

No, not in the sense of instruments or physical equipment!

This mini-masterclass is about the facets of music we can use to turn a score from “a pile of notes” into “a piece of music”.

Every single note and every phrase made up of a sequence of notes has features that we as musicians, and that we as guitarists, can alter to improve the musicality...

Each note has pitch, length, volume and tone

These four characteristics place the note uniquely in the sound-canvas you are creating...

- The pitch - how high you place the note on the canvas - the height
- The length - how long the note resides in the piece - the breadth
- The volume - how "in your face" the note is - the distance or depth
- The tone - how the note is wrapped up - its appearance

And we, as players, can tailor these a little...

For individual notes...

Pitch - we can add vibrato to long notes to make them sound more compelling - *see my Vibrato teach-in*

Length - we can shorten notes or make them smoother via snaps & hammers - *see my Articulation teach-in*

Volume - we can accent individual notes

Tone - unlike most other instruments we can

Vary our tone (pianos can't for example)

Vary it independently of volume (most wind instruments can't) by moving the right hand to the bridge or fingerboard

For phrases...

Pitch - not much we can change here - pitch defines the melody - but we can *gliss* between notes

Length - we can change the speed of a phrase - stepwise or gradually faster or slower - *see my Italian Terms teach-in*

Volume - we can change the volume of a piece stepwise or gradually louder or quieter

Tone - we can alter the tone - especially effective to delineate a repeat

As musicians, rather than technicians, we try to add these devices to every piece we play...

Here's our toolkit

Per note...	Sudden changes...	Gradual changes...
Pitch <i>vib</i> - vibrato	Step changes in pitch We can connect 2 notes with a glissando or slide. Not really a step change, but it's used suddenly for effect, not all the time	
Length <i>staccato</i> or a . - shorter <i>legato</i> or a slur - longer	Step changes in speed MM (Metronome Mark) or an Italian word such as <i>Largo</i> , <i>Presto</i>	Gradual changes in speed <i>accel</i> (accelerando) - getting faster <i>rall</i> (rallentando) - getting slower
Volume > - accent	Step changes in volume <i>pp</i> - pianissimo <i>p</i> - piano <i>mp</i> - mezzo piano <i>mf</i> - mezzo forte <i>f</i> - forte <i>ff</i> - fortissimo	Gradual changes in volume <i>cresc</i> (crescendo) or opening hairpin - getting louder <i>dim</i> (diminuendo) or closing hairpin - getting quieter
Tone <i>Apoyando</i> - for strong notes <i>Tirando</i> - for arpeggios	Step changes in tone Sul ponti - near the bridge Sul tasto - over the fingerboard	

There are other devices too (like pizzicato for length) that are more rarely used.