



BAMBOOTAMBOO

play it and smile



Developing Rhythm

Developing Rhythmic Confidence

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Introduction

The following exercises are aimed at improving or helping you find your sense of rhythm.

Once you have built some confidence in this area you can share these exercises with your class to help deliver certain parts of the national curriculum.

We all do have rhythm. Our bodies and our world are one huge mass of rhythms, from our heart beat, the way we walk, the way we talk to the way we move, these are our natural personal rhythms.

The Universe around us also has its own rhythms: our planet revolves once on its axis and we call this a day, our world revolves around the sun once and we call this a year.

Our Sun orbits the centre of the Galaxy, everything moves with rhythm.

When we know this it is not so difficult to understand why Humans gain such joy in expressing themselves through rhythm, and what follows are a few simple exercises to get us in touch with our sense of rhythm.

This may be simpler than you think.

When you are comfortable with these few simple exercises you are ready to run a Bamboo Tamboo workshop.

The Beat

When we listen to music we often find ourselves moving or tapping in time to the rhythm of music.

This steady pulse that we move to is called the beat.

In most western popular music we often work in groups of four beats.

Subdivisions of the Beat

In music the beat is often divided in a number of equal parts (this is the maths bit, think of fractions).

Commonly the beat will be divided into two, three or four even parts; you can divide a beat as many times as you wish but these are the more common ones.

We can use words to help represent these patterns.

For example:

When we play a beat we can count 1,2,3,4 or we can use the word Tea to represent the beat.

So we now have: tea, tea, tea, tea.

We say the word and tap the beat. Make sure that you tap on the 'T' of tea.

When we divide each beat into two equal notes, instead of having four notes per measure we have eight.

We could count these; 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & (The number is the beat the & is the offbeat).
Or we could use the word Coffee.

So: coffee coffee coffee coffee

Likewise when we subdivide the beat into four equal parts we can use the words coca cola.

Exercise 1

Feeling the Beat

Next time you are listening to a piece of music simply allow yourself to tap along in time with the beat.

If the song has lyrics, listen to how they work in time with the beat and hear how the beat helps all the other instruments play in time with each other.

Exercise 2

Dividing the Beat

As you tap a beat say the word tea over and over in time to your beat, making sure that you are tapping on the 'T' of tea.

Now say the word coffee over and over again, this time tapping on the 'c' of coffee.

Now try saying the word tea four times and then change smoothly and say the word coffee four times, all the time tapping your beat on the first letter of each word.

Then alternate between the two.

Your beat should remain steady throughout.

When you can manage this use the words coca cola, this time tapping your beat on the first 'c' of coca.

Now say, 'tea tea tea tea coffee coffee coffee coffee coca cola coca cola coca cola coca cola'. All the time tapping your beat on the first letter of each word or phrase.

Eventually you will be able to say the words in a random order and keep the beat steady so for example: tea coffee tea coca cola coffee cocacola tea tea tea coca cola coffee tea etc.

Exercise 3

Call and Response

Call and response is a simple game, one person is the leader and claps a rhythm, the rest of the group must listen to the rhythm and then clap it back as one.

You can use the phrases above to generate many different rhythms for call and response.

For this exercise we will use groups of 4 beats, so all you need to do is use any combination of four of the words we used in the last exercise.

It is a good rule always to end with tea, so now we only need to supply three other words.
For example: tea tea coffee tea

This time when we clap, instead of just clapping the beat we will clap the rhythm of each syllable.

Here are some other rhythms to try:

Coffee tea coffee tea

Coffee coca cola coffee tea

Coca cola coca cola coffee tea

Coffee tea coca cola tea

Now practice generating rhythms on your own before playing the game with your class.

Exercise 4

Using Phrases

For this exercise you will need to download one of the Rhythm Packs from our website.

If you are unsure of the exact rhythm there are some MP3 files for you to listen and get the correct phrasing.

To start with use the Foundation and KS1 rhythms before having a go at the KS2 ones.

Repeat each rhythm several times without stopping.

Here are few to try:

I like fish and chips

1 2 3 4 5 bananas

Grandpa Ted jumping on the bed

Can you dance, yes I can dance

I want a biscuit I want a biscuit

Finally

That's it.

If you can manage these simple exercises you have enough rhythmic confidence to run a successful and enjoyable Bamboo Tamboo Workshop.

Honest.

However, some people mistake a lack of rhythmic confidence for a lack of coordination. To play Bamboo Tamboo we do need a bit of coordination, but when you have a go you will find this as easy to develop as your rhythmic confidence.