

We Got the Beat: Building Rhythmic Literacy From the Ground Up

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This poster outlines techniques for developing rhythmic literacy with young instrumentalists both without and with notation. The central concept is that rhythm is created by applying the functions of 1. division, 2. silence, 3. connection, and 4. accent to a steady pulse. During the first year of instruction, students use movement, imagination, and variations to learn how to create and perform rhythms using division and silence. In the second year of instruction, students learn five building block rhythms, which become the foundation for reading in both 4/4 and alla breve meters. The third and fourth years of instruction focus on performing syncopated rhythms, silent mental counting, and sixteenth note subdivisions. Techniques for using hand signals to indicate rhythms prior to notation and for assessing mastery through movement, improvisation, composition, prepared performance, and sight-reading are also provided.