

# Music Literacy 13 Step Unit Plan

## Preparatory Level

The Music Literacy Unit Plan is a 13 step process used to teach each rhythmic or melodic concept. Each concept is taught sequentially. A melody unit may be taught simultaneously with a rhythm unit as long as the songs in the melodic unit utilize rhythms the children already know. The activities in the 13 step process may require eight to ten fifteen minute lessons to complete.

The 13 steps for mastering each music concept are described below. Quality folk songs appropriate for the age of the child are provided in each rhythmic or melodic unit. Five songs from each unit should be chosen by the teacher and listed on the Unit Plan form. The Unit Plan Form, found after the Documentation and Assessment section, is used to track the 13 step process described below for teaching a music concept. For ease of use, completed forms for each rhythm and melody unit in this collection may be found after the Song and Rhyme Index.

### **PREPARATION**

1. **Songs - Rote** - Teach the first three chosen songs of a unit by rote until the children can sing them with confidence.

Techniques:

- A. ECHOING - The teacher sings a short phrase and the students repeat it. The short phrases are combined to create longer phrases in turn echoed by the students until the entire song is sung by the teacher and then the class.

### **PRESENTATION - Discovery**

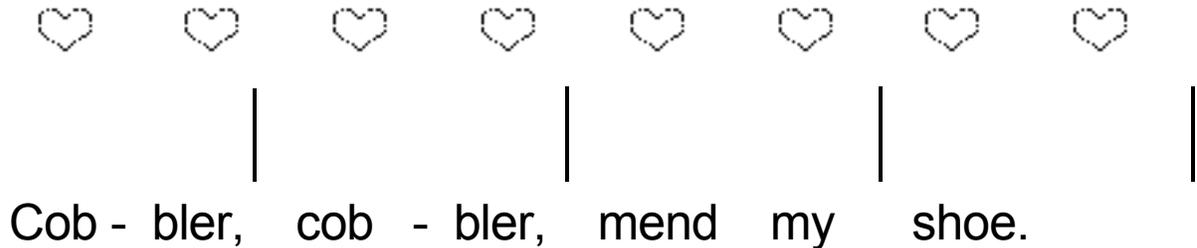
2. **Songs - Discover Concept Aurally, Present Syllables, Present Visually** - Isolate the sound of the new rhythmic or melodic concept aurally before presenting the visual symbol. The rhythmic and melodic syllables used in this program are provided in each music concept unit. (The Preparatory Level uses words to describe instead of syllables). Rhythmic and melodic teaching suggestions are described below.

**BEAT** - The beat is the basic concept from which the foundation of rhythm is built. Feeling and patting the beat while singing songs and listening to music with an evident pulse are fundamental activities from which all rhythmic concepts should evolve. Once the concept of identifying the beat through feeling the pulse is mastered, the next step is to follow a visual representation of the beat. A heart symbol is used to



metaphorically relate to the way a human heart beats. Songs in each rhythm unit have pictures of hearts in the music score to indicate beat. Appropriate terminology and definitions should be made known for symbols, such as; bar line, double bar line, and measure.

Song example: "Cobbler, Cobbler"



**RHYTHM** - Rhythm concepts are taught having the students clap the words or word syllables in a song. Beat remains steady and does not change. Rhythm is different from beat in that it varies with long, short, or no sounds.

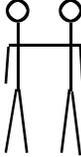
Techniques:

A. **Discover Concept Aurally - Present Syllables - Present Visually -**

**Beat** - Sing the words to the song while patting the beat.

1. Select a short phrase or measure that contains the unknown rhythm.
2. Use four large hearts cut from construction paper as a visual aid. Place them on a white board to represent each beat. Point to the four beats which include the unknown concept while the children sing the lyrics and pat the beats on their lap.
3. Repeat the selection clapping the rhythm and singing the words while pointing to the beats.
4. One beat at a time, stop and identify how many words (syllables) occur per beat and describe the sounds using terms such as long, short or no sound.
5. By each heart, select children as human notes to represent the rhythm of the words that occur on each beat (see below). A beat with no sound is vacant. Identify known rhythm sounds if present.
6. Sing the selection using words while looking at the children.
7. Present the words that describe the new rhythm-long, short,short, etc.
8. Clap the rhythm using these words while looking at the children.
9. Present the visual representation of the rhythm in pictorial format.

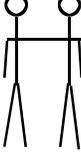
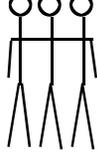
Song example: "Apple Tree" - (Four beats from a familiar phrase).

