Introduction to Music Notation

Content Area: **Vocal Music**
Course(s): **Vocal Music**
Time Period: **Week 3**
Length: **16 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

In this unit, students will focus on the three main elements of music notation: Pitch, Rhythm, Dynamics Connection: Reading music is like reading a map. There is an x-axis and a y-axis. We will create and perform rhythms, learn the notes on the staff, and basic dynamic markings and the transference of that knowledge to the concert repertoire. Students will explore strong and weak beats, frequency, dynamic contrast and how composers can use these elements to influence their message. All knowledge is applied to concert repertoire. Continual practice of these elements of music notation will not only enhance student understanding of how to read music, but also improve their performance.

Standards

VPA.1.1.5.B.1	Identify the elements of music in response to aural prompts and printed music notational systems.
VPA.1.1.5.B.2	Demonstrate the basic concepts of meter, rhythm, tonality, intervals, chords, and melodic and harmonic progressions, and differentiate basic structures.
VPA.1.1.8.B.1	Analyze the application of the elements of music in diverse Western and non-Western musical works from different historical eras using active listening and by reading and interpreting written scores.
VPA.1.1.8.B.2	Compare and contrast the use of structural forms and the manipulation of the elements of music in diverse styles and genres of musical compositions.
VPA.1.3.5.B.1	Sing or play music from complex notation, using notation systems in treble and bass clef, mixed meter, and compound meter.
VPA.1.3.5.B.2	Sing melodic and harmonizing parts, independently and in groups, adjusting to the range and timbre of the developing voice.
VPA.1.3.5.B.3	Improvise and score simple melodies over given harmonic structures using traditional instruments and/or computer programs.
VPA.1.3.8.B.1	Perform instrumental or vocal compositions using complex standard and non-standard Western, non-Western, and avant-garde notation.
VPA.1.3.8.B.2	Perform independently and in groups with expressive qualities appropriately aligned with the stylistic characteristics of the genre.
VPA.1.3.8.B.3	Apply theoretical understanding of expressive and dynamic music terminology to the performance of written scores in the grand staff.

Essential Questions

- How does music work?

- How is reading music like reading a map?
- What techniques and resources can I use to practice and perform music expressively without relying on a teacher?
- What elements and techniques can I use to compose and arrange my own music?
- In what ways is understanding theory necessary to understanding music? What couldn't we do if we didn't understand music theory?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Basic understanding of notation is essential to developing good rehearsal skills and ultimately, an effective performance.
- Music is a universal language that can be read from the same form culture to culture.
- Music is like a map with an x and y axis.
- Silence is just as important as sound in some applications of music.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- Comprehend and apply the values of whole, half, quarter, eighth, and dotted notes and rests
- Comprehend what characteristics influence high and low sounds
- Count and clap simple rhythms
- Create2 or 4-measure rhythmic compositions
- Define basic dynamic terms
- Demonstrate dynamic shifts within their concert repertoire
- Demonstrate solfege singing and the solfege hand signs
- Differentiate between melody and harmony
- Differentiate between notes and rests
- Identify beats and their subdivisions
- Identify pitches on the staff
- Read and understand simple meters and time signatures
- Understand and demonstrate pulse

Assessments

Formative:

- Whiteboard responses
- Sticky Ball Identification
- Rhythm Flashcards
- Name a note game
- Pitch identification on MusicTheory.net
- 2-measure compositions

- Clapping performances
- Marking scores

Summative:

- Students will take 1 short written quiz on notes, rests, and other basic terminology
- 1 clapping assessment
- A unit test that is the culmination of these assessments and will have a composition portion in which students will demonstrate their understanding of all concepts by creating an 8 measure rhythmic piece

Suggested Activities

- Activities to aurally differentiate between beat and rhythm. Practice/drill Hal Leonard rhythm flashcards. Play specific patterns as ostinati on classroom percussion to accompany rounds. Use rhythms in games such as Music Baseball, Rhythm Bingo, or Forbidden Rhythm. Make rhythmic dictation a routine classroom activity.
- Practice/drill using activities such as Pitch Bingo, worksheets, Music Concentration, Music Baseball, Music Jeopardy, "50 in 5," etc. Identify pitches in current pieces on specific vocal lines.
- Identifying specific measures in current repertoire, worksheets, conducting practice.
- Direct instruction, highlighting scale-wise motion in repertoire, singing major and minor scales, worksheets, aural drill, SMART board activities.
- Direct instruction, worksheet, applying skills to current repertoire
- Score search to find symbols and markings in repertoire
- Highlight similarities between writing a paragraph and writing in music. Practice improvising to build confidence in creating music on the spot. Assign composition projects that incorporate specific patterns.

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

- Use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles
- peer scaffolding to support learning
- adjusting questions
- peer and teacher modeling for demonstration
- acceleration/deceleration
- hands-on tools (tongue depressors, mirrors, books on abdomen) for reinforcement
- rubrics.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

ELA: Visual literacy, discipline specific vocabulary

Math: attend to precision, make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, model with mathematics, look for and make use of structure

Technology: Exposure to/use of multimedia approaches to learning

Resources

- *Essentials of Music Theory Complete* by Surnami, Surnami, and Manus. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1998.
- *One Minute Theory* by Ronald Slabbinck and Holly Shaw-Slabbinck. Neil Kjos Music Company.
- *Thirty Days to Melody* by Betsy Henderson. Hal Leonard Corporation, 2003.
- *Thirty Days to Rhythm* by Betsey Henderson. Hal Leonard Corporation, 2002.
- Music Theory.net http://www.musictheory.net/