

String Quartet Texture Models

The twenty-seven examples of string quartet textures in this document are here for you to steal and adapt!

You can hear many of these extracts in the Tracks(MP3) folder (they have a corresponding SQ number).

The first ten or so models are relatively straightforward, after which they become more contrapuntal. The last six offer some more complex twentieth models.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	W. A. Mozart	ID	SQ1
Extract	String Quartet KV 156, I: Presto, bb. 1-19		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basically melody dominated homophony with melody in first violin• Lower three parts enliven chordal texture with rhythmic idea		

Presto.

The musical score is for the first movement of Mozart's String Quartet KV 156, marked Presto. It is in 3/8 time and G major. The score consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The first violin part features a melodic line with trills (tr.) and slurs. The other three parts provide a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and chords. Dynamics include forte (f) and piano (p).

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	W. A. Mozart	ID	SQ2
Extract	String Quartet KV 157 I: bb. 1-8		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top two parts mostly in thirds• Simple bass line enlivened by quavers• Note how viola fills in the gaps at the end of the second and fourth bars.		

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves (Violin I and Violin II) are in treble clef and play a melody primarily in thirds. The bottom two staves (Viola and Cello/Double Bass) are in bass clef. The Cello/Double Bass part features a simple bass line with quaver patterns. The Viola part fills in the gaps at the end of the second and fourth bars. The score is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic.

The second system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves (Violin I and Violin II) are in treble clef and play a melody primarily in thirds. The bottom two staves (Viola and Cello/Double Bass) are in bass clef. The Cello/Double Bass part features a simple bass line with quaver patterns. The Viola part fills in the gaps at the end of the second and fourth bars. The score is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Joseph Haydn	<i>ID</i>	SQ3
<i>Extract</i>	Quartet op. 3 no. 3, Presto, bb. 1-8		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple melody-dominated homophony at opening with some rhythmic variety in third full bar. • Melody switches to second violin in bar 5 but then the interest passes back up to the first violin when it re-enters. 		

Presto.

VIOLINO I.

VIOLINO II.

VIOLA.

VIOLONC.

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet extract by Joseph Haydn, measures 1-8. The score is for Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked 'Presto.' The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score shows a melody-dominated homophony with dynamic markings of piano (p) and forte (f). The first violin part starts with a melody in measure 1, which is then taken up by the second violin in measure 5. The interest then passes back up to the first violin when it re-enters in measure 8.

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Joseph Haydn	<i>ID</i>	SQ4
<i>Extract</i>	Quartet op. 2 no. 5, Menuetto, bb. 1-10		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple melody-dominated homophony at opening • Nice use of parallel thirds between second violin and viola • Melody passes between second and first violin in second phrase – second violin is octave lower than first.. 		

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet extract. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes staves for Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The second system continues the music for the same instruments. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first phrase (measures 1-4) features a melody in the first violin, with the second violin and viola playing parallel thirds. The second phrase (measures 5-8) shows the melody moving from the second violin to the first violin, with the second violin playing an octave lower. The viola and cello provide harmonic support throughout.

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Johann Christian Bach	<i>ID</i>	SQ5
<i>Extract</i>	Quartet in C major, Allegro		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective rocking motion in the middle of the texture (2nd violin and viola) for first four bars • Thirds between first and second violin in second phrase • Modification of first phrase in bar9, with melody in viola and rocking accompaniment reduced to one instrument. 		

Allegro

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (bars 1-4) includes Flute (Violin I), Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The second system (bars 5-8) includes Flute (Violin I), Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The third system (bars 9-12) includes Flute (Violin I), Violin II, Viola, and Cello. Dynamics include *f*, *mf*, and *p*.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Franz Josef Haydn	ID	SQ6
Extract	Quartet op. 77 no. 1 I: Allegro moderato, bb. 1-20		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple homophonic texture enlivened by staccato crotchets • Note echo of main melody in second violin in bar 4 • Note how the idea and texture is developed from the upbeat to bar 9 for the second half of the phrase. 		

Allegro moderato

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with four staves representing the instruments: Violine I, Violine II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *p* (piano), *mezza voce* (half-voice), and *sf* (sforzando). A measure number '10' is indicated above the second system. The notation includes staccato crotchets and note echoes between the first and second violins.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Joseph Haydn	ID	SQ7
Extract	Quartet op. 3 no. 5, Andante Cantabile		
Notes	• Gentle pizzicato accompaniment		

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet, specifically the first three staves: Violino I, Violino II, and Viola. The Violino I part begins with a *dol.* (dolce) marking and is played *Con Sordina.* (with mutes). The Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello parts feature a *pizz.* (pizzicato) accompaniment. The score is written in common time (C) and includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The bottom section of the image shows the beginning of the Violoncello part, which starts with a *pizz.* marking.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Franz Josef Haydn	ID	SQ8
Extract	Quartet op. 76 no. 5 IV: Presto, bb. 1-20		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternation of two contrasting ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Homophonic repeated cadential idea (bb. 1-6) ○ Double pedal with melody first over the top in the violin and then underneath in the cello 		

Finale. Presto



Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Ludwig van Beethoven	ID	SQ9
Extract	Quartet op. 59 no. 1, I bb. 1-19		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Melody appears first in cello and then in first violin with quaver accompaniment		

Quartett N^o 7.
Op. 59. N^o 1.