			
			
"Ap-ple short-short	tree, long	ap-ple short-short	tree..." long

2

					
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When referring to meter with the children, 2 will be used to designate a march beat feel and 6 will be used to designate a sway beat feel. Guide children to realize there are two short sounds per march beat and three short sounds per sway beat. The number of short sounds per beat will indicate the type of beat and meter. Examples of rhythms taught in the Preparatory Level are shown below.

						
Human notes:						
Descriptive Words:	long	short-short	long	short-short-short		
Pictorial Format:						
Traditional Notation:	$\frac{2}{4}$ 		$\frac{6}{8}$ 			

**MELODY** - Melodic concepts should be taught in a process similar to rhythm. Each sound should be analyzed and compared to one another.

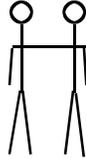
Techniques:

**A. Discover Concept Aurally - Present Syllables - Present Visually - Low - High - Up**

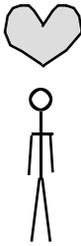
**Beat** - Sing the words to the song while patting the beat. Sing the song again while clapping the rhythm.

1. Determine the known rhythms one beat at a time using children as human notes as previously described in the rhythm section.
- 2a. Identify the sounds of *mi* and *so* - The teacher sings alone the selection asking the students to compare the pitches as to which sounds *high* or *low*. As each pitch is analyzed have the children stand for *high* and kneel for *low* (see 3a next).
- 2b. Identify the sound of “*la*” - Determine the starting pitch of the selection as *high* or *low*. Sing the words and analyze each known pitch as being *high* or *low* as mentioned in 2a. When the sound of *la* occurs, ask the children if the word is sung higher or lower than the known pitches. Once the new pitch is identified as being higher than *so*, call this sound *up* indicating it is higher than *high*. Raise the hand above the head for this new pitch.
3. Then, sing the the selection using *high*, *low* and *up* where appropriate.
4. Sing the words of the song while looking at the children to see if the rhythm and melody match the sounds the human notes represent.
5. To introduce the written symbols for pitch, use a transparency of the first page found at the beginning of the melodic unit showing the concept of *high*, *low*, or *up* in pictorial format.

Song example: “Apple Tree”

						
						
	“Ap-ple high-high	tree, low	ap-ple high-high	tree...” low		
2						

Examples of pitches taught in the Preparatory Level are shown below.

			
Human Notes:			
Descriptive Words:	low	high	up
Pictorial Format:			

**LEARNING**

**3. Songs - Syllables (Teacher Guided) -**

Techniques:

**RHYTHM**

- A. The teacher claps and sings (or speaks) a pattern, phrase, or song with words. The students copy the teacher. The teacher then claps and sings (or speaks) the rhythm of the selection using the words *long*, or *short-short*, etc. to identify the rhythm. A rest may be indicated by opening the hands on the beat instead of clapping. Whispering *sh* may be added to indicate the beat of silence. The students copy the teacher.

**MELODY**

- A. The teacher sings a phrase of a song with words. The students repeat the phrase. The teacher then sings the phrase using the words *high*, *low*, or *up* where appropriate to identify the pitches. The students copy the teacher.
- B. The teacher sings simple patterns using the words *high*, *low*, or *up* to compare the pitches and gain familiarity with the sounds. The students repeat.

**4. Songs - Read (Teacher Guided)**

Techniques:

**RHYTHM**

- 1. The teacher demonstrates by clapping and singing (or speaking) using the words *long*, *short-short*, or no sound for a rest while reading a pictorial representation of the rhythm to a known song. The students repeat.

- Identify the number that represents the meter and what it represents.  
Explain what rhythm patterns occur within the beat.

**MELODY**

- The teacher sings the melody of a song using the words *low*, *high*, and *up* while looking at the pictorial representation of the melody to a known song. The students repeat.

**5. Songs 1-3: Aurally Identify Concept Using Syllables (Teacher Guided)**

**Techniques:**

- The teacher sings a song replacing lyrics with words, *long*, *short-short*, or no sound for a rest while clapping the rhythm, or *low*, *high*, and *up* for melody. The students identify the song by thinking a song they know that matches the pattern. The children check an answer by singing the song in their head, then singing it out loud. After the song is identified, the children sing the song or phrases with the descriptive words instead of the lyrics.
- The teacher sings a phrase of a song with lyrics. The children repeat the phrase using *long*, *short*, *low*, *high*, and *up* instead of lyrics to identify the music concepts.

