

Day 2

Creating our own music



Day 2: Creating our own music

Introduction

Even if we do not own a musical instrument or have never taken a music lesson, we can make our own music. We can make music with our voices, with our bodies, and with objects around us. We'll look at how children and adults throughout history and around the world have used hand-clapping, foot-stomping, and found objects to make and share music.

Questions to guide explorations

- How do we make our own music?
 - Do you have to take lessons or own an instrument to make music?
 - What can we do with our own voices? Our bodies?
 - Does music have to include melody or can rhythm alone be music?
 - What makes sound?
 - What are the different types of instruments that have been invented?
 - Are new instruments being invented?
 - How are songs with words different from music without words?
 - How can I make up my own song?
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Activities

- **Activity 1:** Making Music with Our Bodies — Hambone
- **Activity 2:** Making Music with a Group — Creating and Conducting Our Orchestra
- **Activity 3:** Making Music with Words — Writing Song Parody Lyrics
- **Activity 4:** Making Music with Words — Writing Rap Lyrics



Children's Books

Fiction

- *Drum City* by Thea Guidone (Ages 3-6)
- *Drum Dream Girl* by Margarita Engle (Ages 6-9)
- *Jazz for Lunch* by Jarrett Dapier (Ages 3-6)
- *Moses Goes to a Concert* by Isaac Millman (Ages 6-9)
- *My Family Plays Music* by Judy Cox (Ages 6-9)
- *Rhythm Rescue* by Vicky Weber (Ages 6-9)
- *Roly-Polies* by Mónica Carretero (Ages 6-9)
- *Violet's Music* by Angela Johnson (Ages 3-6)
- *Wild Symphony* by Dan Brown (Ages 3-6)

Poetry and songs

- *A is for Oboe: The Orchestra's Alphabet* by Lera Auerbach and Marilyn Nelson (Ages 6-9)
- *Hip Hop Dog* by Chris Raschka (Ages 3-6)
- *Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat* by Nikki Giovanni (Ages 9-12)
- *The Carnival of the Animals* by Jack Prelutsky (Ages 6-9)

Nonfiction

- *Music Is for Everyone* by Jill Barber (Ages 6-9)
- *Listen to the Birds: An Introduction to Classical Music* by Ana Gerhard (Ages 6-9)
- *The Roots of Rap* by Carole Boston Weatherford (Ages 6-9)
- *When the Beat Was Born: DJ Kool Herc and the Creation of Hip Hop* by Laban Carrick Hill (Ages 6-9)



Music Words

Baton

A light, thin stick used by a conductor to guide an orchestra or a choir.

Beatboxing

Using various mouth sounds, such as clicks, pops, and exhales to make a beat.

Call and response

A leader sings or plays a musical phrase and a follower repeats it back.

Choral Director or choirmaster

A conductor who leads a chorus or choir.

Conductor

The person who leads the musicians in an orchestra or band.

Dynamics

The volume of the music — how soft or loud.

Hamboning

Using the body to create percussion, such as finger snapping, chest tapping, foot stomping. Hamboning is a style of body percussion that evolved during the slavery of African Americans.

Lyrics

The words of a song.



Melody

A series of notes played in an order that is memorable and recognizable. Also described as the tune of a song.

Orchestra

A large group of musicians who play together on a variety of string, wind, and percussion instruments. The conductor leads the group of musicians.

Percussion

Rhythmic sound that can be made by using drums, instruments, or the body. Percussion instruments include drums, cymbals, gongs, xylophones, bells, and rattles.



Rap

A genre of music developed in the 1970s by disc jockeys and urban Black performers involving rhyming lyrics over a recurring beat. Rap is often improvised and often spoken, rather than sung.

Rhythm

A strong, regular, repeated pattern of sound or movement.

Slant rhyme (or near rhyme)

A type of rhyme with words that have similar, but not identical sounds. For example, *late* and *today* share the long “a” sound.

Song parody

New words (often funny) for an existing song.

