Lesson: Rhythm and Syllables in 4/4 Time

Ages: 7-15   Projected time: 40-60min total

Supplies needed: Pencil, writing paper, a ticking clock or metronome.

Rhyming Dictionary: Rhymer.com
Metronome: Google Metronome

Project Intro: Students will write simple poems with a strong emphasize on rhymes. These poems, along with a metronome, will be used to help students become familiar with a simple time signature of 4/4.

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. Time signatures use fractions to represent note values.

> **Example: 1/1 = 1 whole note**
> **1/2 = 1 half note**
> **1/4 = 1 quarter note**
> **1/8 = 1 eight note**
> **1/16 = 1 sixteenth note**
> **1/32 = 1 thirty-second note**

Simple Time Signatures: The most common type of time signatures heard in popular music.

Example: 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 2/2.

4/4 time signature: The bottom number (the denominator) represents which note value receives a beat (quarter note in our case). The top number (the numerator) represents the total number beats within a given measure.

A 4/4 time signature (image above) tells us that there are a total of four (top number) quarter notes (bottom number) in a given measure.

Metronome: a device used by musicians that marks time at a selected rate by giving a regular tick.

Poem: a piece of writing in which the words are arranged in separate lines, often ending in rhyme, and are chosen for their sound and for the images and ideas they suggest.

Project steps:

PART 1: Keeping Time

1. On paper, write the number 1, 2, 3, 4 with a dash or short line between them. Example: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4
2. Find a ticking clock at home and listen to the tick of the second hand. If you can't find a ticking clock then set a metronome to 60 beats per minute or 60bpm.
3. Now begin counting from 1 to 4 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: 1   2   3   4   1...

4. After counting up to the number 4 return to the number 1 and continue counting. Example: 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4...
5. Continue counting in time with the tick of the clock or metronome until it feels natural and easy.
6. You are now counting in 4/4 Time. In this case, each number represents a single beat with a total of 4 beats.
7. Move away from the clock or turn off the metronome. Can you keep counting in time without the help of the metronome or clock? If you think you can then move on to Part 2.

Part 2: Four Syllable Poems

1. Let's write a poem with four syllables per line. Make the poem as long as you want and as weird or funny as you want. Try to use every line of your writing paper, the longer the better.
2. There are two rules:
1. four syllables per line.
2. try to make the last syllable of each line rhyme with the last syllable of the next line.
Example: I like piz-za
        With cold so-da
        In the pla-za
        Not my ca-sa

Part 3: Rhyming in 4/4 Time

Now let's combine our poem with the tick of our clock or metronome!

1. Find a ticking clock at home and listen to the tick of the second hand. If you can't find a ticking clock then set a metronome to 60 beats per minute

or 60bpm and leave it running for the rest of the steps.

2. Warm up by counting from 1 to 4 along with the ticking clock or metronome. When you get comfortable keeping time, move on to the next step.

3. Grab your paper with your long poem and start reading it in time with the tick. Make sure to say one syllable per tick. Read the entire poem with the tick.

Did you finish reading and felt that it was too easy?

4. Now read it again and now say two syllables per tick.

Example: tick...   tick...
1 – 2   3 – 4
I like   piz-za

Still too easy? Then try the next step.

5. Now read the entire poem and say four syllables per tick.

Example: tick...   tick....
1 – 2 – 3 – 4   1 – 2 – 3 - 4
I   like piz-za with cold so- da

Good Job on completing the lesson! Do you wanna try saying eight syllables per tick?