



How Music Has Changed Throughout History

KS2 MUSIC

KS3 HISTORY

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 4 min read

Music in Ancient Times

Thousands of years ago, music looked very different from what we hear today. **Ancient civilisations** like the **Egyptians**, **Greeks**, and **Romans** created music using simple instruments made from bones, wood, and animal skin. People sang together and played instruments mainly for **religious ceremonies**, celebrations, and entertainment. There were no recordings, so music only existed when someone was actually playing it.

The **ancient Greeks** invented the **lyre** (a stringed instrument) and believed music was so important that they taught it in schools alongside maths and philosophy. Music was seen as a way to connect with the gods and express emotions.

The Medieval and Renaissance Periods

During the **Middle Ages** (roughly 500–1400 CE), **church music** became extremely important in Europe. **Monks** created elaborate singing styles called **Gregorian chant**. Around this time, new instruments like the **violin**, **harpsichord**, and early **pianos** were invented.

Think of it like how video games evolved—from simple beeps and boops to orchestral soundtracks. Music went from basic tunes to complex, layered compositions.

The **Renaissance** (1400–1600) brought a musical explosion. Composers like **Mozart**, **Beethoven**, and **Bach** created masterpieces that are still played today. Music became more complex, with multiple instruments playing different parts at the same time.

The Modern Revolution

Everything changed in the **19th and 20th centuries**. The invention of **recording technology** meant music could be captured and played back. **Edison's phonograph** (1877) was revolutionary—suddenly, people could listen to music anytime they wanted, not just at live performances.

Then came **electric instruments**, the **radio**, and recorded music on **vinyl records**. New styles emerged like **jazz**, **blues**, **rock and roll**, and **pop**. **African American musicians** created entirely new musical genres that changed the world forever.

Music Today

In the **21st century**, music has become digital. We carry thousands of songs on our phones and stream them instantly from services like **Spotify** and **YouTube**. Anyone with a computer can now produce professional-quality music at home—something that was impossible just **30 years ago**.

Think of it like libraries—ancient music was like a library you had to visit in person. Now we carry the entire library in our pocket!

The way we discover music has changed too. **Social media** and **TikTok** can make a song famous overnight. Artists collaborate across the globe instantly. The history of music shows us how **technology** and **culture** shape each other—they dance together through time.