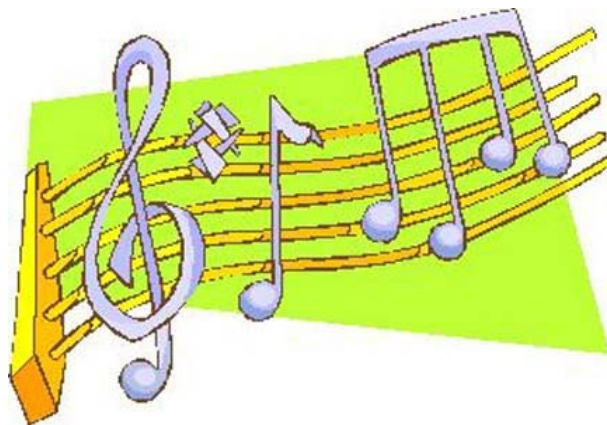




# GCSE Music Listening

## Revision notes

These notes will support all GCSE specifications, although the Areas of Study refer to the Edexcel specification



## GCSE Music Listening Paper - Revision notes

### General Advice

- Check the number of times you hear the extract.
- Whole sentences aren't necessary - you can use bullet points if it helps you.
- Spelling isn't counted - but make sure it is at least understandable.

### Musical Devices

*"Name the musical device used in the bass part at the beginning of the extract."*

There are only FOUR possible answers in the exam:

- Sequence - A repeating pattern which is transposed (moved up or down) a scale or round a cycle.
- Imitation - A musical idea being passed around instruments or instrumental families.
- Pedal - A sustained note which can be either either low in the bass, or high in the melody.
- Ostinato - A repeating musical phrase. Often heard in the bass.

### Playing Technique

*"What playing technique is used by the strings throughout the extract?"*

There are only THREE possible techniques.

- Pizzicato - Plucked strings.
- Tremolando - Rapid bowing of notes.
- Drum Roll

Because of this, it will only ever refer to a member of the strings or percussion family - no brass, no woodwind. If the question refers to a specific instrument you should be able to either complete the question without hearing it, or narrow down the possible answers.

### Rhythmic Device

*"What rhythmic device is used in the percussion?"*

There is only ONE possible answer: Syncopation

### Rhythmic Feature

*"What features are used in this extract?"*

- Triplets
- Swing/Swung rhythm
- Dotted rhythm

### Tempo

This may be anything between *Largo* and *Presto*. Don't be afraid to use English words if you feel more comfortable!

### Tempo Changes

- Rit/Ritardando
- Rall/Rallentando
- Accelerando

## Melodic Movement

- Step
- Leap
- Scalic
- Chromatic

## Melodic Shape

- Arpeggio or Broken Chord

If the question is for two marks remember to say if it is ascending or descending.

## Phrasing/Articulation

- Legato
- Staccato

## Dynamics

Can be *pianissimo* through *fortissimo*. You can however use English - but be precise!

## Dynamic Changes

- Crescendo
- Decrescendo
- Diminuendo
- Sforzando/Accent

If the question is worth two marks, be specific about the change. E.g. "*The violin starts pianissimo then crescendos to fortissimo*".

## Cadences

In order of likeliness:

- Perfect
- Imperfect
- Interrupted
- Plagal

## Texture

DON'T write thick or thin. Either describe it or use the correct name:

- Monophonic
- Homophonic
- Hetrophonic/Melody and Accompaniment
- Polyphonic/contrapuntal

## Form

- Binary - ABC
- Ternary - ABA
- Verse & Chorus

The answer could hypothetically include the following options, but realistically the extract be will be too short for them to be viable.

- Rondo
- Theme & Variations

## **Tonality**

- Major
- Minor
- Modal - Renaissance/church music.
- Atonal - 20th Century

Most likely to be either Major or Minor. Never Pentatonic.

## **Voices**

- Soprano
- Alto
- Tenor
- Bass

## **Ornamentation**

- Trill
- Turn
- Mordent
- Passing Note - Not often asked as they are hard to identify.

