



# John Williams

Creative Response  
Activities

KSI + 2

## Activity 1: Listen to Leitmotifs

Do you remember learning about **motifs** when we looked at **Beethoven**?

A **motif** is a short **musical idea** or **melody**. In Beethoven's Symphony No.5, the motif (ti-ti-ti-taaaa) was repeated again at different pitches\* and tempos\*.

\*Pitch — high/low/middle

\*Tempo — speed of music

## What's a Leitmotif?

It is a short melody (tune) used to represent a specific character, object or emotion.

John Williams is brilliant at writing **strong, recognisable leitmotifs**. Click on the link and scroll down to listen to the leitmotifs from Star Wars, Jaws and Superman.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zv89dxs/revision/3>

What made the *Darth Vader* leitmotif scary? Baddies or scary moments in films are often represented by **low notes**. In '*Jaws*', the **low notes get faster** to show that the shark is getting closer.

In **Superman**, the music sounds like a fanfare...it is happy and triumphant. It is played on brass instruments.

The magical music of **Harry Potter** (in Hedwig's Theme) has high notes played on a tinkly instrument (the celeste).

Activity 2: Make up your own leitmotif (short tune) to represent one of the characters below?



Tinkerbell



Miss Trunchbull

You could use any tuned instruments or an app such as Garage Band or Chrome Music Lab.

See an example here:

<https://youtu.be/0ZPPIInWlzCQ>





## Extension:

Choose another character from your favourite film and create a **leitmotif** to represent them.