**6. Songs - Write (Teacher Guided)**

**Techniques:**

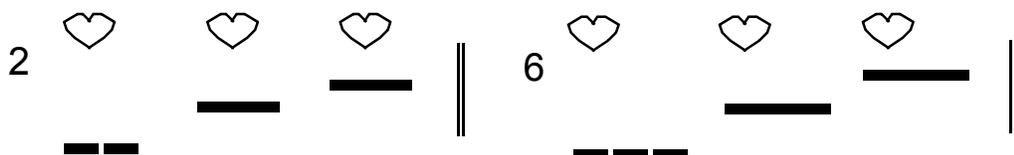
**RHYTHM**

- Use a transparency and overhead projector for all to see and copy. Select a writing page of a known song that has the new rhythm missing. Sing the song using lyrics while following the rhythms. Analyze the words and write the missing rhythms by placing lines to indicate the long and short sounds under the beats.



**MELODY**

- Using a transparency and overhead projector for all to see and copy, the teacher uses a known song from the unit and adds the missing pitches by placing the lines *low*, *high*, and *up* as indicated by the melody after analyzing the sounds.



## 7. **Songs - Read New** (Use songs 4 and 5, if applicable 6, from the chosen list.)

### RHYTHM

1. Identify the meter and type of beat.
2. The students clap and read the pictorial representation of the rhythm using the words *long* and *short* to identify the patterns.
3. The students and teacher slowly sound out and read the words. After the words are identified, speak the words in rhythm while clapping the pictorial representation. The teacher demonstrates and the student's repeat.
4. Discuss the meaning of the words.
5. The melody is taught by rote.

### MELODY

- (Read the rhythm pattern of a new song or pattern as listed above 1-5).
6. Establish the sounds of *mi*, *so*, and *la* using the words *low*, *high*, and *up*. Identify the starting pitch of the song or pattern.
  7. The children read the pictorial representation and sing the melody using the words *low*, *high*, and *up* for the sounds of *mi*, *so* and *la*.
  8. Echo sing the words to the song while following the pictorial representation of the rhythm and melody.

## 8. **Masterworks - Listen and Read**

### Techniques:

- A. Listen to a masterwork while reading known rhythmic or melodic concepts.

**Note:** Masterworks are currently not available in the Preparatory Level.

## 9. **Songs - Play Instruments**

### Techniques:

- A. Use rhythm or melody instruments to read notation in pictorial format.

## 10. **Songs 4-5: Aurally Identify Concept Using Syllables**

### Techniques:

- A. The teacher sings or speaks one or two measures of a song with lyrics. The children repeat the pattern analyzing and identifying the sounds using words such as *long*, *short*, *low*, *high* and *up*.
- B. The students clap and sing (or speak) a song using words such as *long*, *short*, *low*, *high*, and *up* identifying the rhythm or melody of familiar pieces.

- C. *Patterns* - Using neutral syllables or instruments, the teacher performs a pattern which contains the music concept. The students repeat the pattern orally using the words *long, short, low, high, and up* to identify the known musical concepts.

## 11. Songs - Write (Assess)

Techniques:

- A. Choose song with a writing page from the concept unit. The student's write the rhythm and melody concepts as shown in step 6.
- B. Use the written form "What Do You Hear?" provided in the concept unit. The teacher plays on a melodic or rhythmic instrument one pattern from the group of two. The student's circle the correct pattern heard.

## 12. Compose / Perform

Techniques:

- A. The student's use the "Compose" form provided in each unit to create a simple musical piece indicating known rhythms and pitches using *long, short, low, high, and higher* lines.
- B. The students perform their compositions.
- C. The students evaluate each other's composition.

## 13. Improvise

Techniques:

### RHYTHM

- A. Student's improvise demonstrating the concepts of *long, short, and rest* by saying, and clapping or playing on instruments, short rhythmic patterns.
- B. Using the known rhythmic concepts of *long, short, and rest*, the teacher improvises a rhythmic "question". In response, the student's improvise a rhythmic "answer".

### MELODY

- A. Student's improvise demonstrating the concepts of *low, high and up* by singing, and/or playing on instruments, short melodic patterns.
- B. Using the known melodic concepts of *low, high and up*, the teacher improvises a melodic "question". In response, the student's improvise a melodic "answer".
- C. Using designated known pitches, the student sings a response with words that describe a subject or mood.

## **PRACTICE**

After a music concept has been learned, continue practicing the concept by repeating one of the 13 steps using a known or new song. Concepts will be reinforced in song material presented in subsequent units.