

HOUSE OF MODIR / YOUR FREE INTRODUCTION

KICKSTARTER

DJ 101

Understand what's happening behind the decks.

Follow the music. Recognise the connections.
Get to know the controls.

No equipment needed.
No previous knowledge assumed.

A standalone introduction to DJ technology and terminology.



PLAYERS · MIXER · CABLES · CONNECTORS · 41 LABELS

A setup that makes sense.

You don't have to own decks to understand them. Start by giving each piece of equipment a job. The controls become easier to recognise once you know which part of the journey they belong to.

The music: a file waiting to be played

A track is a piece of recorded music. A USB stick can hold many track files. Software such as rekordbox helps organise and analyse those files before a compatible library is exported for the players.

The player: where the track becomes audio

A media player reads the chosen file and plays it. Our example uses two XDJ-1000MK2 players: one for each available track. They work from compatible USB music without needing a laptop for this playback route.

The mixer: where the sources meet

Each player feeds a separate mixer channel. The DJM-750MK2 has four channels. A mixer controls the signal level, tone and routing, and combines selected sources into the main mix.

The outputs: where the sound goes

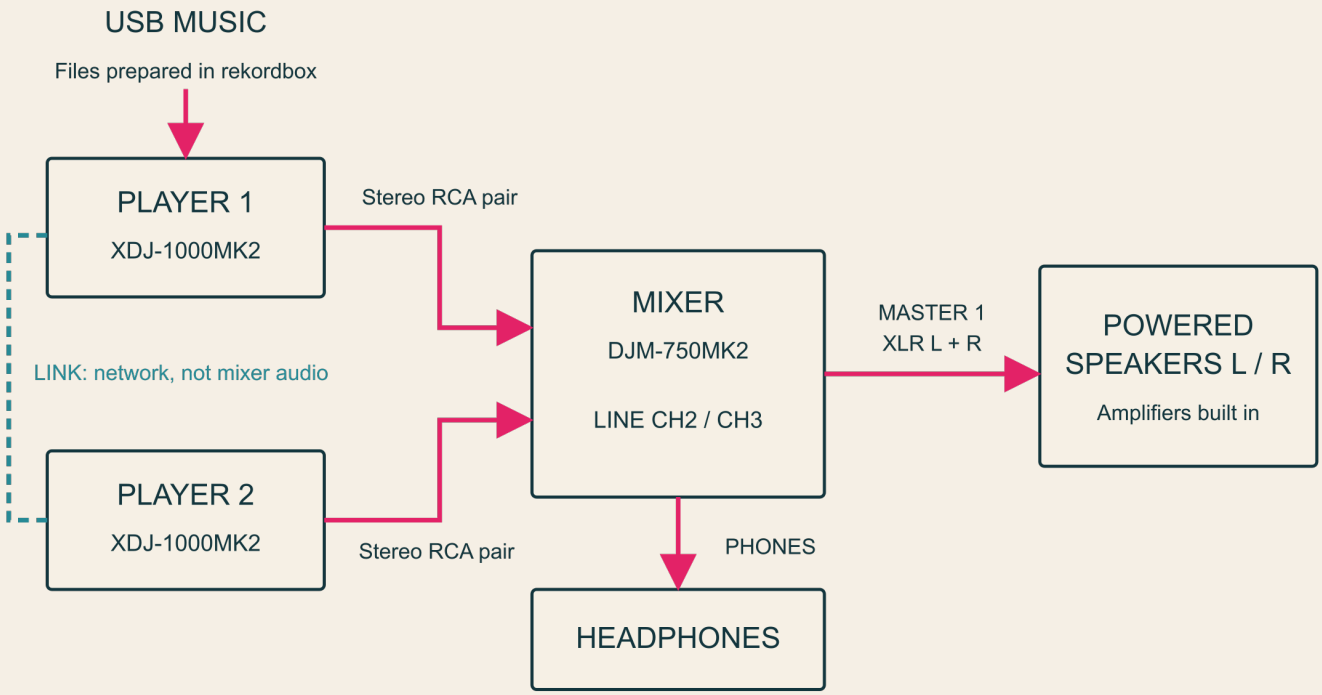
Powered speakers reproduce the main mix for the room. Headphones let the DJ monitor selected sound separately. A booth monitor is an optional speaker facing the DJ.