Allegro.

Violino I.
Violino II.
Viola.
Violoncello.

p
mf e dolce.
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
p
cresc.
cresc.
cresc.
p
p
p
p

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Ludwig van Beethoven	<i>ID</i>	SQ10
<i>Extract</i>	Quartet op. 18 no. 4, I bb. 1-13		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tension created by quaver pedal in cello • Note how the passage builds to a climax, going up in both volume and pitch 		

Allegro ma non tanto.

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet, specifically the first movement of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 18 No. 4. The score is arranged in four staves, labeled from top to bottom as Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked 'Allegro ma non tanto.' The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score shows a crescendo in volume and pitch across the instruments, with a quaver pedal in the cello part. The first system (measures 1-13) shows the instruments playing in a rhythmic pattern, with the cello part featuring a quaver pedal. The second system (measures 14-26) shows a significant increase in volume and pitch, with the instruments playing more complex rhythmic patterns. The score is written in a clear, legible font, with dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'cresc.' (crescendo) visible.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	W. A. Mozart	<i>ID</i>	SQ11
<i>Extract</i>	String Quartet KV 172 IV: Allegro bb 1-12		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overlapping pairs of imitation in first eight bars• Note how this phrase is then rounded off by a simpler homophonic texture		

Allegro assai.

The musical score is presented in four staves. The first two staves (Violin I and Violin II) show overlapping pairs of imitation in the first eight bars. The third and fourth staves (Viola and Cello) provide harmonic support. The texture is homophonic. Dynamics range from piano (p) to forte (f).

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	W. A. Mozart	<i>ID</i>	SQ12
<i>Extract</i>	String Quartet KV 458 IV: Allegro assai, bb 1-24		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note how second eight bars develops the texture of the first eight by reinforcing the melody in a higher octave and moving the accompaniment down onto the lower instruments • From bar 17 the question and answer texture is basically two-part writing for four instruments. 		

Allegro assai.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string quartet. The first system, labeled 'Allegro assai.', shows the first eight bars. The top staff (Violin I) begins with a melody marked *p* (piano). The second staff (Violin II) has rests. The third staff (Viola) has a melody marked *p*. The fourth staff (Cello/Double Bass) has a melody marked *p*. Dynamics *f* (forte) are indicated in the first and third staves in the second half of the system. The second system shows the development of the texture, with the first staff continuing its melody and the other three staves providing accompaniment, all marked *p*. Dynamics *f* are also present in the first and third staves.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Ludwig van Beethoven	<i>ID</i>	SQ13
<i>Extract</i>	Quartet op. 18 no. 1, I bb. 1-8		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Octave unison texture in first four bars contrasts with fuller homophonic texture in second half of phrase• Note how the second half of the extract takes the opening motif as its starting point• See SQ18b to see how Beethoven develops this idea		

Allegro con brio.

The image shows a musical score for the first four bars of the first movement of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 18 No. 1. The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features an octave unison texture in the first four bars, followed by a more homophonic texture. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con brio'. The score is written for four staves, with the first two staves in treble clef and the last two in bass clef. The first four bars show an octave unison texture, while the last four bars show a more homophonic texture. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con brio'.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Ludwig van Beethoven	ID	SQ14
Extract	Quartet op. 18 no. 4, I bb. 21-29		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Note how the motif from SQ13 is repeated and developed in this extract		

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet, consisting of two systems of five staves each. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The first system (measures 21-29) features a prominent melodic motif in the first violin part, which is repeated and developed throughout the system. The second system (measures 30-37) continues the development of this motif, with various instruments taking turns to play it. The score includes dynamic markings such as *sf* (sforzando), *p* (piano), and *f* (forte), as well as articulation marks like accents and slurs. The overall texture is dense and rhythmic, characteristic of Beethoven's style.

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Franz Josef Haydn	ID	SQ15
Extract	Quartet op. 74 no. 3 II: Largo, bb. 1-10		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple but effective homophonic texture • Gradually moves to melody dominated homophony in second half of phrase • Note that harmony has to be very strong to make this sort of writing effective. 		

