

The Victorians

Opportunities for the children to explore music and sound

Activity 1: Rhythm Inventions

Learning how to clap rhythms from topic-related pictures

Activity 2: Sequence the Rhythms!

Exploring how to change the order of different rhythms to create different effects

Activity 3: Note the Notation

Extending knowledge of picture rhythms into learning to read and write basic musical notation

Resources

For this topic, you will need a selection of percussion instruments

Resource 10: Invention Pictures

Resource 11: Mini Invention Pictures

Resource 12: Musical Notation

Resource 13: Invention Rhythm Audio

Resource 14: Mini Musical Notation



Activity 1: Rhythm Inventions

Discuss with the children how the Victorian era was an age of great invention. Ask the children to suggest some Victorian inventions using what they have already learned about this topic. Suggestions may include:

- bicycle
- sewing machine
- steam train
- typewriter
- concrete
- postage stamp

Videos are available online that illustrate the difference between rhythm and beat. Select one that you feel is appropriate and play it for the children. Here are two examples from YouTube:

[Beat vs Rhythm](#)

[Beat and Rhythm Explained](#)

Display images of the inventions listed (**Resource 10: Invention Pictures**). Clap the rhythm of one of them and ask the children to guess which one you clapped. For example, typewriter would have three claps. Ask the children how they knew which one you were clapping.

Discuss the link to syllables in literacy (link to the video you used). Encourage the children to work in pairs. Ask them to decide on the rhythm pattern for the other inventions on the list. Work through the answers together, encouraging everyone to clap each of these invention rhythm patterns a few times as you introduce them. Depending on which inventions you choose, some may have the same rhythm.

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Next, display an invention picture in different parts of the room. Have a walking quiz. Clap the rhythm of each of the inventions and ask the children to move to the wall displaying the invention picture or word that matches the rhythm. For those with the same rhythm, the children may walk to either picture.

As the children become more confident, choose one of them to become the leader. Ask the leader to choose an invention and clap its rhythm for their peers. Encourage questioning after the children have moved to an appropriate place in the room. For example, ask:

- How did you know this rhythm pattern matches this invention?
- How many beats does this invention rhythm have?

- Is the rhythm of this invention longer or shorter than the rhythm we clapped for the last invention?

You could also use percussion instruments in this walking quiz. Ask the leader to play the rhythm of the invention they have chosen on their instrument. Encourage the other children to echo the same rhythm on their instruments. Then, ask them to walk to the image that corresponds to the rhythm they have just played.

These activities provide variety and reinforce the key teaching point. For the children to succeed in the following lessons, a solid foundation in rhythm is essential.



Activity 2: Sequence the Rhythms!

Revise the rhythm patterns of the inventions from last time. Display the invention pictures. Choose a child to clap the rhythm of one of the inventions. Continue until the children have discovered all the inventions.

When all the children have clapped the rhythm of each invention and revealed its picture, ask them to tell you anything about each invention (or inventions if more than one that you have selected has the same rhythm). For example, do they know when it was invented and who invented it? Then ask the children to clap through all rhythms again as you conduct, pointing to each invention picture in turn.

Ask the children to work in pairs. Encourage them to think about how to sequence the

invention pictures according to the length of their rhythms, from longest to shortest. Choose various children to rearrange the rhythm cards to show this, clapping and discussing as you go.

Discuss other ways to sequence the invention rhythms, for example by date of invention, by the class favourite or by those still popular today. Sort the rhythms into the sequence the children have agreed on before asking the children to clap or play each sequence on percussion instruments. Choose a different child to conduct each sequence to keep the class together as they clap or play. Alternatively, ask one child to sequence the rhythms first without giving a reason for the order. Then encourage the class to clap the sequence, before deciding why the sequence is in that order.

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Choose a variety of the children's favourite rhythm sequences. Encourage them to discuss why they like them. Do the rhythm sequences sound better with the longer rhythms at the start or at the end? Why do they think so? Encourage the children to discuss how a composer might find these rhythm decisions very important when writing a piece of music. Discuss how the children will have different opinions about which order sounds best.

Ask the children to work in pairs. Give each pair a copy of **Resource 11: Mini Invention Pictures**. Ask each pair to work together, listening carefully and then ordering the rhythms by sequencing the cards as you clap each invention in a variety of sequences.

To start, clap one rhythm at a time. Give the children enough time to sequence each invention, one at a time. Eventually, the children should be confident enough to wait until the end of the sequence before sorting all the invention pictures. Encourage discussion about how to work best in their pairs to accomplish this task. For example, one child could listen and remember the first two rhythms and the other child could listen for the last two.

Repeat this activity several times. Encourage the children to take the lead at clapping the different rhythms for their peers to sequence. This will be a challenge as the leader will have to try hard to remember the order of the rhythms they clapped.



Activity 3: Note the Notation

Introduce the idea of musical notation to the children. Explain how a composer uses musical symbols to show the duration of individual notes in a rhythm. After the previous rhythm activities, the children should be more confident with the various invention rhythms. You can now challenge them to learn about what each rhythm would look like when written as musical

notation. Use **Resource 12: Musical Notation** to introduce notation rhythm gradually, perhaps one a week. Introducing too many at one time could confuse the children. **Resource 13: Invention Rhythm Audio** illustrates the correct rhythm of each word. Audio files can be downloaded from <http://cea.org.uk/music-world-around-us>

Invention word	Notation	Explanation
Sew-ing-mach-ine	Four quavers (2+2)	Four half-beat notes
Steam-train	Two crotchets	Two 1-beat notes
Type-wri-ter	Crotchet, quaver, quaver	One 1-beat note, two half-beat notes
Bi-cy-cle	Two quavers and a crotchet	Two half-beat notes followed by one 1-beat note
Con-crete	Two crotchets	Two 1-beat notes
Post-age-stamp	Two quavers and a crotchet	Two half-beat notes followed by one 1-beat note

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Repeat the activities above, but this time focus solely on the musical notation rather than the invention names or pictures. For example, the walking quiz could gradually involve the children walking to the notation of each invention that you have clapped rather than the picture or word. Introduce one **notation** at a time, along with other inventions still using the word or picture. Proceeding any faster could confuse the children. For example, in the first week the children may only learn that steam train is represented as two crotchets. Continue representing other inventions, such as the bicycle or sewing machine, by their picture. Introducing notation slowly gives the children time to learn to describe each invention using the correct musical terms. For example, when they walk to the steam train rhythm, they should be able to say that the rhythm pattern is made up of two crotchets.

Most children, even those with no prior musical knowledge, will surprise you by how quickly they pick up these new terms. As an added challenge for the walking quiz, ask the children to think of other words that might match the rhythm of each invention. For example, for the bicycle invention (two quavers and a crotchet), they could think of phrases such as mu-sic time or he-llo Joe.

The sequencing activities outlined previously are equally applicable here as the children learn musical notation. **Resource 14: Mini Musical Notation** will be useful. These cards are mini versions of the larger notation images in **Resource 13**. The children can use them, in pairs or groups, for listening and sequencing the different rhythms as you clap them. As with the larger cards, you can use the mini pictures (**Resource 13**) and mini notation cards (**Resource 14**) interchangeably, until the children can manage to sequence all four rhythms from their notation only.

At the end of the session, extend the children's learning further by encouraging them to draw the musical notation for each of the inventions. Clap a sequence of the four invention rhythms while the children draw the correct notation. Clap one rhythm at a time until the children build up confidence, then clap all four rhythms.