Different equipment. Familiar jobs.

A controller commonly works with DJ software on a computer. An all-in-one system combines player and mixer functions. The boxes may change; the source, mixing and output jobs remain.

From music to speakers.

Read the audio route from left to right. Each player sends its own stereo audio pair into the mixer. The players' LINK connection is a separate network route.



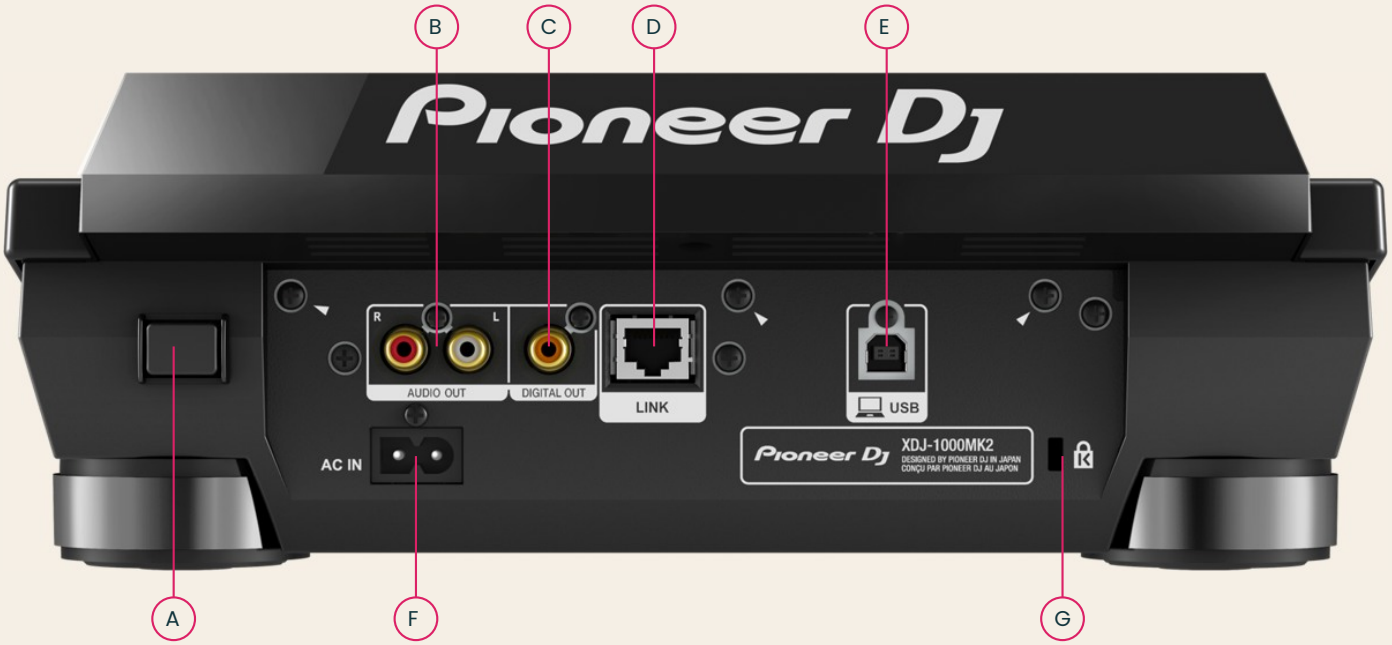
Pink arrows show the sound route after playback. The dashed teal line carries network data between the players; it does not replace their audio connections to the mixer.

Three things travel through a setup

Music files are data. After the player reads them, audio cables carry the sound signal. Power leads supply electricity. Each powered device needs power; power leads are omitted here for clarity.

XDJ-1000MK2 / player rear.

Match each letter to its socket name. These rear-view letters are separate from the 41 numbered top-view controls.



