

Lesson 31: Rhythm

“As you begin to realize that every different type of music, everybody's individual music, has its own rhythm, life, language and heritage, you realize how life changes, and you learn how to be more open and adaptive to what is around us.” —Yo-Yo Ma

Social Justice Standards: Identity 5, Diversity 7

Summary

Music is magical! These stories feature children who LOVE music and also find music and rhythm in unexpected places. Use this lesson as a springboard to explore a variety of musical traditions and also the rhythms of the world around us.

Booklist

- *I Got the Rhythm* by Connie Schofield-Morrison, illustrated by Frank Morrison
- *Squeak, Rumble, Whomp! Whomp! Whomp!:* A Sonic Adventure by Wynton Marsalis, illustrated by Paul Rogers
- *Little Melba and Her Big Trombone* by Katheryn Russell-Brown, illustrated by Frank Morrison
- *The Bat Boy & His Violin* by Gavin Curtis, illustrated by E. B. Lewis
- *Paletero Man* by Lucky Diaz, illustrated by Micah Player, translated by Dr. Carmen Tafolla
- *Your Name Is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, illustrated by Luisa Uribe

Consider This

- Have your preferences for rhythm changed over time?
- Does the rhythm in your music ever correlate with your mood? Why do you think we find comfort in music that way?
- Do you consider yourself to have a good sense of rhythm? What about those in your family?

Talk Together

- What kind of rhythms do you like? Slow? Fast? Loud? Soft?
- Can you find 5 unexpected musical instruments in your home? What about 10? How do they sound together? Can you make up a song to accompany them?

Engage

- Take turns creating and repeating a rhythm. Rhythms can be made with your body or objects. Test your memory and creativity. An example is “clap, stomp, clap, clap, snap.” Then have your child or students repeat the rhythm. Switch turns and have them create a rhythm and you repeat.
- Grab a set of markers, colored pencils, or crayons. Either arrange them in a row or make dots on a piece of paper. Create a rhythm by putting the colors in any order and perform the rhythm aloud together. For example, a rhythm might be “blue, red, yel-low, yel-low, green, yel-low, blue, pur-ple.” Don’t forget to keep your beat steady.

Explore More

- “Rhythm might be hardwired in humans” by Catherine Maticic (*Science Magazine*, December 19, 2016)
- All Around This World’s “Everything Is a Drum”