Tempo

The speed of a musical piece or song.



Activity 1: Making Music with Our Bodies — Hambone

Introduction

Many cultures around the world use hand-clapping, finger-snapping, chest-thumping, toe-tapping, and more to create **rhythms**. **Hamboning** is a style of singing and body **percussion** created by enslaved Africans in North America. Not allowed to use their traditional drums, the people found ways to make rhythms with their bodies.

Supplies

No special supplies needed!

Prepare

Viewing the videos listed in this lesson can help you feel comfortable leading the activities. See Step 2 on the next page.

Get kids thinking

Write the words “Creating Our Own” on the Music Mural.

Ask: Imagine you want to make music without using any instrument. What could you do to make a sound? The kids might sing, clap their hands, snap their fingers, etc.

Let’s get started

Step 1

Write “Hambone” on the Music Mural. Explain that you’ll be learning about and practicing hamboning, which is a tradition of “playing the body” as an instrument. Talk about why most enslaved people didn’t have access to musical instruments.



Activity 1: Making Music with Our Bodies — Hambone

(continued from previous page)



Step 2

View any or all of the videos below:

“Christylez Bacon and Steve Hickman — Beatbox meets Hambone 2013”

<https://youtu.be/jBW9IWHkDRw>

“John Dee Holeman and Dom Flemons — Hambone”

<https://youtu.be/6mOd4PheLTA>

“The Story of Hambone” by Diane Ferlatte

<https://youtu.be/VIC469NOqbw>

Invite kids to draw hands clapping or add the hand-clapping image from the Printables section (see page 68) to the Music Mural.



Activity 1: Making Music with Our Bodies — Hambone

(continued from previous page)

Step 3

Sit or stand in a circle. Make up one simple four-count rhythm. For example, to an even rhythm, clap your hands together twice and then tap your chest with your palm twice.

1 2 3 4
clap clap tap tap

Ask the kids to repeat it. Then, ask for a volunteer to come up with a different four-count rhythm for the group to repeat. Encourage them to make sounds with different parts of the body — tapping knees, tapping feet, etc. Go around the circle, giving each kid a chance to create and teach a rhythm.

Step 4

Try hamboning a name song. First decide on a four-count rhythm (knee tap, knee tap, clap, clap). Then chant the words of this simple name song as you do the rhythm:

I am Kiera I am here.
Tap Tap Clap Clap

Ask the kids to repeat it.

Encourage each kid to hambone their own name song. Younger kids can use the same structure — I am (name) and I am here. Older kids can make up their own rhythmic chant to announce their presence.

Note: What you're doing when you demonstrate a rhythm or a melody and then ask the group to repeat it back to you is a technique called **call and response**.



Activity 2: Making Music with a Group — Creating and Conducting Our Orchestra

Introduction

An **orchestra** is a group of musicians who all play together. The **conductor** is the musician who leads them. We'll practice being a conductor and create our own orchestra.

Supplies

- Online video: "What does a conductor do?" (Your Classical MPR)
https://youtu.be/x_6cTbyWP88
- Optional **baton** (a pencil or stick is fine) — please note that conducting can be done with hands only if you are concerned about safety issues.
- Optional plastic drinking cups — if you're learning the cup rhythm song (see page 56).



Prepare

Familiarize yourself with the video "What does a conductor do" (link above).

Get kids thinking

Ask: What does a train conductor do? Have you ever heard of an orchestra conductor? Any ideas why both are called conductors? Kids might make the connection that a train conductor gives signals, stops and starts a train, decides when a train should go faster or slower, and generally keeps the train on the track. An orchestra conductor does similar things with the orchestra.

Write the word "Conductor" on the Music Mural.