A / Power switch
On / off

B / AUDIO OUT — R / L
Two RCA / phono sockets

C / DIGITAL OUT
One RCA socket; digital audio

D / LINK
Ethernet network socket

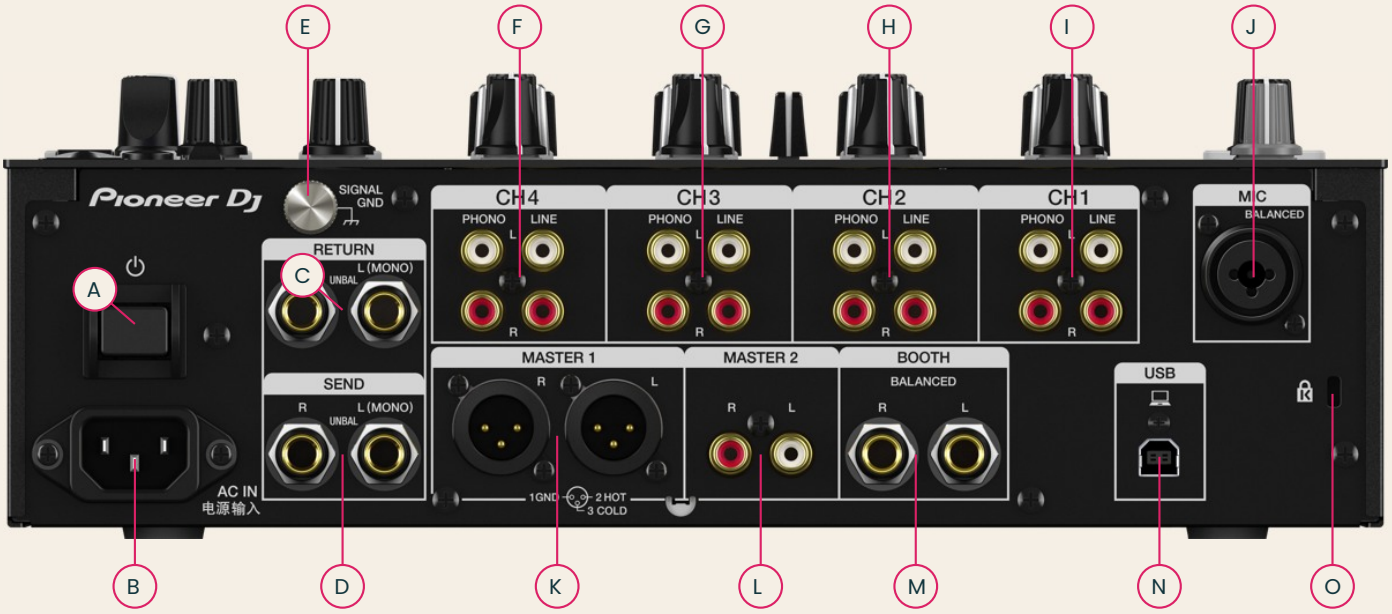
E / USB
USB-B computer socket

F / AC IN
Two-pin power inlet

G / Security slot
Kensington-style cable lock

DJM-750MK2 / mixer rear.

Match each letter to its socket name. These rear-view letters are separate from the 41 numbered top-view controls.



A / Power switch
On / off

B / AC IN
Three-pin power inlet

C / RETURN — R / L (MONO)
6.35 mm jack sockets

D / SEND — R / L (MONO)
6.35 mm jack sockets

E / SIGNAL GND
Ground terminal

F / CH4 — PHONO / LINE
Separate RCA input pairs

G / CH3 — PHONO / LINE
Separate RCA input pairs

H / CH2 — PHONO / LINE
Separate RCA input pairs

I / CH1 — PHONO / LINE
Separate RCA input pairs

J / MIC — BALANCED
XLR / 6.35 mm combo socket

K / MASTER 1 — R / L
XLR output sockets

L / MASTER 2 — R / L
RCA output sockets

M / BOOTH — R / L
6.35 mm jack output sockets

N / USB
USB-B computer socket — rear

O / Security slot
Kensington-style cable lock

Read the socket, too.

The right shape is only the first clue. Always match the labelled output to the right input. Two sockets can look alike and still expect very different signals.



XDJ-1000MK2 rear panel / official manufacturer image

RCA / phono: player AUDIO OUT → mixer LINE

Each player sends stereo audio through a pair of RCA leads: white for left and red for right. In this example, the pairs feed LINE inputs on mixer channels 2 and 3. Other channel choices are possible; the source selection must match the connection.

XLR: MASTER 1 → powered speakers

A balanced XLR cable can run from each MASTER 1 output to a compatible powered-speaker input. Left and right use separate cables. The mixer also has MASTER 2 RCA outputs, controlled by the same master level.

