

ABRSM Grade 2 Clarinet.

For this grade (as for grade 1) you will be asked to play 3 pieces . One from each section A B and C. A and B have piano accompaniments and C is a study piece (without accompaniment)

You MUST have your own copy of the Exam Pack as photo copies ARE NOT allowed.

It is important that you buy the Exam Pack version as this contains the piano accompaniments you will need as well as the scales and practice sight reading as well as a code for free downloads of all the pieces so that you can listen to and play along to them at home.

At the back of the book you will find a section labelled Audio Downloads. Ask someone to use the web address given then follow the instructions entering your unique code when prompted. Select download all so that you can listen to all of the pieces and backing tracks.

Alternatively if you are unsure how to download music you can always use Youtube. Just search for ABRSM Clarinet grade 2 and then the name of the piece you want to listen to.

List A 1– Allegro by W.A Mozart.

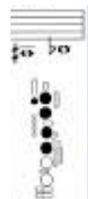
Look at the key signature of this piece – that’s the sharps or flats at the start of your music!



Now look at the scales at the back of your book. Can you see a scale with the same key signature?

You should be able to see that Bb Major matches your piece.

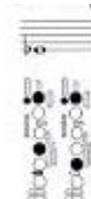
The key signature
flats.



Bb fingering

means that all

Eb



the B's and E's are to be played as

fingering

With out a key signature the scale looks like this.

Practice this scale several times before you try playing the piece.

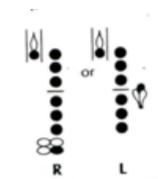


Practice it slurred and tongued, breathing at the top and end of the scale.

Ok lets try the first few bars of Allegro by Mozart.

- Look at the notes in the first 10 bars of the piece. (the first 3 are piano introduction)
- Remember all of the B's are Bb – look at the fingering above if you are unsure. Try to remember B Flat uses First finger. Both start with F.

- The lowest note of this section is F. There are two different ways to play low F for this section you can choose the one that feels most comfortable for you. Cover all 6 holes and your thumb hole then choose either you left little finger on the key that points in a different direction to the rest! Or the Right little finger on the top right key.



- Once you are sure of all the notes listen to this section on your download or You tube.
- Can you hear that some of the notes are smooth and some are detached?
- The smooth notes are called slurs and are played by blowing continuously from one note to the next.



- Slurs are marked by a curved line over or under the notes you should tongue the first note and then keep blowing whilst you fingers move to the next note.

- The detached notes are, in this part staccato, and should be tongued – short and bouncy notes. Staccato notes are marked with a dot above or below the note.



- This is a quaver rest and is a good place to take a breath in this piece.

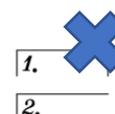


- Practice the first 6 bars again. This time trying to add the slurs and staccato notes in. It might be a good time to listen to the piece again and try to play along with it if you are confident of your notes.

- Remember there are 3 bars rest at the start of the piece. Listen to the introduction. You may be able to work out when to start just by listening but if not the counting is as follows.

- And – 1 and 2 and – 2 and 2 and – 3 and 2 and – 4 and 2 start playing on the next and.

When you are happy with the first section move on to the next 6 bars. (Last note bar 10 to bar 16)



- In this exam we do not need to do the repeat so put a line through the 1st time bar (with a number 1 over) it we will skip straight to the 2nd time bar .

- In bar 13 you will notice a little note with a line through its tail

Looking something like this.

GRACE NOTES



Little notes added as ornaments to give a graceful effect. They have no time value and should be played as quickly as possible.

- You should try to play the A to G as quickly as possible.

