

Let's Create A Rhythm!

[For ages 11+]

Goals

1. To convert what you hear into musical notation
2. To experience the joy and complexity of creating music as a group/orchestra
3. To be patient and listen to each other
4. To create rhythm

Materials

Paper, pencil/pen, black or white board, chalk or marker

Musical instrument (optional)

Recyclable materials/found objects such as plastic bottles, rubber bands, wooden pieces, metal pieces, beans, sand, rocks of different sizes

Preparation

Find out if there are instruments available in the school or your homes that you can use. You will also need to collect objects that could make a variety of interesting sounds so that everyone in the class has something to play!

Activity

Part 1: Find Your Instrument

- Collect musical instruments
- AND/OR create your own!
- Organize groups according to the sounds your instrument makes

Part 2 Compose a Rhythm

- Write this on the black or white board: “| _ _ _ _ | _ _ _ _”
- Copy this down on a piece of paper for yourself
- Each dash is a beat
- Practice clapping on each beat
- You can now choose to create a sound or leave the beat silent
- For every sound, you write “1”
- Create a rhythmic composition with your instrument
- You can do this individually or in a group
- Choose a sign to represent your instrument [e.g. star, sun, moon, circle, triangle, flower]
- Write the notation for your rhythm so that instead of the 1, you draw your sign [e.g. | ☺ _ ☺ ☺ | ☺ _ ☺ ☺ | ☺ _ ☺ ☺ | ☺ _ ☺ ☺]
- Perform!
- Challenge: Write everyone's rhythmic patterns on the board. Start with one rhythmic pattern, then have separate groups add their rhythms to it and see how it sounds. Make any changes necessary to make the sound more clear.

Part 3: Double Challenge—Play the Rhythm to A Song

- Choose a song familiar with most people in the classroom and sing it together
- Either write your own lyrics [See Video on “Let’s Write Poetry”] or make sure everyone is familiar with the words
- Add the rhythmic pattern you have created to the song and make any adjustments necessary
- Perform!

Reflect

What was it like to play in a large group? How did it feel to create your own rhythm? Which instrument would you like to try next?

What kind of instruments are you familiar with? Are there instruments that your ancestors played that are no longer being played? Who makes these instruments? What do they sound like? How do people learn to play these instruments?