RCA / phono: follow the socket labels.

RCA plugs are also commonly called phono plugs. Connect each player's AUDIO OUT L/R to the mixer's LINE L/R inputs using a stereo RCA/phono lead. PHONO inputs accept the same plugs but are intended for phono-level turntable signals.

Audio, data or network?

Use the visual reference to inspect each shape. These are the connections you'll recognise around this example setup.

TRS and TS jacks

The 6.35 mm size is also called a quarter-inch jack. A TRS plug has two insulating bands; a TS plug has one. The mixer's balanced BOOTH output uses 6.35 mm TRS per side. Headphones use stereo TRS: the same contact pattern serves a different job. Read the connection label.

See the illustrated TRS and TS jacks reference

USB-A: the music stick

The broad rectangular socket on top of the player accepts the music USB stick. It holds files prepared for the player. It is not an analogue audio connection.

See the illustrated USB-A reference

USB-B: the computer connection

Both units have a rear USB-B computer socket. For supported software audio or data, use a USB cable that supports data transfer. A charging-only lead cannot carry this data.

See the illustrated USB-B reference

Ethernet / LINK: the players' network

The latched network cable joins the two players' LINK ports. They can share access to USB music and track information. Each player still needs its own audio pair to the mixer. The mixer has no LINK port.

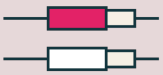
See the illustrated Ethernet / LINK reference

Powered or passive?

Powered speakers have amplifiers built in. Passive speakers need a separate amplifier between mixer and speakers. In a venue, a sound technician will often handle the larger sound system.

Know it when you see it.

Compare shapes, then read the socket label. These simplified illustrations are not to scale.



RCA / phono

Two plugs for stereo audio

AUDIO OUT to LINE



TRS

Quarter-inch / 6.35 mm; two bands

PHONES stereo / BOOTH balanced mono



TS

Quarter-inch / 6.35 mm; one band

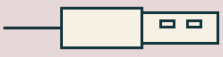
Unbalanced mono applications



Ethernet

Latched network connector

Player LINK to player LINK



USB-A

Broad rectangular connector

Music stick to player top socket



USB-B

Roughly square device connector

Equipment to computer

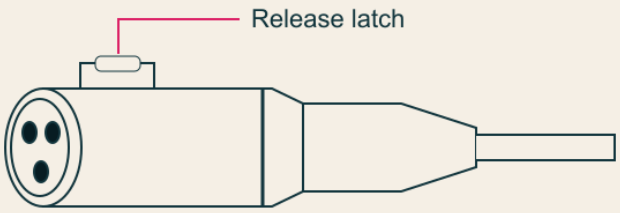
XLR: recognise both ends.

The male end has three pins. The female end has three contact holes and commonly a release latch. These are two ends of the same kind of audio connection.

Female

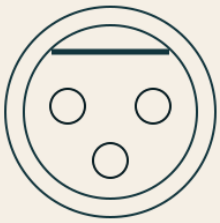


Face-on · Three sockets / holes

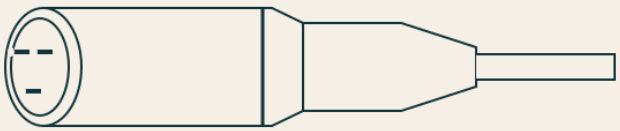


Side view · cable connector

Male



Face-on · Three protruding pins



Side view · cable connector

In this setup

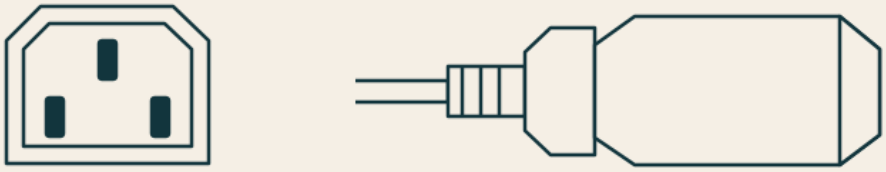
The mixer's MASTER 1 outputs have male XLR contacts. Connect a cable's female end there, then its male end to a compatible powered-speaker input. Left and right use separate balanced cables.

Power has its own leads.

Audio carries sound. Power leads supply electricity. Each player, the mixer and each powered speaker needs its own suitable power connection.