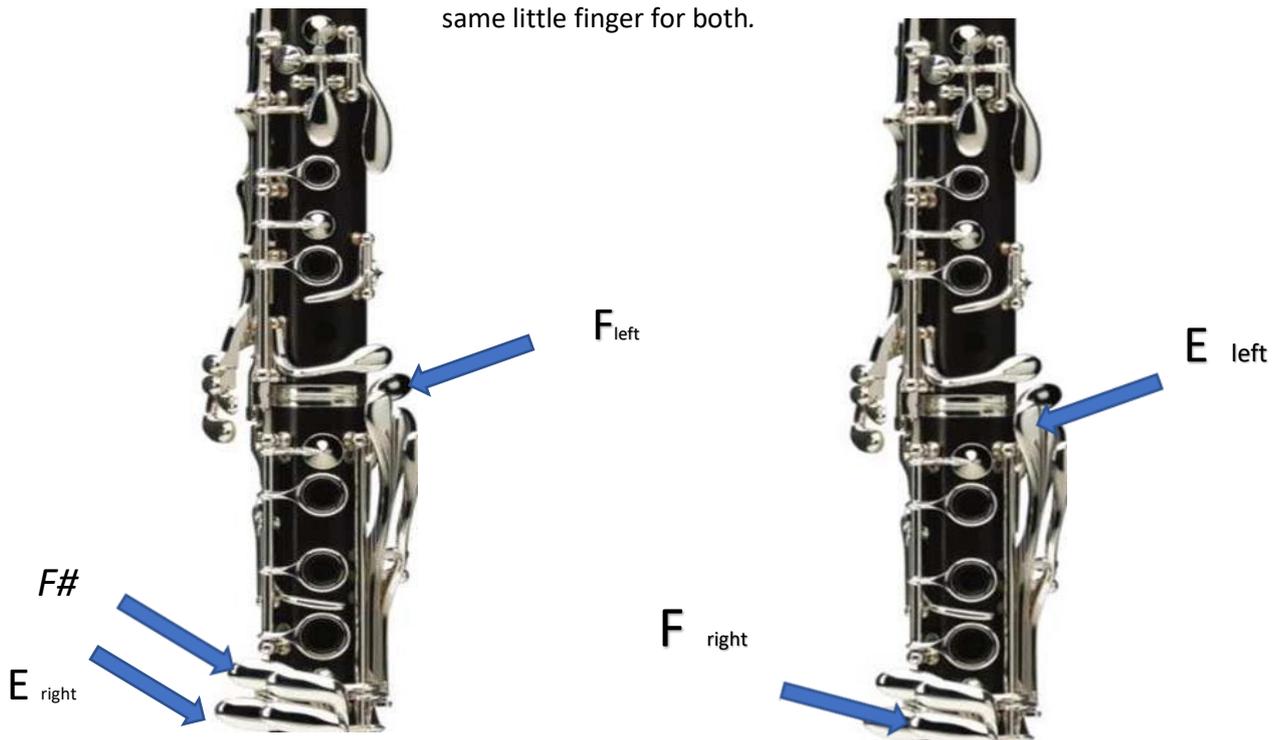
- Sometimes we call this a crushed note as we are trying to “crush” it into the music.

- Listen to the piece and try to spot the grace note.

- Practice playing A to G as fast as you can – be careful not to cut the G short though it still has its full value.

- You will notice that the low E has a natural sign next to it \natural this cancels out the flat sign at the start of the music – As E is the lowest note on the clarinet it would be impossible to play Eb !!

- This time we have to move from low F to low E – it is important that you DO NOT use the same little finger for both.



- If you use the Right hand E key use the left hand F .
- If you use the left hand E key then use the right hand F key.
- The fingering for F# is also shown here. Practice bar 15 to get used to using the F# key. NOTICE that in bar 16 (the 2nd time bar) however the natural sign is used to tell you to go back to F \flat
- We have already established that you do not do the repeat so go straight to the the 2nd time bar.
- Practice this section on its own then with the first section so that you can play from the beginning to the 2nd time bar.
- Now listen to the music again.
- When you are happy with the way it sounds try playing along.

Bars 17 – 24

- This section has another \flat sign. This time it is for the B. remember B used the middle finger.
- Remember a \flat sign only last until the end of the bar. After that you must go back to using the key signature.
- There are some longer slurred passages in this section. Take a deep breath before you start. Tongue the first note and don't touch the reed again until the end of the slur. (bars 19 – 23 – 31 and 33)
- Listen to the music again paying particular attention to the slurred passages. Try to copy the sound.
- Play along to the backing track when you feel confident.

Bars 24 – the end.

- Again there is no repeat needed for the Exam in this piece so cross out the 1st time bar.
- The beginning of this section is the same as the beginning of the piece so you should already be familiar with it.
- Remember to add in all the slurs and staccato notes.
- The ending is slightly different in bar 31 you can see another grace note. Practice moving from D to C quickly.
- Then try playing the full bar as a slur.
- Watch out for bars 33 and 34 as that natural sign appears again on the B in 33 but goes back to Bb in bar 34 (2nd time bar)

Ok so now you should have the basics of the piece with regards to fingering and hopefully timing by listening to and working through the piece step by step.

Now lets try and make it sound a little more musical!

At the start of the piece you will see the word Allegro followed by $\text{♩} = c88$

The word Allegro tells us how we should play this piece and means *lively*.

$\text{♩} = c88$ tells us how fast to play this piece and means there are 88 crotchets in a minute.

You could try to use a metronome to find the correct speed or just follow the backing track as this is already set at the right tempo.

There are also dynamic markings throughout the piece (signs that tell us how loud or quiet to play)

Look at this table and match the signs to your piece.

Try to control the sound you make when playing

To match the dynamics marked.

It is particularly important to control you loud playing

So that the notes stay in tune.

piano	<i>p</i>	soft
pianissimo	<i>pp</i>	very soft
forte	<i>f</i>	loud
fortissimo	<i>ff</i>	very loud
mezzo piano	<i>mp</i>	medium soft
mezzo forte	<i>mf</i>	medium loud
crescendo	<i>cresc.</i> <	gradually louder
diminuendo	<i>dim.</i> >	gradually softer

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For the exam it is all about contrast. There might not seem like much difference between *mf* and *mp* but the examiner will only know that you understand the difference if he or she can hear it in your playing.

Unless it is marked *cresc* the change in dynamics (volume) should be instant.

Mozart wrote some absolutely amazing pieces for the clarinet. Why not search You tube for some of his other works. Mozarts Clarinet Concerto is a particular favourite of mine.