

# Short Composition Tasks

*Music Theory Foundations — Quick Reference*

Grade 3 composition tasks build on Grade 2's "complete the melody" exercises, now within a chosen key (often minor) and sometimes compound time. The same principle applies: use everything you've learned in this grade to write something that sounds finished and intentional.

## Given Opening (D minor, 6/8)



*A two-bar opening using the D natural minor scale.*

## One Possible Completion



*The continuation rises to a peak, then settles back down to the tonic (D) for a clear sense of arrival — using the same key, time signature, and rhythmic language as the opening.*

## A Simple Approach

- Identify the key and scale being used — check the key signature and, in minor keys, watch for a raised 7th suggesting harmonic minor.
- Keep the same time signature and a consistent rhythmic style throughout, using the beat-grouping rules from Grades 2 and 3.
- Give the melody an overall shape — a rise to a high point, then a fall back toward the tonic, works reliably.
- End on the tonic note (scale degree 1) for the strongest sense of completion, often approached from the leading note or dominant.

## Key Rules to Remember

- Examiners are checking for consistency and musical sense, not a "correct" answer — there is always more than one good solution.
- Stay inside the given key signature unless the task specifically invites chromatic notes.
- A strong final cadence (often dominant → tonic, i.e. scale degree 5 → 1) gives the clearest sense of ending.
- Re-using a rhythm or melodic shape from the given opening shows control and unity, rather than introducing unrelated new ideas.