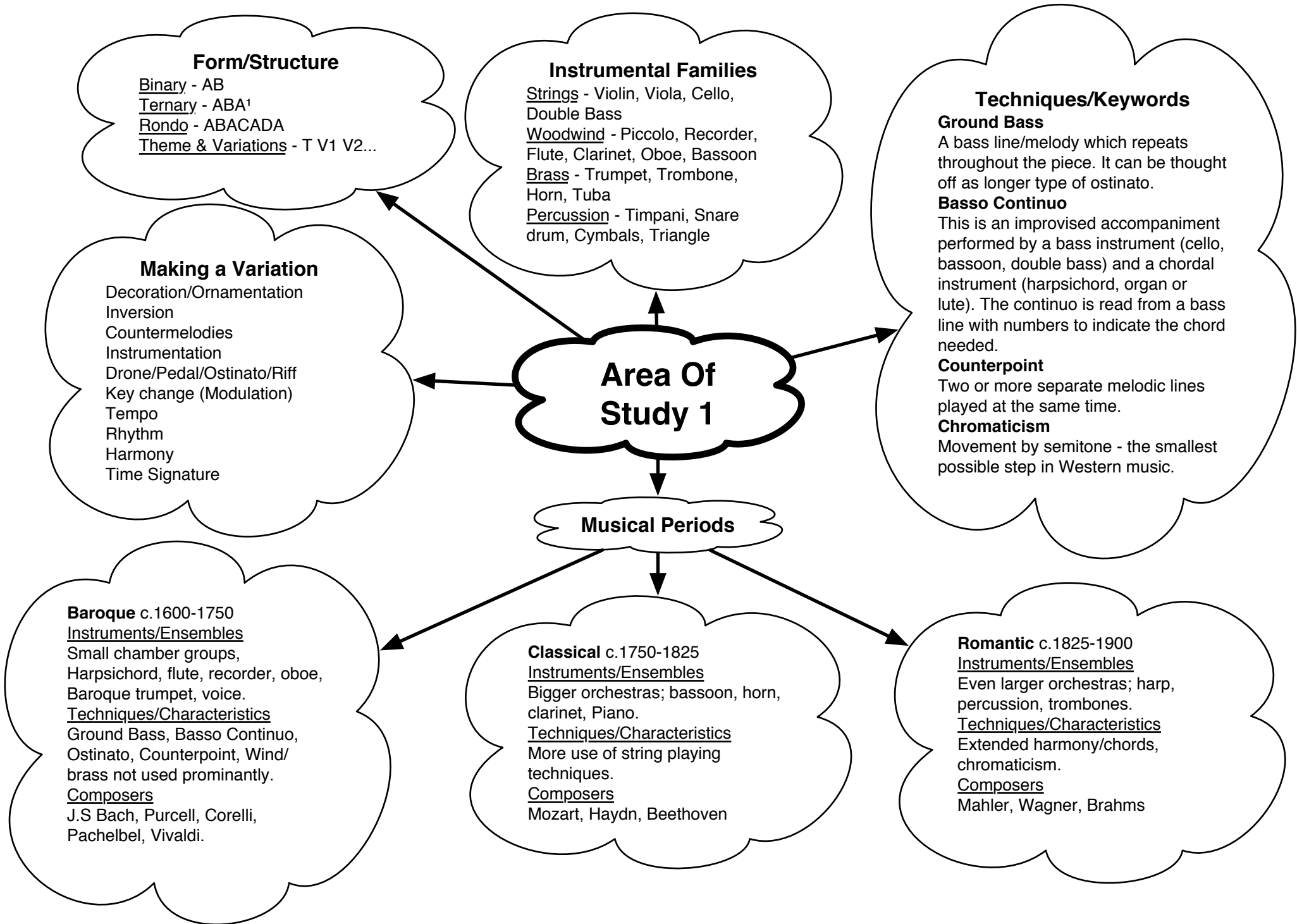
## **Intervals**

- Unison
- Octaves

Although these sound similar, they are different!

- Thirds/Sixths
- Fourths/Fifths

Seconds and Sevenths sound to dissonant, so they probably won't be used.



**Form/Structure**

Binary - AB  
Ternary - ABA<sup>1</sup>  
Rondo - ABACADA  
Theme & Variations - T V1 V2...

**Instrumental Families**

Strings - Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass  
Woodwind - Piccolo, Recorder, Flute, Clarinet, Oboe, Bassoon  
Brass - Trumpet, Trombone, Horn, Tuba  
Percussion - Timpani, Snare drum, Cymbals, Triangle

**Techniques/Keywords**

**Ground Bass**  
 A bass line/melody which repeats throughout the piece. It can be thought off as longer type of ostinato.  
**Basso Continuo**  
 This is an improvised accompaniment performed by a bass instrument (cello, bassoon, double bass) and a chordal instrument (harpsichord, organ or lute). The continuo is read from a bass line with numbers to indicate the chord needed.  
**Counterpoint**  
 Two or more separate melodic lines played at the same time.  
**Chromaticism**  
 Movement by semitone - the smallest possible step in Western music.

