

Sonata form

The first movement of a sonata is typically in sonata form – a type of ternary form (A B A) with additional prescription in terms of keys and melodies used (although there are no hard or fast rules):

- **Exposition:** made up of a first subject (or theme) in the tonic key and a contrasting second subject in a related key. The first and second subjects are often linked by a **bridge** section.
- **Development:** the material of the first or second subject is developed through a variety of related keys.
- **Recapitulation:** repeats the exposition (but may be varied in some way). Both subjects appear in the tonic this time, and it often finishes with a **coda**.

Structure	Key	Description
Exposition		
First subject	Tonic	Introduces the main melody
Bridge/transition	Moves from the tonic to dominant or relative major/minor	A passage to modulate (change key)
Second subject	Dominant or relative major/minor	A second recognisable melody
Codetta	Dominant, sub-dominant, relative major or minor	A short passage to end the exposition with a perfect cadence in the new key
Development	Usually starts in the same key but then moves through many different keys	Melodies from the exposition are changed and developed
Recapitulation		
First subject	Tonic	The original melody that may or may not have been embellished.
Bridge/Transition	Tonic	
Second subject	Tonic	The original melody that may or may not have been embellished.
Coda	Tonic	A short passage to end the piece that may include the first or second subject.

This is an example structure of sonata form, however keys and form may vary. There is no definitive model.



Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Robert Schumann wrote only three advanced piano sonatas (Op. 11, 14 and 22) and three for children, his Kindersonaten Op. 118, the first of which is included here. This set was believed to have been written for his three daughters, to help develop their musical abilities (he was very committed to pedagogical music). Each is said to reflect a different girl's character. Schumann was a composer of the Romantic period so this work is quite different to the other sonatas in this book. It is a characterful piece with a lullaby for a toy as the third movement!



Activity

Questions for Sonata in G major Op. 118 No. 1

What do the following musical terms mean:

Lebhaft _____

fp _____

Ziemlich langsam _____

Zurückhaltend _____

Etwas langsamer _____

Im Takt _____

Nicht schnell _____

Puppenwiegenlied _____

Rondoletto _____

Identify where these terms are in the sonata.



Composer quote

"The young must also become accustomed to performing longer movements." Robert Schumann

Sonata facile in G minor Op. 49 No. 1

Beethoven's two easy Op. 49 sonatas are really sonatinas, with just two movements. The dynamics are editorial, added either by Hummel or Czerny (one of Beethoven's students).

Playing tips: Care should be taken with the articulation in both movements. Unusually, the first movement is *Andante*, so should not be rushed. In contrast, the second movement is a Rondo that can be played at speed: enjoy the rapid finger staccato and couplet slurs in this exciting finale.

Ludwig van Beethoven

Andante

8

14

19

24