Lesson 2

You are going to find out about Beethoven's life.

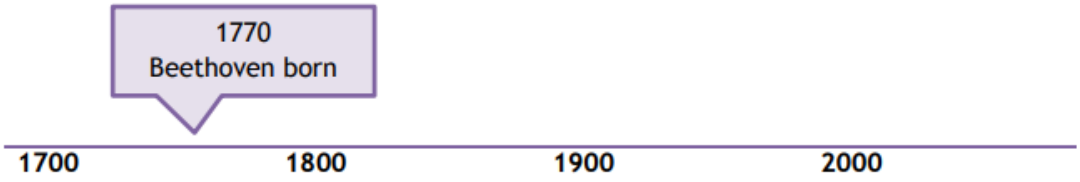
First, read the text and answer the questions.

Lesson 2
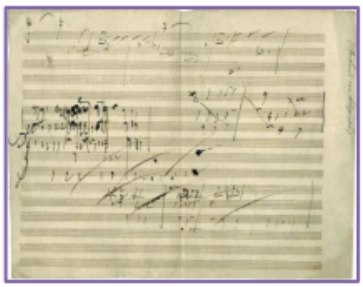
The Unlucky Genius - a biography of Ludwig van Beethoven

Born in 1770 in Bonn, Germany, Ludwig Van Beethoven is known throughout the world as one of the greatest ever composers of classical music.
His compositions still live on in small works for solo piano and string quartets, but he is also renowned for his expansive symphonies involving hundreds of instruments and the memorable tunes that he created. His music is still used in advertisements, played at live concerts and learned by millions of students across the globe.





In this period of history (known as the 18th century), the technology did not exist to record music. To be remembered and played accurately, music had to be written down. It was performed live—either in the home on a piano or in concert halls, large and small.
Beethoven made his living from selling and performing his music, and as a music teacher. The music of this time is now called **classical**, but in Beethoven's time it was the pop music of the day and he was as famous as any pop star is today.



Lesson 2
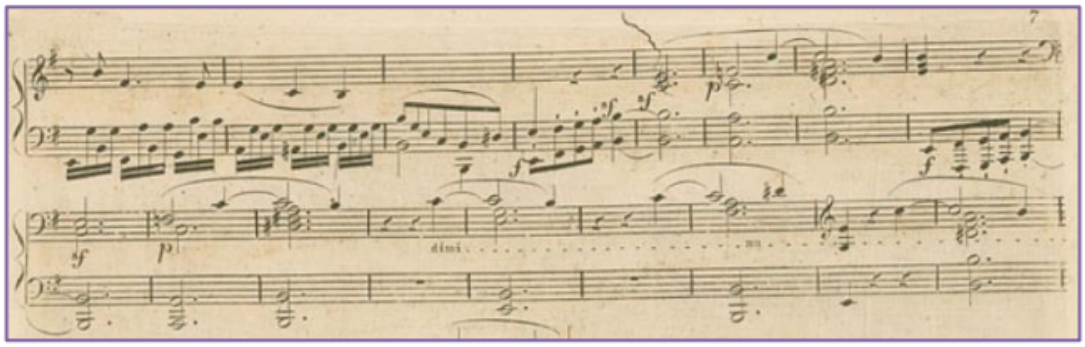


Beethoven is celebrated for being inventive with his music, and for surprising people with his ideas and originality. He changed the way the orchestra was organised, and he challenged the talented musicians of the day with his complex musical ideas. Members of the orchestra had to rehearse for days on end to cope with Beethoven's complex and exciting new music. No-one had ever heard music like it! His Symphony No.3, for example, was responsible for bringing him fame across the whole of Europe. He wrote it to celebrate the new Emperor of France - Napoleon Bonaparte, who came to power in 1804.

Lesson 2

This symphony was only a tiny part of the huge collection of masterpieces that Beethoven created over his relatively short life. His Symphony No.5 starts with four simple, ominous notes which is still known and played across the world.

This whole piece of music (divided into four parts, called **movements**) is based on these four notes - transforming each time into a new character in the music. Beethoven was one of the first composers to introduce the idea that music could have an emotional effect on an audience. He experimented with sound, adding voices to orchestras and creating new sensations in his audiences.

Beethoven is credited for starting the trend towards **romantic classical music** - a sound world concerned with feelings, impressions, and all of the senses.



Right up to his death in 1827, Beethoven continued his musical journey, even though he was plagued by hearing loss. In the last ten years of his life, he was almost completely deaf. Yet some of his finest works were produced at this time, such was his musical genius.


N Germany
North Sea
Amsterdam
NETHER.
BELGIUM
Cologne (Köln)
Bonn
GERMANY
Frankfurt
Mainz
LUX.
Paris
FRANCE
Nürnberg
Mannheim
Regensburg
Stuttgart
Ulm
Munich
LIECH.
Kiel
Lübeck
Hamburg
Bremen
Berlin
Hannover
Potsdam
Magdeburg
Brunswick
(Braunschweig)
Leipzig
Dresden
Essen
Düsseldorf
0 50 100 mi

Lesson 2

1. Here are some of the trickier words from the text. Read around the words to work out their meanings. Draw a line to the best match.

Word	Meaning
composition	a section of music
expansive	suffered from
masterpiece	created using artistic skills
movement	a great piece of work
plagued	large in scale

2. Use the information in the text to work out what age Beethoven lived to.

.....

3. Which piece of music brought fame across Europe to Beethoven?

.....

Lesson 2

4. What is meant by 'romantic' classical music?

   .....

5. What is your impression of Beethoven as a person? Complete the sentences:

   Beethoven was clever and creative because... .....

   .....

   He was resilient because ... .

   .....

6. Why do you think people still appreciate Beethoven's music today? Give two reasons.

Lesson 2

You are going to find out about Beethoven's life.

Skim through the text and highlight the key information such as:

Date of birth
Where he was born
What his life was like
How he lived
When he died

Lesson 2

On A3 paper, create a mind map for Beethoven.

Choose one colour (felt-tip) to record what you have found out about his life.