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COLLEGE  
OF MUSIC  
*London*

# RCM Sparks Springboard: Guide to Writing a Solo Piece

RCM Sparks is the Royal College of Music's learning and participation programme.  
To find out more and get involved visit [www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks](http://www.rcm.ac.uk/sparks)



**This pack is a guide to writing a solo piece.**

## **The basics**

Think carefully about instrumentation and your planned duration before you begin.

## **Inspiration**

What is your piece about?

You need ONE strong idea: a story, a picture, a place, a colour, a feeling, a temperature, a poem, an event, or something personal....

## **Basic raw materials**

Notes and rhythm are your basic raw materials.

Choose a few notes (a mode) or a scale to start with. Play with these notes until you find a combination and order you are happy with.

Independently of your notes, create a short rhythm. (This doesn't need to have a pitch or can be on one note).

Now you have notes and a rhythm you can try put them together. How do your notes sound with rhythm? Try lots of versions, writing the best ones down.

You can try turning the notes and rhythm(s) upside down and back to front, or doubling or halving the note lengths of the rhythm.

## **Structure**

Once you've got your idea, your notes and rhythm(s) to use for your piece you should think about the bigger picture. How do they fit together to form a piece?

Grab a piece of paper and some colours and draw your piece like a graphic score. This can help to clarify things.

## **Polish**

Add the finishing touches.

- Mood
  - Tempo
  - Articulation
  - Phrasing
  - Dynamics
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