Activity 2: Making Music with a Group — Creating and Conducting Our Orchestra

(continued from previous page)

Let's get started

Step 1

Watch the video: "What does a conductor do?" (Your Classical MPR)

https://youtu.be/x_6cTbyWP88

Talk about the ideas presented in the video. Conductors use arm gestures to communicate with musicians so the musicians stay "on track." Conductors cue them so the musicians know these basics:

- When to start playing
- How to stick to a rhythm or beat
- When to play louder or softer
- When to play faster or slower

Invite kids to draw a conductor on the Music Mural or add the image of the conductor from the Printables section (see page 69).

Step 2

Ask all the kids to pretend that they are conductors and practice making the basic four-part gesture for a four-beat rhythm (right hand **down**, to the **left**, to the **right, up**).

Say the words **down, left, right, up** as you and the kids practice conducting. Also practice doing this without saying the words and saying the counts instead: **one, two, three, four**.

Now, practice changing that same pattern to give special cues:

- To make musicians play louder, make your gestures bigger or stronger.
- To make musicians play softer, make your gestures smaller or softer.
- To make musicians play faster, make your gestures faster.
- To make musicians play slower, make your gestures slower.



Activity 2: Making Music with a Group — Creating and Conducting Our Orchestra

(continued from previous page)

Also, practice cueing musicians to come in by pointing with hand palm up or index finger. Experiment with different ways of giving a cue for musicians to stop. Often a conductor will turn both hands down to end.

Step 3

Explain that you'll all be creating an orchestra and each kid can take a turn conducting.

Ask the kids to first become the musicians and sit facing the "audience."

Split your orchestra into four sections and choose a different body percussion sound that each section will make. You can decide what the sounds are, but here are suggestions:

- Section 1: finger snapping
- Section 2: foot tapping
- Section 3: chest tapping
- Section 4: hand clapping

For example, if you have a group of 12, four will snap fingers, four will tap their feet, four will tap their chests, and four will clap their hands. Get a beat going by saying **one, two, three, four** as you do the conductor's hand gesture for a four-count rhythm, and then ask them to all start "playing" when you cue them to begin.

Practice making them go louder and softer by making your gestures bigger and smaller. Practice making them go faster or slower by speeding up or slowing down your gestures. Finally, end the "song" by bringing both hands down.

Step 4

Letting kids have a turn to conduct can be fun. Make the ritual special by having them walk in, bow to the audience, and then turn to face the musicians — all while the musicians are silent and ready.

If your kid conductors aren't clear with their gestures, the kid musicians will not know what to do. This is a great learning experience. Keep each turn short. As you are changing conductors, allow the kid musicians to change what section they are in to keep the musicians from getting bored.



Activity 2: Making Music with a Group — Creating and Conducting Our Orchestra

(continued from previous page)

Option: Create and conduct a “vocal orchestra”

A conductor who leads a chorus or choir is often called a [choral director](#) or [choirmaster](#).

You can do the same conducting activity with vocals rather than body percussion.

To do this, follow all the steps above, but ask your different sections in your chorus to each make a different vocal sound. One section might sing *la la la*, another section might sing *doo wabba doo*, etc.

Share the voice orchestra recording: <https://tinyurl.com/mrhz4jbc>

In it, you’ll hear four different sound motifs that are sung separately and then together. After you’re done listening to it, split your group into four sections and assign them each one of the “parts.” You can all sing along with the recording or use the same sound motifs to improvise a new masterpiece.

You can also decide on a familiar song for your chorus, such as “Twinkle, Twinkle” and have your conductor lead the chorus in making that song speed up, slow down, or get softer or louder.

Note: One of the activities for Day 3 is learning about a famous orchestra that played instruments made from recycled materials and you’ll have a chance to create and conduct an orchestra that uses common objects.





Activity 2: Making Music with a Group — Creating and Conducting Our Orchestra

(continued from previous page)

Option: Create percussion and rhythm with the cup song

In the opening sequence of Playing for Change’s version of Kool and the Gang’s “Celebration” song video (<https://youtu.be/8Lu41LulQos>), you can see a great example of cup rhythm. Kids love learning this routine. This rhythm is played as a game and has been used in the popular movie *Pitch Perfect*. The videos below show and/or teach the rhythm.