Your mixer: IEC C13

Often called a “kettle lead”. Its three contact openings fit the power inlet on the back of the DJM-750MK2 mixer. It supplies electricity, not audio. The player uses the different two-contact connector shown below.



Face-on Side view

Figure-of-eight: IEC C7

The XDJ-1000MK2 player uses this IEC C7 figure-of-eight mains lead: two rounded lobes with one contact hole in each. It supplies electricity, not audio. The mixer uses the three-contact IEC C13 connector shown above.



Face-on Side view

Match the lead to the power inlet. Some equipment uses an external power adaptor instead. Powered-speaker connections can vary too. Check the connector, supply voltage and lead rating on the equipment or in its manual.

Equipment ends shown face-on and from the side. Illustrations are not to scale.

Meet the player.

XDJ-1000MK2 / media player



Its job

Reads and plays one selected track.

Find music

USB, display and browsing controls.

Control playback

CUE, PLAY/PAUSE, jog wheel and tempo.

Recognise later

Loops, hot cues and sync are named here. Practical use comes later.

P01 refers to the rear panel. P03, P06 and P08 identify touchscreen functions shown in different views. The second player uses the same labels.

Meet the mixer.

DJM-750MK2 / four-channel mixer



Its job

Receives sources, shapes their sound and routes the mix.

Input

A source selector and TRIM on each channel.

Tone and level

EQ, channel faders, crossfader and master.

Separate listening

CUE and headphone controls let the DJ monitor a source.

M01 covers the rear connections, including the computer USB-B socket. Labels describe control groups. A full definition for every number follows.

Three stages. Three jobs.

These controls all affect level, but they work at different stages. Understanding their jobs helps you read a mixer without needing to operate one.

1. TRIM: the incoming signal

Sets a useful level as the sound enters the channel. If this stage is overloaded, a quieter output later in the chain will still contain that distortion.

Find this control in the glossary

2. Channel fader: this source in the mix

Controls the channel's contribution towards the main mix. A channel meter can show signal before the fader, even while that fader is down.

Find this control in the glossary

3. MASTER LEVEL: the main output

Controls the level sent to the main outputs. Speaker input controls and the sound system also affect the sound level in the room.

Find this control in the glossary

EQ changes tone. Meters show level.

HI, MID and LOW change broad frequency ranges. The meters show signal level, not safe listening volume at your ears. Red is not a target. Headphone and speaker volumes both need care.

Two CUEs. Different jobs.

The player and mixer both say CUE. The word is the same; the purpose is different.

PLAYER CUE / where in the track?

A remembered playback position. The player's CUE button relates to a place in the music. Think "where does playback return to?"

MIXER CUE / what do I hear?

Selects a channel for headphone monitoring before its fader. Think "which source can I listen to separately from the room?"

Headphones MIXING

Blends selected CUE sources with the MASTER feed in your headphones. It does not crossfade the sound for the audience.

Headphones LEVEL

Sets headphone volume independently of the speakers. Begin low when you later use equipment; loud headphones can damage hearing even when the room sounds quiet.

A silent room can still have a playing track

The player may be running while a channel fader is down, the wrong input is selected or another output stage is closed. Read the whole route rather than treating every silence as a player problem.

Explore both meanings of CUE

Player labels 01–10.

Match these labels to the equipment map. Select a heading to open its website definition in the live knowledge base.

P01 / Player connections

Analogue AUDIO OUT sends left and right sound to the mixer. LINK is the network connection between players. DIGITAL OUT is a separate optional audio output; rear USB connects a computer. AC IN supplies power. The digital output cannot connect directly to this mixer.

P02 / USB port

The top USB-A socket accepts a compatible USB storage device containing your music. A USB stick stores files; the player reads them and turns them into sound. USB STOP prepares it for safe removal.

P03 / Browse controls

The touchscreen browse tabs and source choices organise what you see: music sources, track lists and information. They help you find music; they do not change its sound. Some options appear only in the relevant screen.

P04 / Touch display

The screen shows track information, the waveform and touch controls. A waveform is a picture of the audio over time. Its display helps you recognise structure, but listening remains essential.

P05 / Rotary selector and BACK

The rotary selector scrolls through lists and confirms a selection when pressed. BACK returns to the previous view. Track loading is a selection action, separate from starting playback.