Largo assai

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string quartet. The first system, labeled 'Largo assai', shows four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass) with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The music begins with a 'mezza voce' instruction and 'ten.' markings. The second system shows the continuation of the piece, with 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'p' (piano) markings. The tempo is 'Largo assai'.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	W. A. Mozart	ID	SQ16
Extract	String Quartet KV 156, I: Presto, bb. 72-94		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ostinato idea in second violin• Simple motif is imitated between other three parts, with cello and first violin working as a pair		

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	W. A. Mozart	ID	SQ17
Extract	String Quartet KV 157 IV: Presto, last 10 bars		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Note how the opening idea is passed down through the instruments as the texture builds towards the end.		

The image shows a musical score for a string quartet, consisting of four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The score is in G major and 2/4 time. The first staff (Violin I) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a melodic line of eighth notes. The second staff (Violin II) has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a similar melodic line. The third staff (Viola) has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a similar melodic line. The fourth staff (Cello/Double Bass) has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a similar melodic line. The score includes dynamic markings such as *crese.* (crescendo) and *f* (forte), and trills (*tr.*) in the final bars. The texture builds towards the end of the extract.

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	W. A. Mozart	ID	SQ18
Extract	String Quartet KV 171 III: Trio. bb 1-8		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imitation between first violin and viola with chords filled in by the other two parts		

Trio.

The musical score is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first violin part begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic line with trills (*tr*) in measures 2 and 4. The other parts provide harmonic support with chords and rhythmic patterns.

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

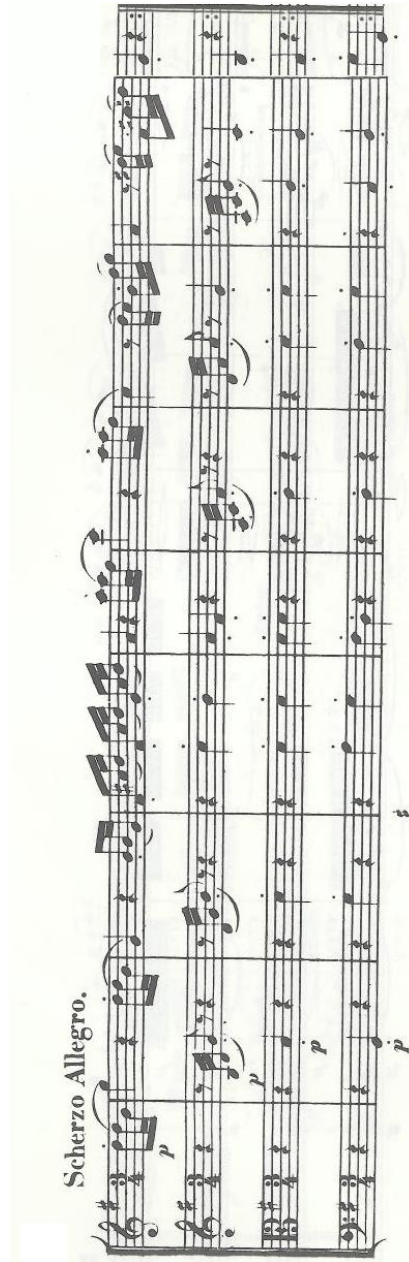
<i>Composer</i>	Johannes Brahms	<i>ID</i>	SQ19
<i>Extract</i>	Quartet op. 51/1, II: Trio		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic texture is melody in violin plus chordal accompaniment in viola and cello • Texture is enlivened by alternate stopped and open string As in quavers in the second violin 		

Un poco più animato

E. E. 4574

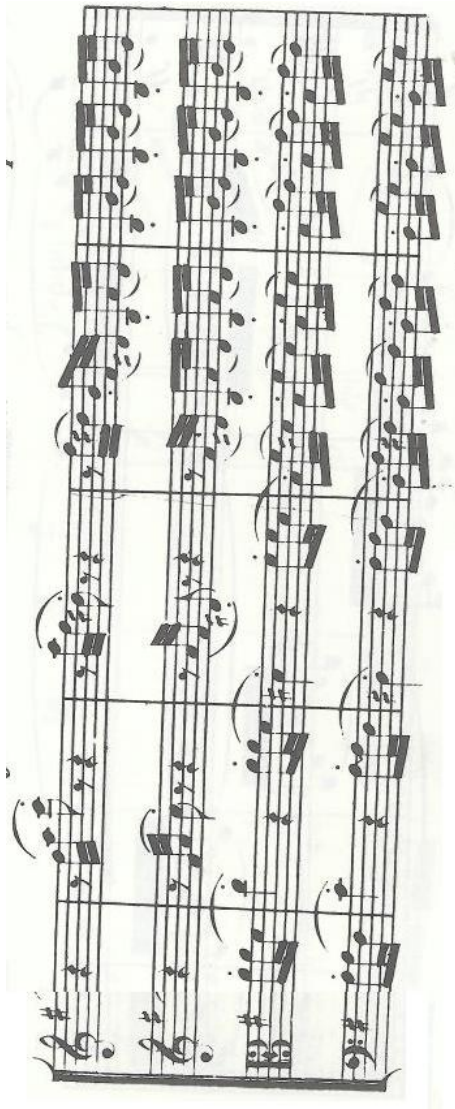
Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Ludwig van Beethoven	<i>ID</i>	SQ20
<i>Extract</i>	Quartet op. 18 no. 2, III bb. 1-8		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interplay between first and second violins• Note how the end of the first phrase breaks up this interplay with a more continuous melody• Note how the opening idea is developed in SQ19b		



Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Ludwig van Beethoven	ID	SQ21
Extract	Quartet op. 18 no. 1, I bb. 16		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note how Beethoven develops the idea from SQ19a in various ways		



Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Bela Bartok	<i>ID</i>	SQ22
<i>Extract</i>	Quartet no. 2, II: Allegro molto capriccioso, bb. 1-19		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiky twentieth century texture • Octave unison in first four bars • What is going on in the fifth and sixth bars? • Strings can occasionally quadruple stop as in bar 7, but check carefully that you chords are easy to play. • Insistent repeated pedal in second violin against repetitive melody in first violin four before Figure 1 		

Allegro molto capriccioso (♩ = 160)

The first system of the score consists of four staves. The top two staves (Violin I and Violin II) are in treble clef, and the bottom two staves (Viola and Violoncello) are in bass clef. The time signature is 2/4. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegro molto capriccioso' with a quarter note equal to 160 beats per minute. Dynamics include *f*, *sf*, and *pizz.* (pizzicato). The music features a complex, rhythmic texture with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

1

The second system continues the music. The first violin part (top staff) has a circled '1' above it. Dynamics include *pizz.*, *arco*, *sf*, and *ff*. The tempo is marked (♩ = 192). The music continues with intricate rhythmic patterns and dynamic contrasts.

The third system shows further development of the complex texture. The first violin part has a *sf* dynamic. The overall texture remains dense and rhythmic.

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Bela Bartok	ID	SQ23
Extract	Quartet no. 4, IV: Allegro pizzicato, bb. 1-10		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentle but irregular rhythms of the pizzicato accompaniment • Note the effect of a pizzicato melody moving in the middle of the texture in the viola part from bar 6 • Note the triple stops in the cello – chords like this work well on string instruments, but you need to check they are playable. Not all spacings are equally easy to play. 		

*) Allegretto pizzicato, $\text{♩} = 142$ 5

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Claude Debussy	ID	SQ24
Extract	String Quartet Op. 10, I: Animé et très décidé, opening		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens with homophonic texture (but with interesting rhythms) • Note how parts gradually gain independence • Phrygian mode on G 		

Animé et très décidé. 63

Models for A level Composition
String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Bohuslav Martinu	<i>ID</i>	SQ25
<i>Extract</i>	String Quartet no. 3, II: Andante		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dark, hushed texture• Melody is in viola in the middle of the texture• Accompanying parallel chords (a bit like Debussy) in violins and cello		

The image shows a musical score for a string quartet. It consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The dynamics are 'molto pp' for the violins and 'p dolce' for the viola and cello. The score features a melody in the viola, with accompanying parallel chords in the violins and cello. There are triplets in the viola and cello parts.

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

<i>Composer</i>	Maurice Ravel	<i>ID</i>	SQ26
<i>Extract</i>	String Quartet, I: Allegro moderato, opening		
<i>Notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full, warm texture • Main accompanying idea is in second violin and cello, with upwards movement in 10ths across first four bars, followed by descent in the following four bars 		

Allegro mod^{to} - Très doux. (♩ = 120)

1^{er} VIOLON

2^d VIOLON

ALTO

VIOLONCELLE

p *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

cresc. poco a

pp express. *pp* *pp soutenu* *pp soutenu*

express.

Models for A level Composition

String Quartet Extracts

Composer	Franz Schubert	ID	SQ27
Extract	String Quartet op. 125 no. 1, III: Scherzo		
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note simple but effective repetition and development of opening idea • Clear tonal structure: statement of tonic at beginning, moves to relative minor in the middle before preparing return of tonic with dominant seventh • Homophonic texture at beginning • Bars 17 onwards sees a basically chordal texture enlivened by arpeggios in cello and syncopation in inner parts 		

SCHERZO.
Prestissimo.

The musical score consists of three systems of four staves each. The first system begins with a forte dynamic (f) and a sforzando (sfz) accent. The second system shows a transition to piano (p) and then back to forte (f). The third system features a piano-piano (pp) section, followed by a first ending and a second ending. The score is marked with various dynamics including sfz, p, f, and pp, and includes articulation marks like accents and slurs.