



Vocal Music Virtual Learning

7th Grade Choir

Beat vs. Rhythm

May 21, 2020



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Lesson: May 21, 2020

Objective/Learning Target:

How are the terms “beat” and “rhythm” the same and different in music?



Warm-Up activity:

Let's listen to our hearts for a minute!

Put your hand over your heart and tap your finger to your collarbone. Now, close your eyes and imagine the beat of your heart. Tap that heartbeat onto your collarbone ten or twelve times. It should sound like a regular, even, double-pulse (bump-bump, bump-bump...)

Now, imagine that you are in the middle of running the pacer at school. How would your heart be beating now? Beat the new heartbeat onto your collarbone!



Warm-Up activity:

Now, imagine that you are in the middle of running the pacer at school. How would your heart be beating now? Beat the new heartbeat onto your collarbone.

Finally, imagine you are taking a nap. How would your heart be beating now? Beat the new heartbeat onto your collarbone.

Now, think about how those three examples of heartbeats were different. We are going to come back to that!



2nd Warm-Up activity:

Now let's experiment with rhythm patterns!

Now for something completely different. Say the following (random) words at a steady speed and listen to how they each have a unique speech pattern to them.

For each word or phrase, say it four times in a row at the same speed!

2nd Warm-Up activity:

Caterpillar - Caterpillar - Caterpillar - Caterpillar

Applesauce - Applesauce - Applesauce - Applesauce

Hot Takis - Hot Takis - Hot Takis - Hot Takis

TikTok - TikTok - TikTok - TikTok

Bruh - Bruh - Bruh - Bruh



2nd Warm-Up activity:

Okay, now lets mix some of those words together and see if we can hear the different patterns of the words play against each other. Try saying:

“Caterpillar Applesauce, TikTok Bruh”

Or

“Hot Takis TikTok TikTok Applesauce”



Why are we doing these crazy things?!?!

I'm so glad you asked!

These two activities did a great job of helping us understand the difference between **BEAT** and **RHYTHM**. Both of these words have to do with pulse, speed, and pattern of music, and both are connected to one another. But understanding each and how they are different is important for musicians hoping to make any kind of music!

Let's dig in more by talking about **beat**.

Beat

Beat definition:

The underlying steady pulse of music, which governs the speed of the music being performed

Remember the heartbeat exercise? When you were tapping your heartbeat, the pulse stayed regular and steady. It could speed up (like when you are running the pacer) or slow down (like when you take a nap), but it didn't change suddenly or erratically.



Beat

In music, the underlying pulse that syncs all of the musicians together is called the **beat**. How fast or slow the beat is affects the speed of the music being played. We use the word “tempo” to talk about the speed of the beat in a piece of music.

It’s important to note, however, that music that sounds fast doesn’t necessarily always have a fast beat, and music that sounds slow doesn’t have to have a slow beat.

The other big factor to the speed of the music is **rhythm**.



Rhythm

Rhythm definition:

The pattern of short and long notes set over the underlying beat

While the beat in music is usually steady and unchanging, rhythm can change all the time. Rhythm comes from the combination of shorter, faster notes and the longer, slower notes that we use in music. We call these **rhythm patterns**.



Rhythm

Now, remember our nonsense words? Each of those words was chosen because it has a unique rhythm pattern when you say it. Let's break those down!

“**Caterpillar**” has four quick syllables that are all said at the same speed

“**Applesauce**” has two quick syllables, then a longer, stronger syllable last

“**Hot Takis**” has a longer stressed sound first (hot) followed by two faster sounds (Takis)

“**TikTok**” has two equally stressed syllables that naturally flow slower “caterpillar”

“**Bruh**” has only one syllable, and naturally gets said with a sense of pause after it.



Now, let's put it all together!

Try making a steady beat by tapping your hand to either your desk or table, or onto your knee/lap.

Tap your beat four times in a row. It should sound something like this:

[Four beats \(example\)](#)



Exercise #1: Caterpillar

Now that you can tap a steady beat, let's experiment with each of the different rhythm patterns we said earlier, and try saying them over the beat we made.

First, listen to the “Caterpillar” rhythm being said over the beat:

[Caterpillar set to the beat](#)

Now you try it!



Exercise #2: Applesauce

Now, let's try that again, but with a new rhythm pattern. This time, let's use "Applesauce."

Once again, tap the beat as you say "Applesauce" four times.

If you do it right, it should sound like this:

[Applesauce to the beat](#)



Exercise #3: Let's try the rest!

Now that you get the idea, try saying each of the other phrases to the beat. For reference, here is a recording of what each one should sound like:

[Hot Takis](#)

[TikTok](#)

[Bruh](#)



Follow-Up Exercises for more challenge!

Exercise #1:

Now that you have mastered each of these rhythm patterns, try combining them together and listen to what the rhythm sounds like to the beat. Here is one sample, where I combined these words:

[Hot Takis, Caterpillar, Applesauce, Bruh](#)



Follow-Up Exercises for more challenge!

Exercise #2:

You should have a pretty strong sense of the beat by now. Instead of tapping the beat with one hand, let's try clapping the rhythm of your phrases using both hands. To do this right, you should clap every time you say a syllable. Try clapping to each rhythm phrase by itself, then clap along to different combos and hear the rhythm you create!

Here is one example, with me clapping the rhythm to the last combo from Exercise #1: [Hot Taki, Caterpillar, Applesauce, Bruh](#)

Singing Exercise

Now, let's try singing the rhythm patterns. This will work just like Follow-Up Exercise #1, where you pick some combination of the words and put them together.

The difference this time is instead of just speaking them, try singing them to a note.



Singing Exercise

If you need a specific note in your mind to sing to, click on the video to the right.

It will play a note that should be comfortable in most people's range (though some boys may prefer to sing it down the octave).





Extension Activity

If you would like more help developing your sense of rhythm, especially as a singer who may struggle with keeping the beat or keeping a steady tempo while singing, watch this video by renowned voice teacher Per Bristow.

Per is sharing these tips in part to promote his own online voice studio, but his advice on rhythm is still pretty useful.

Extension Activity