P06 / Needle search

An on-screen position strip gives access to a different part of a track. It is a touchscreen feature, not a physical strip below the screen. Availability depends on playback and jog-mode conditions.

P07 / Loop controls

IN/4BEAT, OUT and RELOOP/EXIT define or recall a repeating section of music. A loop repeats between a start and an end point. Creating and using loops is part of later practical learning.

P08 / Hot cues

Saved points that can recall a position in a track instantly. On this player they are accessed through the touchscreen performance view; there is no built-in row of eight physical pads.

P09 / JOG MODE

The VINYL button changes how the jog wheel responds. In Vinyl mode, touching the top can stop or manipulate playback; CDJ mode responds differently. The wheel is a control, not a spinning record.

P10 / Jog wheel

The large wheel provides hands-on track movement and temporary speed adjustment. Its edge and top have different roles depending on the mode. Detailed beat alignment comes in the mixing stage.

Player labels 11–19.

Match these labels to the equipment map. Select a heading to open its website definition in the live knowledge base.

P11 / Jog display

The centre display provides playback-position and cue-related information. It belongs to the player and should not be confused with the mixer level meters, which show signal level.

P12 / TRACK SEARCH

Moves between tracks. This is different from searching within one track. The paired previous/next buttons sit above the SEARCH buttons.

P13 / SEARCH

Scans backwards or forwards within the loaded track. It changes position within that track rather than choosing the previous or next one.

P14 / Player CUE

A cue is a remembered playback position. This button returns to the cue point and can preview from it while held. It is not the mixer CUE button that selects headphone listening.

P15 / PLAY / PAUSE

Starts or pauses the loaded track. A playing track will only reach the room if the mixer routes that channel to its output. A moving waveform alone does not guarantee sound at the speakers.

P16 / BEAT SYNC and MASTER

Beat Sync relates a player to the tempo and beat position of the designated master using analysed beat information. MASTER identifies the leading player; it is unrelated to mixer master volume.

P17 / TEMPO range and MASTER TEMPO

TEMPO selects the speed-adjustment range. MASTER TEMPO aims to retain the musical pitch when playback speed changes. These are different functions despite both mentioning tempo.

P18 / TEMPO slider

Changes playback speed. BPM means beats per minute: a tempo measure. Changing speed also changes musical pitch unless pitch-preserving processing is active. The slider does not set the loudness.

P19 / VINYL SPEED ADJUST

TOUCH/RELEASE adjusts the stopping and starting response associated with Vinyl-mode touch operation and playback. It changes the feel of the response, not the track's normal running tempo.

Mixer labels 01–11.

Match these labels to the equipment map. Select a heading to open its website definition in the live knowledge base.

M01 / Mixer connections

The rear panel has separate LINE and PHONO inputs, MASTER 1 (XLR), MASTER 2 (RCA), BOOTH (6.35 mm TRS), SEND/RETURN, MIC, SIGNAL GND, USB-B and AC IN. Its computer USB-B socket is on the back. This model has no DIGITAL IN or LINK port.

M02 / Input selector

Chooses the source heard by a channel: LINE, PHONO, computer USB audio or RETURN AUX. The selection must match the intended source. It does not select a track on the player.

M03 / TRIM / gain

Sets the level entering the channel before its tone controls and channel fader. It helps give different sources a workable signal level. Turning up the master cannot repair a distorted input.

M04 / HI / MID / LOW EQ

Equalisation changes frequency ranges: high, middle and low. Bass lives mainly in the lows; voices and instruments span more than one range. EQ does not cleanly separate vocals from instruments.

M05 / COLOR knob

Controls the selected Sound Color effect for that channel. Its centre position is the neutral point. The knob does not select which effect is active; the Sound Color FX buttons do that.

M06 / Channel CUE

Selects a channel for headphone monitoring before its channel fader. This lets a DJ hear a source that is not yet in the room. It does not set a track cue point.

M07 / Channel fader and meter

The fader controls how much channel sound moves towards the master mix. The adjacent meter shows the channel signal level before the fader, so it can move even with the fader down.

M08 / Crossfader assignment

A and B assign a channel to a side of the crossfader. THRU bypasses crossfader control for that channel. A channel can therefore remain audible when the crossfader is moved.

M09 / Crossfader

Controls the contribution of channels assigned to A and B. Its response depends on the assignment and curve settings. It does not automatically blend every connected source.

