

Parameters for Session skills - Improvising Initial-Grade 8 for all instruments

- ✔ If you choose Improvising, you will be asked to improvise in a specified style over a backing track that you have not seen or heard before.
- ✔ You will be given a chord chart and have 30 seconds to study it or to try out any sections. The examiner will then play the recorded backing track, which consists of a passage of music played on a loop.
- ✔ You should improvise in the given style over the backing track, which will be played four times through before fading out. A count-in will be given at the beginning of the recording, and a backing rhythm will be played throughout.
- ✔ Guitar and Keyboards candidates can choose whether to play a lead melodic line, rhythmic chords, or a combination of the two.
- ✔ In the exam you will have two chances to play along with the track:
 - first time – for practice
 - second time – for assessment.

Tests follow the parameters below; all requirements are cumulative:

Grade	Total bars	Time signatures	Harmonic changes	Keys	Chords Bass, Guitar, Keyboards and Vocals only	Styles
Initial	4	$\frac{4}{4}$	1 chord per bar	Bass: D major and E minor Drums: any key Guitar: D major and A minor Keyboards: C major and G major Vocals: any major key	I, IV and V chords; simple major and minor chords only	Simple Rock or Pop
1	4			Bass: C major and G major Guitar: C major and E minor Keyboards: A minor and E minor Vocals: major and minor keys		Ballad Heavy Rock
2	4	$\frac{3}{4}$		Bass: F major and D minor Guitar: A major and D minor Keyboards: F major and D minor	II and VI chords	Country
3	8	swung quavers		Bass: B minor and G minor Guitar: F major and G major Keyboards: D major and G minor	V7 chords	Blues
4		$\frac{6}{8}$; syncopation	some use of two chords per bar	Bass: E major and C minor Guitar: E major and C minor Keyboards: A major and C minor	major and minor 7th chords	Reggae R'n'B
5	12	$\frac{12}{8}$		Bass: B major and F minor Guitar: B major and F minor Keyboards: E major and F minor	III and VII chords (not augmented or diminished) plus sus 4 chords	Funk Shuffle Disco

Tests follow the parameters below; all requirements are cumulative:

Grade	Total bars	Time signatures	Harmonic changes	Keys	Chords Bass, Guitar, Keyboards and Vocals only	Styles
6	16	3 9 8; 8	may include a one bar solo break	Bass: any major key Guitar: any major key Keyboards: any major key	major and minor 5ths, major and minor 6ths	Latin Metal
7		5 5 7 7 4; 8; 4; 8	more varied rate of harmonic change; may include a solo break of up to two bars	Bass: any key Guitar: any key Keyboards: any key	major and minor 9ths, diminished and augmented chords	Soul Jazz Boogie-woogie
8		2 2 ; changing time signatures within the song	may include a solo break of up to 4 bars		any common chords	any common style to include hybrid styles e.g. jazz funk; latin soul, samba