. Play the notes before writing, write with good notation, and be sure you are 100% happy with it! The staves below are for the final draft of your ornamental variation. (If you have trouble, try writing out the piece with all eighth note subdivisions first. Then go back and change the pitches of notes not on the beat).

*Theme Example:*



*Variation Example:*



Three sets of empty musical staves for writing ornamental variations, each consisting of a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

**METRIC & RHYTHMIC VARIATIONS** are variations where the pulse and/or value of notes change. Try using the original notes, but experiment with the rhythms. Play the notes before writing, write with good notation, and be sure you are 100% happy with it! The staves below are for the final draft of your rhythmic or metric variation. (If you have trouble, start by just swinging the eighth notes).

*Theme Example:*



*Variation Example:*



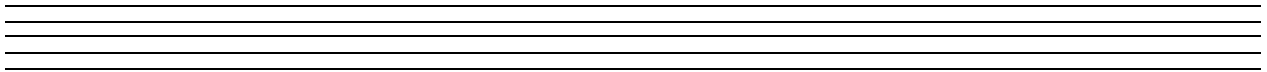
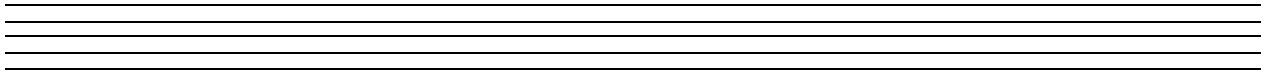
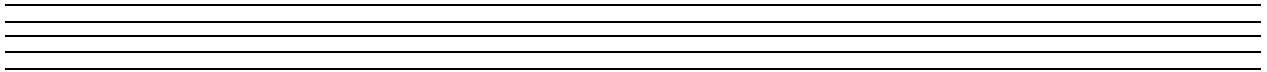
Three sets of empty musical staves for writing metric and rhythmic variations, each consisting of a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature.

**ARTICULATION & TIMBRE VARIATIONS** are variations where you change the type of sound that is produced. You can do this by slurring notes, adding staccato dots, or using modern techniques. Play the notes before writing, write with good notation, and be sure you are 100% happy with it! The staves below are for the final draft of your articulation or timbre variation.

*Theme Example:*



*Variation Example:*



**FINAL VARIATION!** Using combinations of the techniques from your previous variations, write your final variation on the staves below. Be sure it is something you can play for the class. Your variation will be recorded. As always, play the notes before writing, write with good notation, and be sure you are 100% happy with it! Include a title, tempo markings, dynamics, and any special instructions that might help future performers play your piece the way you envision it.

