

Arts Assessment For Learning

MUSIC— 3-5TH GRADES

HOW TO & TIPS: RHYTHMIC COMPOSITION

See **RESOURCES: Lesson Plans**

HOW TO

- Introduce the unit teaching what Unison, Complementary and Dissonant rhythms are by definition and by modeling them.
- Students first work on echoing beats as a small group, in unison. After performing in unison, we work on three important aspects of percussion composition – tone quality, form and how to create complementary and dissonant rhythm parts around one main drum part (the part they worked on in unison).
- Model the technique for high and low tones/right and left hand movement, play a piece that models changes in rhythm from unison to complementary to dissonance and explain how you pay attention to the form (part to part of a composition) while playing.
- In small groups of 4-6, break students into groups to begin working on complementary parts to their unison rhythm. Each student chooses an instrument, creates a part using a “drum sentence” to help them remember their own part, and writes these parts down.
- In the following week, review a percussion rubric before breaking into small groups. During this session, ask students to practice the beats they created, but to also decide on a FORM and to pay attention to TONE QUALITY.
- After this session, groups perform their piece to the class, while the class provides verbal feedback to each group, based on the rubric.
- After all groups performed, discuss the rubric again and came up with some revisions. [We decided to separate all the criteria into their own categories.] Students then go back to their small groups to work on compositions that would mix unison, complementary and dissonant parts, based around a theme they also create for the piece.
- In the following week, students perform their piece for the class, who again provide feedback based on the revised rubric. Here, they are looking at what revisions the groups made based on previous feedback.
- Finally, students are given a self-assessment reflection to complete in written form, based on this experience.

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TIPS

- Be sure to model the steps for each rhythm (unison, complementary and dissonant).
- Be sure to give students time to develop and practice monitor practice with clear expectations, strict timing and visits, but allow for independence
- Model how to create a story using percussion and use maps to brainstorm for ideas
- Create differentiated groups for ELLs
- Allow students to view video of themselves – have camera ready before class
- Keep rubric positive and allow for revisions if things are not working or clearly understood
- Hold students accountable for participation in assessments of each other – encourage them speak in detail through questioning