

Rhythm composition grid

Rhythm is the part of composing you can get completely right or completely wrong, and the marker can check it with arithmetic. Get the sums right first; then make the rhythm interesting.

THE ARITHMETIC

COUNTED IN CROTCHET BEATS

VALUE	BEATS	DOTTED	TWO OF THEM MAKE
Semibreve · whole note	4	6	—
Minim · half note	2	3	a semibreve
Crotchet · quarter note	1	1½	a minim
Quaver · eighth note	½	¾	a crotchet
Semiquaver · sixteenth	¼	⅜	a quaver

A dot adds half of what it follows. A tie adds the two values together across a barline or a beat. The bottom number of the time signature says which value gets the beat — so in 3/8 the quaver is the beat and there are three of them, and the same three quavers written in 3/4 are only one beat long.

THREE RULES THAT EARN MARKS

GROUPING, RESTS, UPBEAT

- Beam within the beat, not across it.** In 4/4, four quavers beam in two pairs, one pair to a beat. In 6/8 they beam in threes, because the dotted crotchet is the beat.
- Rests fill to the beat, then to the bar.** Use one rest for a whole silent beat rather than two halves, and never a rest that straddles the middle of the bar.
- An upbeat is borrowed, not free.** If the piece starts with an incomplete bar, the last bar is short by exactly the same amount.

A · COMPLETE THE BAR

NAME THE SINGLE VALUE THAT FINISHES IT

1	4/4 · minim + crotchet	_____	7	2/4 · dotted quaver + semiquaver	_____
2	3/4 · dotted crotchet + quaver	_____	8	4/4 · dotted minim	_____
3	6/8 · dotted crotchet + crotchet	_____	9	3/8 · quaver + quaver	_____
4	4/4 · crotchet + two quavers + dotted crotchet	_____	10	9/8 · two dotted crotchets	_____
5	2/2 · minim + crotchet	_____	11	5/4 · semibreve	_____
6	3/4 · four quavers	_____	12	12/8 · three dotted crotchets	_____

B · WHAT IS WRONG WITH IT?

A FEW WORDS EACH

13	4/4 · eight quavers beamed as one group of eight	_____	15	3/4 · a crotchet upbeat, and a full last bar	_____
14	6/8 · six quavers, then a crotchet rest	_____	16	4/4 · a semibreve rest, then a crotchet	_____

C · write the rhythms

Ticks below the line mark the beats

NAME _____

DATE _____

Write on the single line — noteheads and stems only, no pitches. Each grid is four bars. Beam within the beat, and make bar 3 answer bar 1.

17 · 4/4, four bars

Use at least one pair of quavers and one dotted note



18 · 3/4, four bars

Begin with a crotchet upbeat, and leave the last bar a beat short



19 · 6/8, four bars

Two beats a bar · beam the quavers in threes



20 · your own metre

Write the time signature in, then rule your own beat ticks



PATTERNS TO BORROW

IF A BAR WILL NOT START ITSELF

• **Long-short-short.** Crotchet, then two quavers.

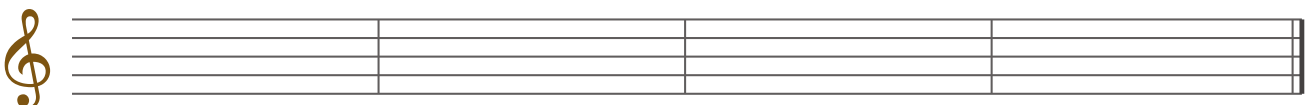
• **The dotted pair.** Dotted crotchet, then quaver.

• **Short-short-long.** Two quavers into a minim.

D · TURN ONE RHYTHM INTO MUSIC

PICK THE RHYTHM YOU LIKE BEST

Copy it onto the stave below and add pitches in C major or A minor. The rhythm decides the shape; the notes only have to keep it in key and end on the tonic.



ANSWER KEY

SECTIONS A AND B · C AND D ARE MARKED BY THE TEACHER

A · COMPLETE THE BAR

1 A crotchet. 2 A crotchet. 3 A quaver — 6/8 holds six quavers, and a dotted crotchet plus a crotchet is five. 4 A quaver. 5 A crotchet — 2/2 is two minim beats, so four crotchets' worth. 6 A crotchet.

7 A crotchet. 8 A crotchet. 9 A quaver. 10 A dotted crotchet. 11 A crotchet. 12 A dotted crotchet.

B · WHAT IS WRONG

13 The beaming ignores the beat. Eight quavers in 4/4 beam as four pairs, or as two groups of four if the beat groups allow — never as one group of eight.

14 The bar is too long. Six quavers already fill 6/8; the crotchet rest adds two more quavers' worth.

15 The last bar should be short by a crotchet, because the upbeat borrowed one. Together the first and last bars must add up to one full bar.

16 A semibreve rest fills the whole of a 4/4 bar on its own, so the crotchet has nowhere to go. Use a minim rest and a crotchet rest instead, or rewrite the bar.

C AND D · WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Every bar adds up · beams sit inside the beat · rests go to the beat before the bar · the upbeat and the final bar balance · bar 3 recognisably answers bar 1 rather than starting again.