“Anna Kendrick Cups” (Pitch Perfect’s “When I’m Gone”)

A demonstration of using ordinary cups and claps to create percussion for a song.

<https://youtu.be/cmSbXsFE3l8>

“The Easiest Cup Song Tutorial” (destined4life)

A slow-motion tutorial on doing the rhythmic cup motions for the cup song.

<https://youtu.be/Y5kYLOb6i5l>

“Cups!” (Kaboom Percussion)

A demonstration of using ordinary cups to create percussion only.

<https://youtu.be/NSFieUSfxGU>

“Cup Challenge #2” (Kaboom Percussion)

A funny game using cup percussion (with surprises!).

<https://youtu.be/qQJp536YioU>





Activity 2: Making Music with a Group — Creating and Conducting Our Orchestra

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Additional resources

“What Do a Conductor’s Gestures Mean?” (Rainer Hersch Fan Channel)

An entertaining explanation of what a conductor does.

<https://youtu.be/3G6gGsCjMIU>

“How to Conduct an Orchestra?” (Great Big Story)

An exploration of how different conductors bring out different emotions or feelings.

<https://youtu.be/VI3O4Ju6zx8>

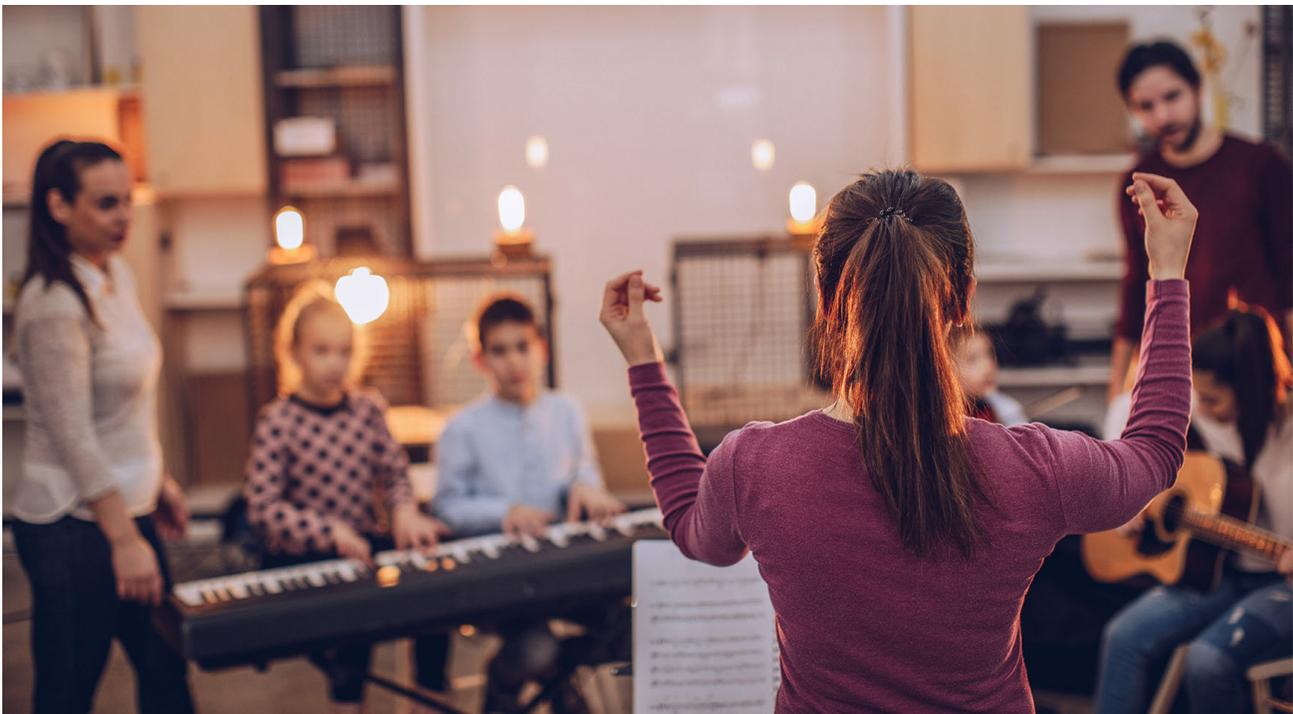
Conductor for a Day (Your Classical)

