



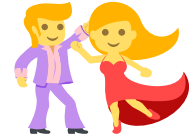
NAME _____

DATE _____

Starts with a B: A-B-A

BRAHMS Waltz in A-flat Major, op. 39, no. 15

COUNTING IN MUSIC



A waltz is a type of ballroom dance that was popular in Europe in the 17th century. A waltz is always in **triple meter**, or beat groupings of 3. **Meter** is how we “feel” music: the rhythmic pattern in music created by the combination of strong and weak beats in different groupings. Let’s watch a [video](#) of a group of dancers performing a waltz!

What do you notice about the dancing? Are all steps equal, or are some steps bigger than the other?

We can think of the big steps as falling on strong beats, and the smaller steps falling on weak beats. The dancers are taking bigger steps on the strong beats, which in this dance falls on beat 1. Visually, we can imagine the strong and weak beats this way:

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do we define meter in music?

2. What is triple meter?

3. What is the strong beat in triple meter? How about the weak beat(s)?

LET’S WALTZ!

Now let’s try it ourselves to see how triple meter feels! Start counting out loud to 3 at a steady pace, and clap along to help feel the beat. Now take a big step forward every time you say “1,” and stand in place for counts 2 and 3. You can also say “1” loudly and whisper “2 - 3” while you do this. Chances are, you will start doing one or both of those things automatically as you start to feel the pulse of the music!

1 2 3
STEP!

1 2 3
STEP!

1 2 3
STEP!