

# Let's Notate A Steady Beat!

In thinking about how I would teach children notation and the way western music is organized, I started with length of sound ~ let's get kids exploring what it means to mix lengths and put them down on paper. This is all explained step by step in the Note Knacks Lesson Plans Phase 1.

I then decided that a logical next step was to look at the steady beat. We do a lot with steady beat, from movement to playing it on instruments, but I wanted to take it a step further. How could I use notation to help explain not only the concept of steady beat versus rhythm, but also that of meter. The lesson below is a lesson from my updated lesson plans (that will be coming out in the next couple of months ~ I will certainly let you know!) that starts this process. In this lesson we will have already covered the definition of a steady beat and will now get into the business of writing it down.

## OVERVIEW

- ❖ **Concept**
  - Notate Steady Beat
- ❖ **Objectives**
  - To represent a steady beat on paper
- ❖ **Vocabulary**
  - Steady Beat
  - Notate
- ❖ **Meeting Standards**
  - Mu.K-4.5a,6c
  - MU:Cr1.1.Ka
  - MU:Pr4.2.1a,1b
- ❖ **Classroom Materials**
  1. Drum
  2. Note Knacks
  3. Crayons
  4. Sentence strips

## MOTIVATE

- ❖ **Move | Steady Beat** Mu.K-4.5a,6c MU:Cr1.1.Ka MU:Pr4.2.1a

1. Review the definition of a Steady Beat.
  - a. A sound heard over and over like a heartbeat.
2. Have students stand up and move to a steady beat as you beat on a drum like in the last lesson.

## DEVELOP

- ❖ **Notate | Steady Beat On Paper** Mu.K-4.5a,6c MU:Cr1.1.Ka MU:Pr4.2.1a,1b

1. Explain to students that just like in Phase 1, we need to represent our sound on paper.
2. Ask "Can anyone tell me how we would represent a steady beat of reds on paper?"
  - a. (Answer: Using a red crayon, trace and draw a row of red Note Knacks on a sentence strip)

3. Say "Great job! What about yellows?" (and so on...)
4. Tell students that when we write sound on paper, we are "notating".
  - a. Say "To Notate means to write sound on paper in music."

❖ **Practice | Notating Mu.K-4.5a,6c MU:Cr1.1.Ka MU:Pr4.2.1a,1b**

1. Tell students that you will send kids off into groups of 5.
  - a. Every group will get sentence strips, crayons and a set of Note Knacks
  - b. Each child within the group will have a job to do:
    - I. One child will trace a row of grays.
    - II. One will trace a row of blues.
    - III. One will trace a row of reds.
    - IV. One will trace a row of yellows.
    - V. One will trace a row of terra cottas.
  - c. Ask students "The gray is very long. Will more than 1 fit on a sentence strip? (no) SO what can we do?"
  - d. Always try and use their ideas but you can tape or staple a few sentence strips together if no one comes up with anything!

## APPLY AND CLOSE

❖ **Present | Notated Steady Beat Mu.K-4.5a,6c MU:Cr1.1.Ka MU:Pr4.2.1a,1b**

1. Bring the groups back and have each group present their work to the rest of the class
  - a. The child that drew each color will drag his/her finger across the Note Knacks as the rest of the class says the proper steady beat  
OR
  - b. each child can present their own steady beat composition to the group
  - c. You can take this opportunity to assess how steady their steady beat is
  - d. For students that have a hard time, walking is a great tool, for as someone once told me, no one walks to an unsteady beat!

Next week I will share with you how I took this and used it to introduce meter...a concept that I greatly enjoy teaching to students!