



Lesson: Jazz and Music in 5/4 Time Signatures

Ages: 11 - 18

Projected time: 80-100 min total

Supplies needed: Pencil, writing paper, a metronome.

Metronome: [Google Metronome](#)

Project Intro: Students will learn about music in 5/4 time signatures with audio and visual examples from various musical sources/performances on YouTube. A 60min documentary on jazz is included to provide some historical context in the use of 5/4 time signatures in popular music.

Vocabulary:

Beat: a main accent or rhythmic unit in music or poetry.

Measure: a segment of time within a piece of music defined by a given number of beats.

Time Signature: the time signature is used to specify how many beats are contained within each measure and which note value is equivalent to a beat.



Saxophone: one of a group of single-reed woodwind instruments usually ranging from soprano to bass and characterized by a conical metal tube and finger keys. Saxophones are usually made of brass.

Drums: a percussion instrument sounded by being struck with sticks or the hands, typically cylindrical, barrel-shaped, or bowl-shaped, with a taut membrane over one or both ends.





Double Bass: the largest and lowest-pitched instrument of the violin family, providing the bassline of the orchestral string section and also used in jazz and some country music.

Jazz: a type of music of black American origin characterized by improvisation, syncopation, and usually a regular or swung (forceful) rhythm, emerging at the beginning of the 20th century. Brass and woodwind instruments, piano, double bass, and guitar are particularly associated with jazz and occasionally violin are also used; styles include Dixieland, swing, bebop, smooth, and free jazz.

Solo: A *solo* is music performed by only one member.

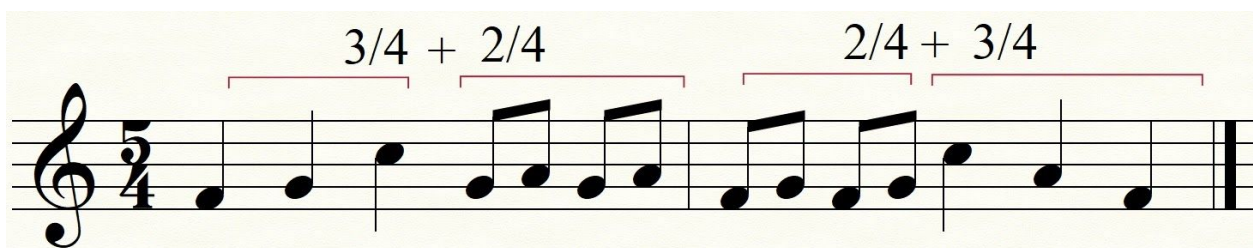
Duo: A *duo* is a musical group with 2 members.

Trio: A *trio* is a musical group with 3 members.

Quartet: A *quartet* is a musical group with four members.

Quintet: A *quintet* is a musical group with five members.

5/4 Time: a time signature with five beats per measure. Usually divided into two parts: 3/4 + 2/4 or 2/4 + 3/4.



**With a grouping of 3/4 + 2/4 the beat pattern in quarter notes would be:
strong-weak-weak-medium-weak.**

**With a grouping of 2/4 + 3/4 the beat pattern in quarter notes would be:
strong-weak-medium-weak-weak.**

PART 1: Keeping Time in 5/4

1. On paper, write the number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, with a dash or short line between them and draw a little star underneath the number one and the number four.

Example: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5
 * *

2. Set the metronome to 120 beats per minute or 120bpm.
3. Now begin counting out loud from 1 to 5 with each tick that you hear. Try to count at the same time that you expect to hear a click, anticipate the tick. Do not count after or before the tick.

Example: Metronome goes: Tick Tick Tick Tick Tick
You say: 1 2 3 4 5

4. After counting up to the number 5 return to the number 1 and continue counting.

Example: 1 2 3 4 5, 1 2 3 4 5, 1 2 3 4 5

5. Continue counting in time with the metronome until it feels natural and easy. If you can, emphasize the number 1 and the number 4 while you read them out loud (remember the stars?)
6. Now try to emphasize ONLY the number one and the number three.
7. You are now counting in 5/4 Time with two different groupings. In this case, each number represents a single beat with a total of 5 beats.
8. Turn off the metronome. Can you keep counting in time without the help of the metronome? If you think you can, then move on to step number 9 and listen to famous music that's in 5/4.
9. [Holst: The Planets, 'Mars' - \(1916\) BBC Proms](#)
[Take Five · The Dave Brubeck Quartet \(1959\)](#)

Part 2: Jazz in 1959

1. Now let's take a look at a documentary and see what other jazz musicians were doing and how they, alongside Brubeck's playful use of time signatures, forever changed music:
[1959 The Year that Changed Jazz](#)

That's it. Good job completing this project! How was the music?