**Making a Variation**

Decoration/Ornamentation  
 Inversion  
 Countermelodies  
 Instrumentation  
 Drone/Pedal/Ostinato/Riff  
 Key change (Modulation)  
 Tempo  
 Rhythm  
 Harmony  
 Time Signature

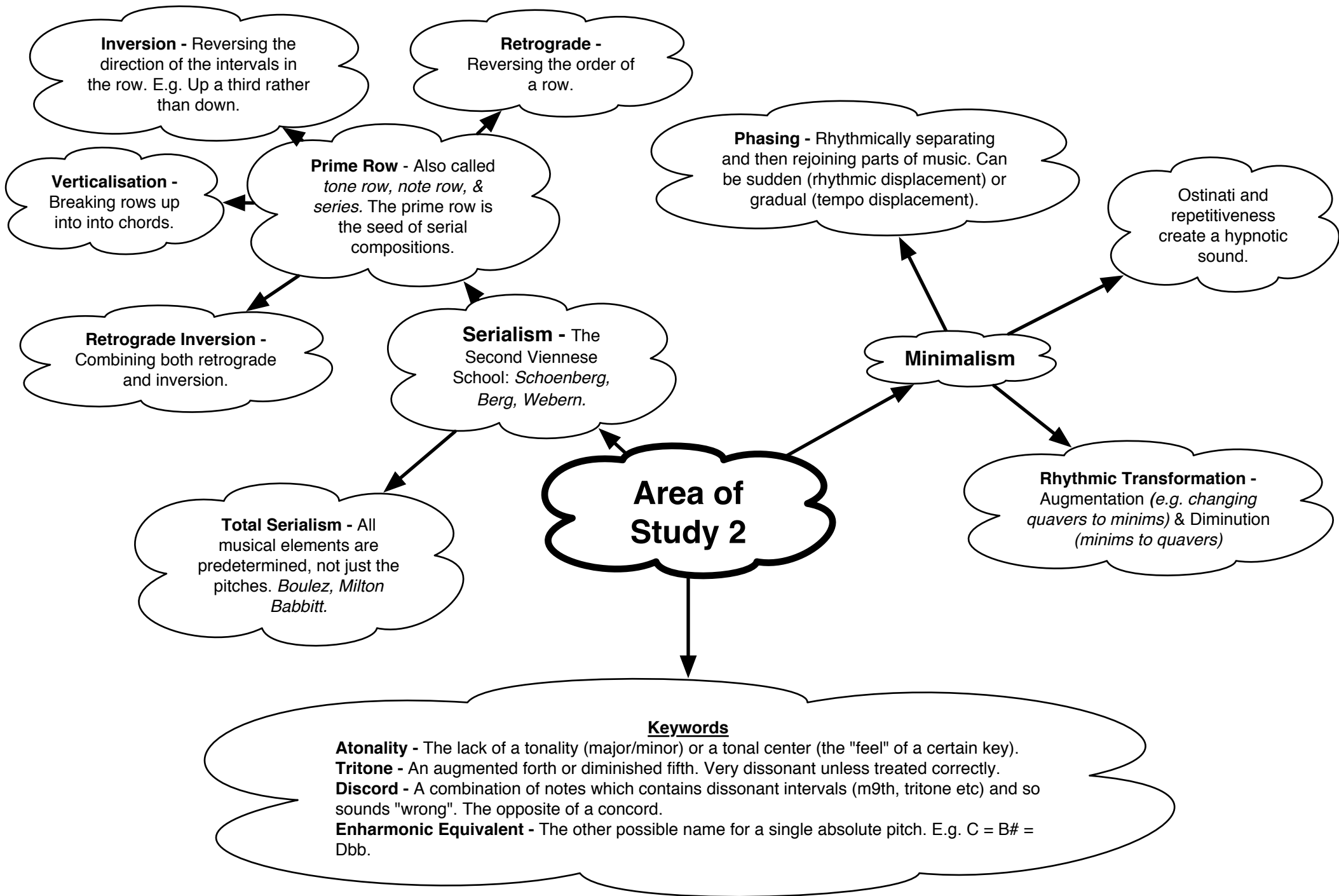
**Area Of Study 1**

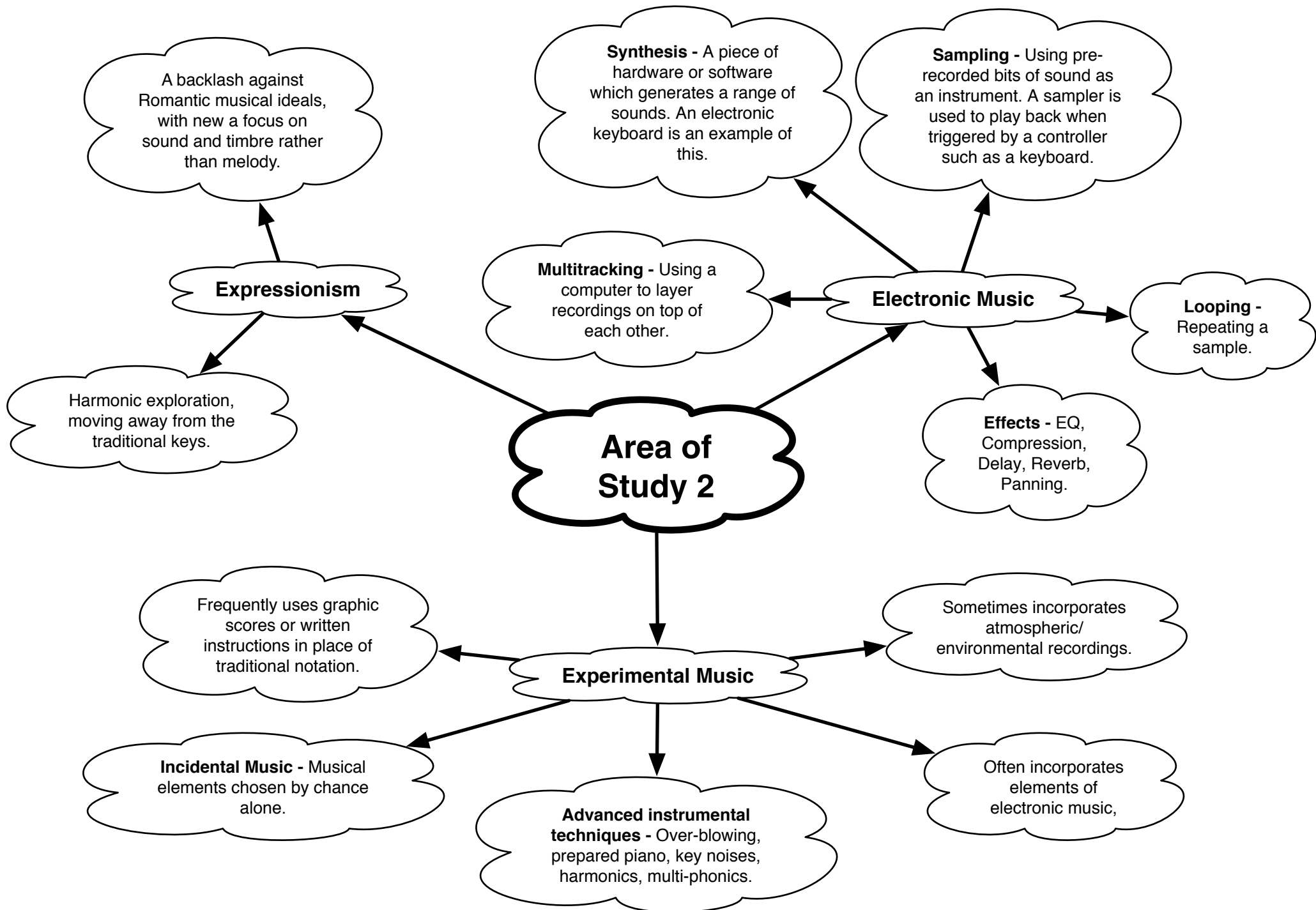
**Musical Periods**

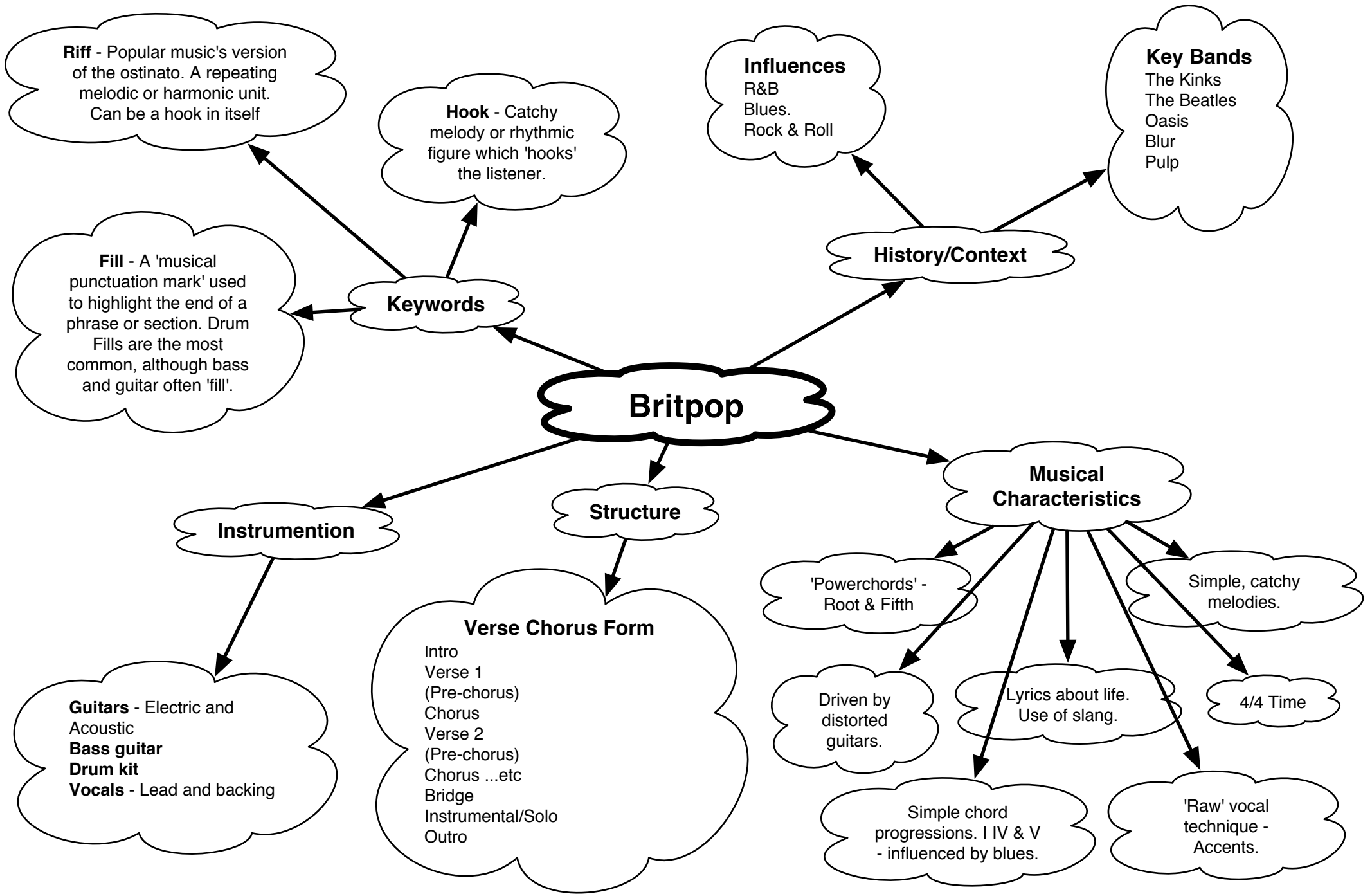
**Baroque** c.1600-1750  
Instruments/Ensembles  
 Small chamber groups, Harpsichord, flute, recorder, oboe, Baroque trumpet, voice.  
Techniques/Characteristics  
 Ground Bass, Basso Continuo, Ostinato, Counterpoint, Wind/brass not used prominently.  
Composers  
 J.S Bach, Purcell, Corelli, Pachelbel, Vivaldi.

**Classical** c.1750-1825  
Instruments/Ensembles  
 Bigger orchestras; bassoon, horn, clarinet, Piano.  
Techniques/Characteristics  
 More use of string playing techniques.  
Composers  
 Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven

**Romantic** c.1825-1900  
Instruments/Ensembles  
 Even larger orchestras; harp, percussion, trombones.  
Techniques/Characteristics  
 Extended harmony/chords, chromaticism.  
Composers  
 Mahler, Wagner, Brahms









# Classical Variation Forms

