

AMES Song Composition Showcase Project Rubric

School: _____ Team: _____ Song Name: _____ (Updated 4-30-2026)

Category	1–2	3–4	5–6	7–8	9–10	
Theme/Prompt <i>Connection to the theme is clear and follows the prompt</i>	No connection to prompt. The composition ignores the prompt; there is no sense of weight, consequence, tension, etc.	A weak or fleeting reference to the prompt. Prompt is occasionally hinted at, but the composition does not meaningfully explore or commit to the theme.	The composition shows some engagement with the prompt. Moments of tension, sacrifice, or weight appear, but the connection to the prompt is inconsistent or underdeveloped.	The composition reflects the prompt clearly. A sense of cost, consequence, or trade-off comes through clearly and effectively in one or more musical elements.	The composition fully embodies the prompt. The composition shows overlapping layers of expression that clearly and substantially connect to themes of loss, consequence, trade-off, and/or sacrifice.	
Development <i>Composition presents an arc or growth</i>	The composition lacks any sense of progression. It feels static or stagnant from start to finish.	Some musical elements vary, but there is little sense of progression or growth.	Musical elements build on established ideas throughout the composition. An arc is present, but may feel underdeveloped; transitions may be rough.	The piece moves with purpose toward a conclusion. Sections flow well from one to the next. Composition presents a clear arc with noticeable development.	Composition demonstrates compelling progression and growth. The arc is satisfying, intentional, and emotionally effective.	
Arrangement <i>Parts are balanced, complementary, and original</i>	Parts clash, overwhelm each other, or are so thin the arrangement feels empty or incomplete. Third-party/sampled elements may be heavily relied upon.	Parts are present but unbalanced. Some elements compete, or the arrangement lacks cohesion. Third-party/sampled elements may outshine original student work.	Parts are decently organized. Balance is mostly achieved, though some elements may feel out of place. May include limited use of third-party/sampled elements.	Parts work well together. The arrangement is balanced and organized, with most elements complementing each other. May include minimal use of third-party/sampled elements.	Arrangement is polished and purposeful. All parts serve a clear role, enhancing or supporting other parts. All parts are completely student-generated.	
Mix <i>Dynamics, frequency spectrum & spatialization</i>	The mix is noticeably unbalanced. dynamics, EQ, or spatial elements detract significantly from the listening experience.	Mix shows some effort but has clear issues with dynamics, frequency balance, or stereo placement.	Mix is acceptable. Attention has been given to the treatment of dynamics, frequency spectrum, and spatialization, though not fully refined.	Mix is clean and intentional. Dynamics, frequency content, and spatial elements are well-handled for the style.	Mix is polished and stylistically appropriate. Dynamics, frequency spectrum, and spatialization all serve and elevate the work.	
Style <i>Personality, expression & hooks</i>	Composition feels generic or impersonal. No distinguishable personality or memorable elements.	Some personality is present, but inconsistent. The piece lacks a strong identity or memorable moments.	Composition has a discernible style. Some expressive choices and personality come through, though some moments/segments may be weaker.	Composition has a clear style with expressive moments that reflect personality and engage the listener.	Composition has a strong, distinctive identity. Expressive choices are executed convincingly with memorable hooks/moments that draw the listener in.	
TOTAL SCORE /50						