



ISA

COMPOSER
COMPETITION

Open to KS2 - KS5

DEADLINE

Monday 18 May 2026

Competition open to ISA Members' schools only
Visit the ISA website for more information

isaschools.org.uk | isaarts@isaschools.org.uk

ISA
ARTS

This competition offers pupils an opportunity to use both mathematical and creative thinking by composing an original piece of music. Open to Key Stages 2-5.

Eligibility

Only schools whose Head is a Member with ISA are eligible to enter ISA competitions. Any pupils competing must be on the main school's admissions register, on the date of the event.

Open to Year 3 – 13. We encourage schools to run their own competition in house and submit their successful entries in the competition. Our year groups are based on the UK national curriculum, for more information and to check the correct year group for your students see [here](#). Please ensure you enter pupils according to the UK system, even if your own school's age group system differs.

At ISA, we are committed to making our opportunities accessible, we welcome applications from all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. If your pupil(s), those with an EHCP or on the school's SEND register, are working at a level that differs from their age group's key stage, or if your school or student focuses on development and skills rather than year groups, please contact us.

Alternative formats of these guidelines are available on request. Please notify us at the earliest opportunity so we can provide the document accordingly, if required.

Competition Categories

Schools can submit a maximum of 10 entries in section A (Instrumental) and 10 entries in section B (Instrumental and Voice), so 20 entries in total.

A. Instrumental

- Year 3-4
- Year 5-6
- Year 7-9
- Year 10-11
- Year 12-13

B. Instrumental and Voice

- Year 3-4
- Year 5-6
- Year 7-9
- Year 10-11
- Year 12-13

How to enter

Entries must be submitted via the online entry form on the ISA website [here](#) by **Monday 18 May 2026**

- A working URL link must be given for the video or audio recording (e.g., to YouTube or Vimeo). ISA won't accept any file to download, WeTransfer links, or broken links.

- Please make sure that your videos are accessible to view by anyone with the link. YouTube videos will need to be unlisted, Vimeo videos will need to be unlisted and age rated, Google Drive will need to be set to 'Anyone with the link' and OneDrive needs to be set with 'share link' to 'anyone'.
- Students have the option to submit a written or computer-generated score if they wish to support their entry.
- Manuscripts (handwritten or computer generated) should be sent as full score (there is no need to generate individual playing parts) in PDF.
- While we recognise the potential benefit of AI, we kindly request that participants are using it for inspiration and support and in line with their schools policies on its use, rather than using it to generate their compositions. Please include details about the process of using AI under "any special circumstances" box if applicable, so judges are aware.
- The copyright ownership of the piece is retained by the composer and must be an original piece, not an arrangement.
- Staff must confirm that all work submitted is the student's own.
- Pieces must have been produced within 12 months of the competition deadline. All entries must be submitted based on the pupil's age and key stage at the time of creation.

Judging criteria

- Overall effectiveness of the piece in portraying the message or emotion.
- Suitability of the composition for the chosen instrument(s)
- Demonstrating good musical understanding, including awareness of musical conventions, rhythm, melody, harmony, structure, and compositional devices
- Technical control and coherence
- Show an understanding of the chosen style/genre

Rules

- Any style of music is welcome. Examples include: classical, contemporary, alternative, pop, jazz, film score, orchestral, minimalism, gospel, folk, indie.
- There is no limit in group sizes.
- Use of music production software is allowed.
- The maximum length of composition is 5 mins (no minimum).
- Entries must include a video or audio recording of the piece being played.
- You may use any instrument you choose, including computer generated sound - conventional or not – i.e., a piano, guitar, or even kitchen utensils. Be as creative as you like.
- Entries with lyrics can be written in any language, provided an English translation is given.
- Paired or group compositions may be submitted to any age class. These may be judged separately from the individual works. Students submitting group work must be from within the same key stage.
- It is possible to submit a composition written for an external exam.

If you have any questions, please contact isaarts@isaschools.org.uk

We look forward to receiving your entries.