

Sequential Rhythm Reading Lesson Outline

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National Standards for Music Education

- 5. Reading and notating music.
- 6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
- 7. Evaluating music and music performances.

DESE-Missouri Knowledge Standards

Goal 1

DESE-Missouri Performance Standards

1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 4.4

Subject Area: Choral/Vocal Ensembles

Grade Range: 6-12

Choral students are “typically weak” rhythm readers by comparison to their instrumental counterparts. A higher level of rhythmic comprehension, improved performance, retention, and sense of meter will be achieved by instituting a daily, sequential rhythm reading program.

Materials Needed: SmartMusic, method of projection in classroom-large TV or projector, speaker(s) to play recording of group rhythm back to classroom, SmartMusic microphone or other microphone, paper, and pencils.

Time Allowance: 2- 5 minutes daily, or on alternating days throughout a whole semester, or year.

Objectives:

1. Students will actively engage in daily rhythm reading in a sequential program.
2. Students will clap, tap, and write rhythm patterns within their area curriculum; demonstrating mastery of those rhythms.

Lesson

- **Step 1: Using SmartMusic Exercises, determine which set of rhythm exercises is the starting point for your singers based on their level and curriculum. After choosing Exercises, click on Rhythms. Under the title of Rhythms, click on Descriptions to find a concise list of the notes and rests covered under that heading. (For example, Simple Time 1: whole, half, quarter notes, half and quarter rests, etc.) Determine what rhythms are to be mastered and assessed based on the curriculum and level of the students. (For example, a teacher might choose exercises #6300-6348 for the group to**

- master.) The instructor should select Clap from the instrument list to enable SmartMusic to assess student accuracy.
- **Step 2:** Starting with the rhythmic exercise chosen, such as #6300, click on the number of the exercise and SmartMusic will open and display the rhythm on the screen for your students to see. Choose Click On to enable the metronome click to continue when the students clap. Click on Cursor to help your class visually follow the rhythm pattern. (For many students, this is the key to gain the critical recognition of the relationship of how the pulse stays constant as rhythms are read.) Both the Click and Cursor can be removed as the class progresses.
 - **Step 3:** Click Assessment and then Record and the class will hear an audible count-off, and then the students can begin to clap the rhythm displayed in time with the metronome click.
 - **Step 4:** When the exercise is completed, SmartMusic will automatically save the audio recording and then give the option of playing it back for the group; allowing them to immediately hear how well they performed the rhythm together. Click on Preview for the class to hear their collective rhythm pattern. Next, click on ASSESSMENT again, and click on DISPLAY ASSESSMENT. The screen will display green notes as those that were performed correctly, and red for incorrect rhythms. Students receive automatic, immediate feedback on their rhythm reading and a percentage score. This score can be SAVED, if desired, as part of “class participation/cooperative learning” points that all students could share; adding motivation and incentive. The instructor may decide on a percentage of class mastery before continuing on to more difficult rhythm patterns.
 - **Step 5:** The teacher may decide to simply move to the next rhythm exercise; and click Next. The next rhythm automatically is displayed on the screen and the metronome and cursor will remain ON, unless you remove them. Choose Play, if desired, (to skip recording and assessment) or click Assessment, then Record as in Step 3.
 - **Step 6:** Continue to open as many rhythms your class will read and clap that day.

Sequential Rhythm Reading Supplemental Instructor Ideas and Activities



Assignment Suggestions

1. The teacher can choose to select a set number of exercises to be read and clapped per day. For example, read three per day, and assess only one or more per class period. This would ensure that very few minutes were used for this activity.
2. Click on TEMPO to adapt the exercise to the level of students, either faster or slower. For adaptations for visually impaired students, the instructor can click on PRINT to print the rhythm exercises in advance, and enlarge them, as needed.
3. A teacher's aide or trusted student could easily operate the SmartMusic Rhythm Exercises for the class. The teacher could move around the room checking student effort, take the roll, or attend to another classroom matter while the learning would continue.

Possible starting point in the Exercises of SmartMusic Rhythms is:

Level I	Simple Time 1 or 2
Level II	Simple Time 2 or 3
Level III	Simple Time 3 or Complex Time 1
Level IV	Complex Time 1 or 2

Indicators of Success

Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

1. Actively interpret and clap rhythms cooperatively that are within the scope of their curriculum.
2. Analyze their rhythm accuracy with SmartMusic Assessment feature.
3. Achieve improved rhythm reading retention and progress as a group and individually.

Assessment

1. Students will demonstrate correct rhythms as achieved by entire class on daily sequence of rhythms clapped, and Assessment by SmartMusic.

2. **(Optional) Students could demonstrate their rhythmic retention by using pencil and paper to correctly notate a rhythm from those covered by the method of rhythm dictation. Instructor could clap, play on piano, or use the SmartMusic Exercise choosing the Solo to play, while not showing the rhythm on screen to the class.**

Lesson Extensions

1. **Assign individual students, groups of two, or small groups to clap a specific number of the Exercise Rhythms for practice and/or assessment at a computer station or in a practice room. Their Assessment score could be averaged together with other areas of assessment.**
2. **Divide the class into sections and host a “Rhythm Clapping Competition”. Determine a minimum proficiency score such as 98-100%, etc. Continue clapping rhythms in sequence as presented on SmartMusic Exercises to determine a winning group. This activity could be used as an incentive or reward, or for changing the class routine.**
3. **For extra credit, any student could clap as many rhythms at any difficulty level as they desire. The student could save their assessment, and e-mail or save their score on a classroom work station computer.**
4. **Challenge students to correctly clap the rhythms selected at increasingly faster tempos and to strive for 100% accuracy.**
5. **Assign “Rhythm Partners” by pairing students of varying abilities together to split into cooperative learning groups and clap the assigned set of rhythms. Play a continuous metronome click to assist students to maintain a steady beat.**
6. **Open the same numbered exercises with various Instruments, such as Flute, instead of Clap. This will allow the students to clap the rhythms with a variety of musical accompaniments. (This will not be assessable, however.)**
7. **Assign every student to be individually clap a pre-determined set of rhythms and to be assessed at a work station or in a practice room. This may allow the teacher to measure student progress in all areas of rhythm reading: demonstration of steady beat, higher retention of rhythm recognition in the set that aligns with curriculum for the class, and independence in the performance of accurate rhythms.**
8. **Assign more challenging rhythms to advanced students.**
9. **Host a “Rhythm Bee” in the manner of a typical “Spelling Bee” to determine a top rhythm reader. Each hour could advance their “winner” to a multi-class music assembly or use as an after school fund-raising idea for your program.**