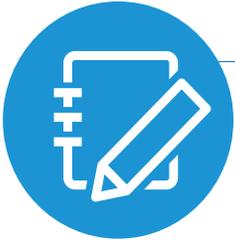
Watch conductor Sarah Hicks explain her job.

<https://www.yourclassical.org/story/2020/04/02/classical-kids-music-lessons-conductor-for-a-day>

“Edward Yudenich (8 years old) conducts Liszt ‘Les Preludes’ (Uzbekistan State Orchestra)

https://youtu.be/v436IGbKL_o





Activity 3: Making Music with Words — Writing Parody Song Lyrics

Introduction

Song parodies can be a fun introduction to songwriting. The idea is to take a song you already know and make up new words for it. Parodies are usually silly or funny.

Supplies

- One copy of the “Parodies to Sing” handout (see Printable on pages 70-72)
- Copies of “Write a Parody” handout — one for each child (see Printable on page 73)
- Pencils
- Option for audio or video recording (a cellphone will work)

Get kids thinking

Remind kids that singers warm up their voices just the way athletes and dancers warm up their muscles. Introduce the vocal warm-up recording and sing along.

Vocal warm-up audio: <https://tinyurl.com/2nfreuwr>

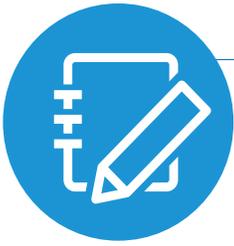
Ask: Have you ever sung a song that is familiar but has funny words that are different from the way the song is supposed to be sung?

Introduce the word parody and write it up on the Music Mural. Cut out the three parodies from the “Parodies to Sing” handout (see Printable on pages 70-72) and ask kids to decorate them and tape them on the music mural.

Let’s get started

Step 1

Sing the three parodies to the three familiar tunes. Ask kids what the original lyrics are. Explain that when you take an existing song and make up new words that is called a parody. Often parodies are funny. Ask if they know any other parodies they can sing.



Activity 3: Making Music with Words Writing Parody Song Lyrics

(continued from previous page)

Step 2

Tell kids that you're all going to write new parodies. Start simply by having them just replace one or two words.

Happy Birthday Parody: Round 1

Happy Birthday to you

Let's go to the zoo

We'll feed all the _____

(name a new animal)

And we'll act like them, too.

Happy Birthday Parody: Round 2

Happy Birthday to you

Let's go to the zoo

We'll feed all the _____

(name a new animal)

And we'll _____ like them, too.

(name something you'll do)

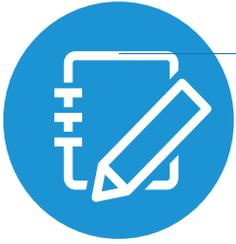
For this last line they might write:

And we'll eat like them, too.

And we'll dance like them, too.

And we'll talk like them, too.





Activity 3: Making Music with Words

Writing Parody Song Lyrics

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Step 3

Older kids will enjoy noticing the patterns and making up all their own words to a song. Pass out copies of the “Write a Parody” handout (see Printable on page 73). Talk through the handout step by step, writing your own parody, too!

Sometimes it can be hard to come up with a rhyme. Encourage kids to ask for brainstorming help. Also rhyming dictionaries (in print or online) can be fun ways to find rhymes.

An online rhyming dictionary can be found here: <https://www.rhymezone.com>

Step 4

Make audio recordings of your parodies, if desired (see “Considerations for Audio/Video Recording” on page 6).

