

LEARNING THE BASICS OF RHYTHM
EDUCATIONAL UNIT PLAN

July 2021

Morgan Kuepfer, Jenna Baumgartner, & Will Clements

About the Authors



Jenna Baumgartner has received a considerable amount of praise for her impressive work as a young educator within the lower mainland. As a co-director of the Vancouver Youth Choir's VYC Kids ensemble, an instructor at Lights Up Musical Theatre Schools, and assistant conductor to the Crescent Women's Choir in White Rock, Baumgartner is incredibly passionate about music education. She is very excited to be continuing her B.Ed. at UBC in the fall of 2021.



As an emerging educator, writer, and performer, **Morgan Kuepfer** holds an impressive range of experiences teaching in various contexts. Kuepfer has volunteered her teachings in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. She is a graduate of Western University, having completed a concurrent Bachelor of Music Honours Music Education and Bachelor of Arts Specialization French Studies as a Western Scholar. She is very passionate about choral music and is excited to begin her career as a choral director in Ontario, Canada following the completion of her B.Ed. in the summer of 2021 at UBC.



Will Clements is a Vancouver-based jazz performer, educator, recording artist, and published arranger. Described by CBC Music as a "*fantastic and easy voice...*", Clements is an enthusiastic and energetic performer when on stage. Some of his musical highlights include a full scholarship towards the Drayton Harbour Festival Camp in Washington in 2016, an Outstanding Ensemble Award for leading and arranging at the 2020 Vocal Impact Festival, and participating at the 2021 Vancouver International Children's Festival as a featured artist with the FM Music residency program. He has recently completed his B.Ed. at UBC in the Summer of 2021.

LEARNING THE BASICS OF RHYTHM

UNIT PLAN

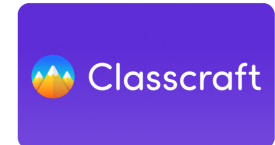
Subject	Unit Overview
General Music 8 or Beginner Band/Choir	The following lesson plan aims to introduce the foundations of Western rhythmic notation, in tandem with further explorations in lyric creation and internalization of the pulse. This unit plan was designed specifically to accompany a specialized unit built directly into the 'Classcraft' platform. Each lesson corresponds to a 'quest' within the course.

#	Lesson Name:	Lesson Overview:
1	Radiant Rhythms	This introductory lesson explores simple rhythms and note values in order to fill measures in 4/4 time. Students will learn the various components of a bar of music, and how to start reading rhythms.
2	Cauldron of Compositions	In the following lesson, students will begin the process of composing their own short eight-bar rhythmic mini-compositions utilizing simple note values described in the first lesson. Students will expand their knowledge of rhythm by understanding its role within a wider context.
3	The Dynamic Dungeon	This lesson introduces dynamics. Students will learn how to identify various dynamic markings, articulate them, notate them, and layer them into their compositions.
4	The Legend of Lyrics	Next, students will learn the basics of lyric writing. Students will experiment with word placement in regards to rhythm and dynamics, and then add words (lyrics) to their compositions (to be used as their character's "Theme Song" in Classcraft).
5	The Sounds of Unity	In this final culminating summative assessment, students will be assigned a group project that includes the previous work completed as part of their compositions.

Reflection Questions

- How do we notate music?
- What are the applications for notation in music?
- How can we compose with music notation?
- How can music present itself as a language?
- How can we use music to collaborate and deliver ideas?

Interactive Components Built Into



Lesson 1: Radiant Rhythms

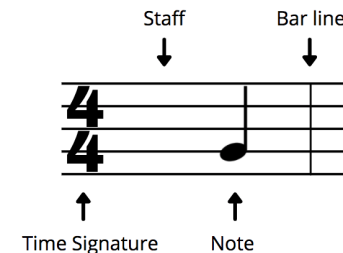
Subject: General Music 8	Grade: 8	Duration: 90 mins
Lesson Overview <i>(What this lesson is about)</i>	This introductory lesson explores simple rhythms and note values in order to fill measures in 4/4 time. Students will learn the various components of a bar of music, and how to start reading rhythms.	

Big Idea(s) <i>(Big ideas from the BC curriculum):</i> https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum	<i>Dance, drama, music, and visual arts are each unique languages for creating and communicating.</i> <i>Creative growth requires patience, readiness to take risks, and willingness to try new approaches.</i>
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Curricular Competencies <i>(What the students will do)</i> https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adapt learned skills, understandings, and processes for use in new contexts and for different purposes and audiences</i> • <i>Intentionally select and apply materials, movements, technologies, environments, tools, and techniques by combining and arranging artistic elements, processes, and principles in art making</i>
FPPOL <i>(What the students will know)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning involves patience and time.</i>

Reflection Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we notate music?

Learning Activities	Time Allotted
<p>Introduction to pulse in music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen to Billie Eilish's Bad Guy as a class. Guide students to recognize how the song is grouped in chunks of 4. ● Ask students to recall their favourite pop songs, and ask if they can figure out what the groupings are. ● Connect to other popular songs, and demonstrate how much of music can be categorized within this grouping ● Define pulses as beats, and groupings as bars and/or measures. 	10 mins
<p>Elements of music notation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Associate these groupings to a visual. Mark on the board a grouping of four, and ask students to internalize the pulse of a pop song by clapping and/or stomping the beats. You can also ask them to count the beats out loud to place one, two, three, and four consecutively. ● Demonstrate the basics of music notation on the board while having students note down the terms: <i>Bar line</i>, <i>staff</i>, <i>Time Signature</i>, <i>Repeat Sign</i>, and <i>End</i>. Note, it may be best to only display a single staff line for this rhythm unit and introduce more staff lines in a later unit relating to note names. 	30 mins



<p>Introduction to reading rhythms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate a simple bar of rhythm using either rhythm flashcards or notation on the board. Using TA (pronounced 'tah') for quarter notes, TI (pronounced 'tee') for eighth notes, and REST for rests. ● Ask the class to recite the same rhythm, and new rhythms using this method in call and response. ● Build towards independent reading from the class. 	15 mins
<p>Elements of rhythmic notation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate the rhythm tree with subdivisions up to eighth notes. Have students note down the various subdivisions. ● Describe the various values each note holds by comparing different note lengths. ● Ask students to recite using TA's and TITI's various rhythms as a class that the instructor creates, and then invite students to create their own on the board for the class to recite. 	15 mins
<p>Practice on Own</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In CLASSCRAFT, ask students to practice their rhythms with the rhythm trainer within the first quest. Recommended settings should be set to mode A, with only quarter notes and eighth notes. 	20 mins

Further Extension Activities

- Explore different groupings of beats within different pop songs
- Recite a measure of rhythm incorrectly and ask students to correct

Lesson 2: Cauldron of Compositions

Subject: General Music 8	Grade: 8	Duration: 60 mins
Lesson Overview <i>(What this lesson is about)</i>	In the following lesson, students will begin the process of composing their own short eight-bar rhythmic mini-compositions utilizing simple note values described in the first lesson. Students will expand their knowledge of rhythm by understanding its role within a wider context.	

Big Idea(s) <i>(Big ideas from the BC curriculum):</i> https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum	<i>Individual and collective expression can be achieved through the arts.</i> <i>Dance, drama, music, and visual arts are each unique languages for creating and communicating.</i>
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Curricular Competencies <i>(What the students will do)</i> https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play • Adapt learned skills, understandings, and processes for use in new contexts and for different purposes and audiences
FPPOL <i>(What the students will know)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning requires the exploration of one's identity.

Reflection Questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I use rhythmic notation to express an idea? • What is involved within the process of composition? 	

Learning Activities	Time Allotted
<p>Review of rhythmic notation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the various subdivisions of subdivision and their respective names (quarter note, eighth note, whole note etc). Ask students to recall the syllables (Ta-TiTi). Don't forget to review accompanying rests as well. Consider displaying on the board the following breakdown of note lengths in order to review the concept of note values. Review reading rhythms with more flashcards or writing a rhythm on the board. Have students perform these rhythms. Build towards longer phrases of four bars. 	20 mins
<p>Introduction of crazy compositions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design with the class a four-bar-long rhythmic composition. Have the class clap, adapt, manipulate, and play with different note lengths, and ideas. Consider connecting these rhythms using words such as car brands, fruits, or any other categories to inspire the writing. Have volunteers come up and start adding to the composition. 	10 mins
<p>Assign composition time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to compose several versions, drafts and configurations of four-bar compositions. Ask students to pick their best one. Ensure the rules are the following: 	15 mins



<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ No repetitions of any bars--have four unique rhythmic bars○ The composition must contain all four subdivisions○ The composition must be singable/clappable	
<p>Perform the compositions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Have students either volunteer to perform or go around in a circle and perform each composition back to back.● Consider pairing students together, or having groups of individuals perform all their compositions at the same time.	10 mins
<p>Upload the composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● In CLASSCRAFT, have students take pictures of their assignments and upload them to Classcraft within the second quest.	5 mins

Lesson 3: The Dynamic Dungeon

Subject: General Music 8	Grade: 8	Duration: 60 mins
Lesson Overview <i>(What this lesson is about)</i>	This lesson introduces dynamics. Students will learn how to identify various dynamic markings, articulate them, notate them, and layer them into their compositions.	

Big Idea(s) <i>(Big ideas from the BC curriculum):</i> https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum	<p><i>Dance, drama, music, and visual arts are each unique languages for creating and communicating.</i></p> <p><i>Creative growth requires patience, readiness to take risks, and willingness to try new approaches.</i></p>
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Curricular Competencies <i>(What the students will do)</i> https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Interpret and communicate ideas using symbols (i.e., articulation markings) and elements to express meaning through the arts</i> <i>Intentionally select and apply materials, movements, technologies, environments, tools, and techniques by combining and arranging artistic elements, processes, and principles in art making</i>
FPPOL <i>(What the students will know)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Learning involves patience and time.</i>

Reflection Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the applications for notation in music?

Learning Activities	Time Allotted
<p>Introduction to dynamics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen to In The Hall Of The Mountain King and "Surprise" Symphony as a class. Guide students to recognize how the "volume" or "sound" varies throughout the piece. ● Define dynamics as the variation in loudness between notes or phrases, indicated by specific musical notation. ● Ask students to recall their favourite songs, and ask if they can figure out what the dynamics are. ● Connect to other popular songs, and demonstrate how all music has dynamic variation and contrast. 	10 mins
<p>Exploring dynamics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In CLASSCRAFT, ask students to complete the next quest: The Dynamic Dungeon. They will watch a short video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ELHLRy0Ooo) and then complete a short 5 question quiz via Google Forms. 	10 mins
<p>Review - Midpoint Battle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In CLASSCRAFT, direct students to the next quest: Midpoint Battle. There, students will find their groups of four where they will each represent a note value (whole, half, quarter, eighth). The teacher will then put on a song and students will have to jump to their respective note subdivision beat. The teacher will then call out a dynamic, and the students will have to use their movement to represent it (i.e., pianissimo = small jumps). 	10 mins
<p>Practice on Own</p>	30 mins

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have students add their own dynamics to their compositions from the previous class. When done, have them present their compositions to each other for feedback. | |
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Lesson 4: The Legend of Lyrics

Subject: General Music 8	Grade: 8	Duration: 60 minutes
Lesson Overview <i>(What this lesson is about)</i>	Next, students will learn the basics of lyric writing. Students will experiment with word placement in regards to rhythm and dynamics, and then add in words (lyrics) to their compositions (to be used as their character's "Theme Song" in Classcraft).	

