Music Writing

Common points to write about in a music paper:

• Relationships or patterns in music.
• Changing in keys or tempo and the effect of that.
• Theoretical principles and their use.
• Performance standards and expectations.

Three types of writing

• Summary
• Critical Response or Reaction Paper
• Research Paper

Summary

Many times while writing within the music discipline you may be asked to write a summary of a performance that briefly outlines and describes the major events of the assignment. Many times the summary will be of either a concert or a specific era in musical history. Summaries can be done even without a musical background and can be composed with traditional sentence structures and essay guidelines.

Critical Response or Reaction Paper

The critical response paper should start with a brief summary about the performance or piece. Be sure to include what you felt during the performance and what you thought during. It is important to discuss what aspects you thought worked out well and which you did not enjoy as much. During the critical response of a reaction paper there should be lengthy analysis. This is the main point and part of your paper. To solidify your critic and analysis, make sure to use the concepts and vocabulary learned in class.
Research Paper

The same general rules for research assignments in other disciplines apply to music also. A research suggestion is that you use documented essays as some of your evidence. Other critiques and reviews are good ways to support your claims and arguments within your paper. Also many people within the music discipline review and write essays and so there should be many available to you. Musical terminology is expected in a research paper. Also, make sure you check the mode of researching, format and documentation style with your instructor since they do not all use the same ones.

How to give examples from musical scores:

- Scores must be numbered
- Examples must have captions above or below them that include the example number, composer, title of piece, and measure which you are using.
- All examples should include: clef, key signatures, times signatures, and any voicing or instrument indication.

Source: