



CLASS ACTIVITY (SOCIALY DISTANT): SYNCOPIATION CHALLENGE

OVERVIEW

In this activity, students will use a combination of rhythm sticks and body percussion to explore syncopated rhythms.

MATERIALS: Rhythm sticks (1 pair per student), large chalk board or white board

INSTRUCTIONS

Begin with the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 written on the board with space in between each. Have the students join you on their rhythm sticks in a steady 4-beat quarter note pattern. Explain that these are the “downbeats.” Then, add the “upbeats” to the board by adding a + between each number.

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

Have the class speak this beat pattern with you as “1, and, 2, and, 3, and, 4, and,” using their rhythm sticks on the downbeats (1, 2, 3, 4) as they did in the first 4-beat pattern. Next, add in the rhythm sticks on the upbeats (+, “and”). Then lead the class in practicing speaking and playing only on the downbeats, and then only on the upbeats. Have the group repeat until they are comfortable.

Now underline some of the downbeats and upbeats on the board. For any downbeats or upbeats on the board that are NOT underlined, the class must stay completely silent. For example:

1 ± 2 ± 3 + 4 +

After the class plays the beat pattern, erase the lines and underline different downbeats and upbeats to create a new syncopated rhythm for them to play. For older groups, have a different student underline the new rhythm each time. This activity can be repeated as desired.

OPTIONAL

Turn the activity into a competition of class vs. teacher. For every rhythm that the class plays correctly, they receive 1 point. Every time the class plays on a non-underlined beat, the teacher receives 1 point. The first to 5 points wins.