



# MUSIC AND REMEMBRANCE: THE LAST POST



Music, PSHE



8 - 16 year olds



30 minutes - 2 hours

**The National Memorial Arboretum is the UK's centre for Remembrance. Every day at 11am, we have a short Act of Remembrance which includes the playing of a piece of music known as The Last Post.**

This piece, normally performed on a bugle or trumpet, has become the most well known piece of music associated with Remembrance. The Last Post was a bugle call used by the British Army as an effective form of communication to signal the camp was secure for the night. The Last Post also had another function: It signalled to those who were still out and wounded or separated from the garrison that the fighting was done, and to follow the sound of the call to find safety and rest. This activity gives you the chance to compose your own bugle/trumpet call to signal a message.

## Step 1: Listening

Follow this link [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDS3TxtGaQ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDS3TxtGaQ0) to see a performance of The Last Post. Try and answer the following questions (it would be really good to discuss your ideas with someone else at home):

**How does the music make you feel and why?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Can you describe the dynamics of the music (lounds and quiets/volume)? Does it change?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Why do you think the piece was created for just one instrument? Why the bugle/trumpet?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



National Memorial Arboretum  
Staffordshire DE13 7AR  
[www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk)



Charity No. 1043992

## Step 1: Listening

Could it be played on different instruments?  
Would it be as effective? Why? Maybe you  
could search for some examples.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What about the music makes us  
want to “remember”?

---

---

---

---

Can you name some of the  
locations in the video?

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Step 2: Listen again and follow the music

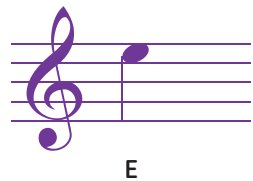
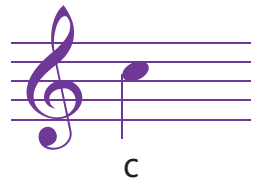
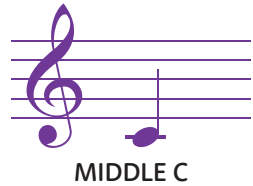
Even if you don't read music, listen again and follow the music below.  
Each note head (the round part of the note) represents a sound from the bugle.

The musical score is written in 2/4 time and consists of eight staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 2/4 time signature, and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. It features a melody with several notes marked with '<>' symbols, indicating accents. The second staff continues the melody. The third staff shows a more rhythmic section with eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff continues this rhythmic pattern. The fifth staff shows a change in rhythm with dotted notes. The sixth staff continues with eighth and sixteenth notes. The seventh staff features a melodic line with a tenuto mark and a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The eighth staff concludes the piece with a final melodic phrase and a 'rit.' marking. The score uses various note values, rests, and articulation marks to represent the sound of a bugle.

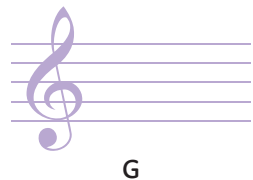
## Step 3: Analysis

Let's analyse the music so that you can understand it better, before composing your own bugle/trumpet call.

There are only five different pitches in The Last Post. Pitch means how high or low a note is.



Can you draw in the missing highest pitched note below?



The pitches are limited to the five notes as they don't require any valves. This is important as bugles don't have valves.

BUGLE (no valves)



TRUMPET (3 valves)



PAUSE



The Last Post uses pauses over certain notes. This means that the player can hold on to the note for as long as they want (or is musically appropriate).

Although the music is in the key of C major and uses the C major triad (CEG), it ends on an E. This means it sounds unfinished and wistful at the end. There is also a rit. (short for *ritardando* or *ritenuto*) meaning to slow down.

## Step 4: Composing

Using the same pitches as in The Last Post, compose your own bugle/trumpet call that passes on a message. The message or meaning can be anything you like.

*You can use standard music notation if you feel happy using that or you can use the following symbols and create a graphic score:*

**Middle C = C**      **4 beat note = \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Lower G = G**      **2 beat note = \_\_**  
**Higher C = C**      **1 beat note = \_**  
**E = E**              **1 beat rest (silence) = X**  
**Higher G = G**

*The start of the Last Post might look like this:*

**c \_ g \_\_ X c \_ g \_\_**

*You could, of course, create your own graphic score symbols with a key, even using colours and shapes!*



## Step 5: Share

Share a picture of your composition with us and some of them may actually get performed by one of our Learning Officers! Or, even better, send us a video of you playing your own composition, even if it's not on the bugle or trumpet!



@NationalMemorialArboretum



@nat\_mem\_arb



@Nat\_Mem\_Arb

### FURTHER THINGS TO DO:

Take a look at the following link and find out more about why we remember:  
[www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/teaching-remembrance](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/teaching-remembrance)