Unit 1: Rhythmic Literacy

Content Area: **Music**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **ongoing**
Status: **Published**

Standards

ELD standards:https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit

1.3C.12acc.Pr4a	Develop and apply criteria to select a varied repertoire to study and perform based on an understanding of theoretical and structural characteristics and expressive challenges in the music, the technical skill of the individual or ensemble, and the purpose and context of the performance.
1.3C.12acc.Pr4b	Document and demonstrate, using music reading skills (where appropriate), how compositional devices employed, and theoretical and structural aspects of musical works, may impact and inform prepared and improvised performances.
1.3C.12acc.Pr4c	Demonstrate how understanding the style, genre and context of a varied repertoire of music influences prepared and improvised performances as well as performers' technical skills to connect with the audience.
1.3C.12acc.Pr5a	Develop and apply appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music and evaluate their success.
1.3C.12acc.Pr6a	Demonstrate mastery of the technical demands and an understanding of expressive qualities of the music in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire representing diverse cultures, styles, genres, and historical periods.
1.3C.12acc.Pr6b	Demonstrate an understanding of intent as a means for connecting with an audience through prepared and improvised performances.
1.3C.12acc.Re7a	Apply criteria to select music for a variety of purposes, justifying choices citing knowledge of the music and the specified purpose and context.
1.3C.12acc.Re7b	Explain how the analysis of structures and contexts inform the response to music.
1.3C.12acc.Re8a	Support interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works citing as evidence the treatment of the elements of music, contexts, the setting of the text (when appropriate), and varied researched sources.
1.3C.12acc.Re9a	Evaluate works and performances based on research as well as personally and collaboratively developed criteria, including analysis and interpretation of the structure and context.

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will explore, describe, perform, and notate common rhythmic patterns found in a variety of jazz styles, including Latin jazz, swing, funk, rock, and jazz ballads. Through listening, analysis, and performance activities, students will develop an understanding of the rhythmic characteristics unique to each style—for example, the syncopated swing feel, the clave-based patterns in Latin jazz, the backbeat-driven grooves of funk and rock, and the rubato phrasing often found in ballads.

Revised August 2025

Transfer

Essential Questions

- How are written rhythms performed?
- How do you notate music that you hear?
- What are the rules of notation?
- What is the purpose of music notation?

Essential Understandings

- all performers are responsible for establishing time.
- the most common way to interpret and master standard jazz notation is to listen to recordings and gain performance experience within the style notated.
- the most commonly performed styles of jazz include Latin, swing, funk, rock, and ballad.
- the performance of jazz rhythm is affected by style and culture and is unique to jazz literature.
- Music notation functions to display pitch and rhythm, allowing the transfer of a musical idea from the mind to the instrument.

Students Will Know

- how to interpret and perform rhythmic notation patterns in various styles of jazz (Latin, swing, funk, rock, ballad).
- how to perform rhythmic sight-reading in the following time signatures: 4/4, 2/4, 3/4, 5/4, 6/4, 3/8, 6/8 (2 beat, 6 beat).
- the function of the rhythm section.
- the rules of music notation in jazz (Latin, swing, funk, rock, ballad)

Students Will Be Skilled At

- Identifying mistakes in music notation.
- Performing ideas written in a variety of styles.
- Writing basic ideas using appropriate and accurate music notation.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

- complete writing exercises –– have students notate familiar rhythms using jazz notation.
- discuss the essential questions and key concepts prior to reading, rehearsing, or listening to a jazz “chart.”
- evaluate and critique ensemble rehearsals: written and aural.
- improvise rhythms and melodies.
- perform in private and public.
- rehearse and recreate jazz rhythms from jazz “charts” within small and large group settings.
- transcribe solos from the literature.

Learning Plan

- Create warm-up activities to reinforce necessary rhythms and issues of time and pulse.
- Discuss and model improvisation of jazz rhythms within a particular style of jazz.
- Discuss the essential questions and key concepts prior to reading, rehearsing, or listening to a jazz “chart.”
- Evaluate performances aurally and through written expression.
- Group learning activity – Alter the rehearsal setting and listening responsibilities of the ensemble.
- Group learning activity – Have students create improvised solos within a particular style using learned notation and rhythmic foundations.
- Group learning activity – Have students rehearse desired sections of music in small group settings, such as sectionals.
- Group learning activity – Have students rehearse the desired sections of music in large group settings.
- Identify and rehearse essential rhythms that are particular to a jazz style before reading the entire “chart.”
- Listen to standard recordings of various jazz charts within a desired style prior to reading or rehearsing a new “chart.”
- Perform for each other and for the public.
- Writing exercise –– Have students write/recreate notated rhythms in various time signatures appropriate to the desire style.

Materials

- Rhythm examples from literature to be performed or learned in class.
- Rhythm reading sheets from "Rhythmic Mastery"
- Smartboard and speakers

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

Jazz Band QSAC Accommodations and Modifications

- Give different examples of varying difficulty for transcription.
- Have different levels of rhythmic sheets that the students work from to address their different learning levels.
- Have layers of rhythm when performing together.
- Require more experienced students to complete longer assignments.
- Require more experienced students to complete same length assignments faster.