Big Idea(s) <i>(Big ideas from the BC curriculum):</i> https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum	<p><i>Individual and collective expression can be achieved through the arts.</i></p> <p><i>Dance, drama, music, and visual arts are each unique languages for creating and communicating.</i></p> <p><i>Creative growth requires patience, readiness to take risks, and willingness to try new approaches.</i></p>
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Curricular Competencies <i>(What the students will do)</i> https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play</i> • <i>Take creative risks to express feelings, ideas, and experiences</i>
FPPOL <i>(What the students will know)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning involves patience and time.</i>

Reflection Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can music present itself as a language?

Learning Activities	Time Allotted
<p>Introduction to lyrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students share their favourite songs with one another and explain why they like them. • Create a class playlist (on such platforms as Spotify or iTunes) with each student's top pick for easy sharing and access. • Define lyrics as the words of a pop song. • Ask students to reflect on the words of their favourite songs and the message they communicate. 	10 mins
<p>Characteristics of lyrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a class, identify the characteristics of lyrics. Prompt students to think about what makes their favourite songs so likable in regards to the lyrics. • List the most important/notable characteristics. 	5 mins
<p>Exploring lyric writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In CLASSCRAFT, ask students to complete the next quest: The Legend of Lyrics. They will watch part 2 and 3 of a songwriting video series (https://nac-cna.ca/en/video/series/songwriting-workshop-series-ila-barker) which explains lyrics and rhyming in songwriting. Encourage students to take notes during the quest (i.e., what are 3 things you would like to use in your own songwriting?) 	15 mins
<p>Practice on Own</p>	30 mins

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have students compose their own lyrics to add to their compositions. Encourage students to perform their compositions for one another and provide feedback. | |
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Lesson 5: The Sounds of Unity

Subject: General Music 8	Grade: 8	Duration: 60 minutes
Lesson Overview <i>(What this lesson is about)</i>	In this final culminating summative assessment, students will be assigned a group project that includes the previous work completed as part of their compositions.	

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FPPOL <i>(What the students will know)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Learning involves patience and time.</i>

Reflection Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we use music to collaborate and deliver ideas?

Learning Activities	Time Allotted
<p>Group work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have students get into three teams based on their characters in CLASSCRAFT: <i>Guardians, Mages, and Healers</i>. ● Each team will work together to create a team cheer by combining their 4 bar compositions. ● The team cheer must contain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A beginning, middle, and end. ○ At least 2 bars from each individual's composition for a total of 16 bars. ● Have students practice their cheers several times before presenting. 	35 mins
<p>Team "Cheer" performances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As a class, perform the team cheers for one another. ● Optional: Have students film their performance ● Model how to provide feedback, and then have students provide feedback for one another. 	15 mins
<p>Final reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In CLASSCRAFT, have students upload their group's performance and/or lyrics and submit a short reflection on their composition process within the last quest. 	10 mins

Suggested Final Boss Battle Grading Rubric

	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Composition Length	The composition is less than 10 bars	The composition is at least 10 bars	The composition is at least 14 bars	The composition is a total of 16 bars
Rhythmic Variety	The composition has many repeated bars of rhythm	The composition has a few repeated rhythms	The composition rarely repeats any rhythms	The composition does not repeat any rhythms
Lyric Creativity	The lyrics are still in progress	The lyrics have fulfilled the number of bars written of rhythm	The lyrics may fit the rhyme scheme, or fit the rhythms appropriately	The lyrics are imaginative, have a rhyme scheme, and are exciting
Professionalism	The performance is lacking focus and does not feel complete	The performance is completed, but difficult to hear as an audience	The performance is enthusiastic, but could have benefitted from additional rehearsal	The performance is rehearsed, enthusiastic, and projected effectively