M10 / MIC level and EQ

The microphone section controls microphone loudness and its high/low tone. A microphone signal is different from a player's line-level signal. This section is separate from the four music channels.

M11 / MASTER LEVEL

Controls the main output level. MASTER 1 and MASTER 2 are alternative main-output connector types, not two independently controlled mixes. Speaker controls and the sound system also affect room loudness.

Mixer labels 12–22.

Match these labels to the equipment map. Select a heading to open its website definition in the live knowledge base.

M12 / Master level meter

Shows left and right signal levels for the main mix. It is a signal-level display, not a measurement of safe listening volume in the room. Avoid overload; red is not a target.

M13 / BOOTH MONITOR

Controls the separate booth output, usually feeding speakers facing the DJ. Booth level can change independently of the main speakers. A booth speaker is optional in the introductory setup.

M14 / SOUND COLOR FX selection

Chooses one of four effects on this model: DUB ECHO, SWEEP, NOISE or FILTER. Each channel's COLOR knob then controls that effect. FX is simply short for effects.

M15 / Sound Color FX PARAMETER

Adjusts a characteristic of the chosen Sound Color effect. Its result depends on the effect selected. The same knob does not mean the same change for every effect.

M16 / BEAT FX selector

Selects the type of Beat FX processing. Effects alter sound, for example by creating repeats or a sense of space. Knowing the section's purpose comes before learning creative effect settings.

M17 / BEAT buttons

Change the Beat FX timing division in relation to the detected or entered BPM. This is effect timing, not a control that changes the track's playback speed.

M18 / FX channel selector

Chooses the destination processed by Beat FX, such as a channel or the master. It routes an effect; it does not choose the source connected to a normal mixer channel.

M19 / LEVEL / DEPTH

Adjusts the amount or intensity of the selected Beat FX. Its behaviour varies with the effect. It is separate from TRIM, the channel fader and MASTER LEVEL.

M20 / Beat FX ON / OFF

Turns the Beat FX processing on or off for its selected destination. A lit effect button does not mean that every channel is being processed.

M21 / Headphones MIXING

Blends the headphone feed between selected CUE sources and MASTER. This changes what the DJ hears in the headphones; it does not perform a crossfade for the room.

M22 / Headphones LEVEL and PHONES

LEVEL controls headphone volume. PHONES accepts 6.35 mm or 3.5 mm stereo headphones. The headphone level is independent of the speaker level; begin low and protect your hearing.

You know more than you did.

No decks needed. Use the diagram and reference to answer these questions, then check below.

1. Which box turns a music file into an audio signal?

2. Why does each player use two RCA leads?

3. Does LINK replace the players' audio cables to this mixer?

4. Which CUE means a track position: player or mixer?

5. Can the channel meter move with its fader down?

6. What extra box do passive speakers need?

Check your understanding

1. The player. 2. Left and right stereo audio. 3. No: it is a network route. 4. Player CUE. 5. Yes: the meter reads before the channel fader. 6. A separate power amplifier.

Now you know how it all works. Step up and play!

DJ Progression 102 / Your next step into mixing.

A reference to return to.

You don’t need to memorise every number. Return to the maps, look up a word and follow the sound path again. Familiarity grows one connection at a time.

What does that mean?

The searchable A–Z explains the terms. Each numbered player and mixer label has a stable link, so the same term can be opened from this PDF or an email.

houseofmodir.com/dj-knowledge/

The visual reference

Separate equipment and cable references show what things look like, where they connect and what they carry. Definitions answer “what does this word mean?” The reference answers “what am I looking at?”

Review edition / November 2026

The glossary, visual equipment reference and next-step enquiry page are live on houseofmodir.com. Select a numbered label or reference link to open the matching explanation. You can return to these resources whenever you need them.

Equipment checked against official Pioneer DJ product imagery and product information for XDJ-1000MK2 and DJM-750MK2. The earlier supplied 41-label sheet provided the numbering. This edition corrects its mixer port list, Sound Color FX count and touchscreen/physical-control distinctions. Final manual-level review remains a release check.

Pioneer DJ and rekordbox product names belong to their respective owners. Equipment images: official Pioneer DJ product pages. Brand photography and HOUSE M logos: houseofmodir.com.