Additional resources

Miss American Pie (Don McLean original version)

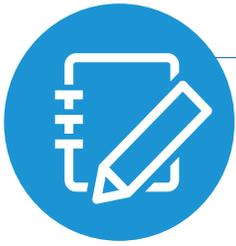
Playing the verse and the chorus will do (you don't need to listen to the full 8-minute song). Maybe even teach kids the chorus so they can really appreciate the parody by “Weird Al” Yankovic (below).

<https://youtu.be/Z13vOA7s0FI>

The Saga Begins (“Weird Al” Yankovic)

A parody of Miss American Pie.

https://youtu.be/9xU_ItuwXA4



Activity 4: Making Music with Words Writing Rap Song Lyrics

Introduction

Our bodies do many wonderful things. They can also be our own little drums. The idea is to create a fun **rap** song and beat out the rhythm on our bodies.

Supplies

- Online video: “Rappin’ and Tappin’ with Gayle Danley” video: <https://youtu.be/vDhialzyJYA>
- Paper
- Pencils or pens
- Option for audio or video recording (a cellphone will work)

Get kids thinking

Read Poet Gayle Danley’s “What Rap Means to Me” and talk about the meaning of rap.



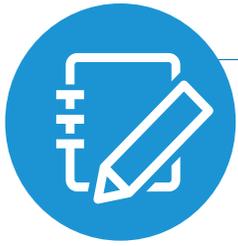
Here’s what Rap is to me! A way of life where beats and rhythm and style all come together. Rap is soul turned into words. It’s that boy riding the city bus keeping his hands busy by writing down his feelings and bringing them alive by tapping the words out on his favorite notebook. It’s the beat of a girl missing her father and sitting on the edge of her bed, laptop on knees, typing out the words he used to say to her and finding the rhythm of his voice with every keystroke. Rap is life explained in words and sweetened by rhythm.

That’s what rap means to me. What does it mean to you?

Ask: Have you ever written a rap but didn’t know how you could create the beat to go with it?

Write the word rap on the Music Mural.

Watch the “Rappin’ and Tappin’ with Gayle Danley” video: <https://youtu.be/vDhialzyJYA>



Activity 4: Making Music with Words — Writing Rap Song Lyrics

(continued from previous page)

This video introduces the different parts of our bodies that can be used as rhythm makers and helps us to “beat out” a song that sounds good and feels good, too. Practice along with the video, encouraging kids to enjoy the rhythm.

Rappin’ and Tappin’ Rap

Where my rhythm?

Where my beat?

Oh yeah

That’s right

It’s in my feet

Where my words

Oh no surprise

Oh yeah

That’s right

It’s in my eyes

All my body is a bop

That’s why they call this groove

Hips hop

I can use ME for my sound

Making beats from foot to crown

Check this out

Ya’ll step aside

Here we go

A rhythm ride

*(snap fingers, wink eyes, tap forehead, swivel neck,
pump chest, tap knees, swing hips, tap feet)*

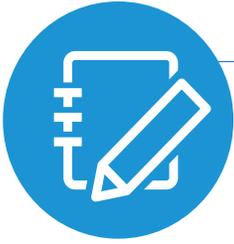
Where my rhythm?

Where my beat?

Oh yeah

That’s right

It’s me me me!



Activity 4: Making Music with Words

Writing Rap Song Lyrics

(continued from previous page)

Let's get started

Step 1

Invite kids to think about what they can rap about. Here are some questions to ask: What's special about you? Did anything special or funny happen that you'd like to write a rap about? Has something made you happy or excited lately that you'd like to tell the world? Or, can you find something interesting about your ordinary day?

Then tell them: decide on one thing to write about and just write down what you're thinking. Don't worry about making it into a rap just yet.

Example 1:

I had a birthday. My party was the jam. We had balloons and cake.

Example 2:

I slept late this morning. I had to hurry to get dressed and I put on two different socks!

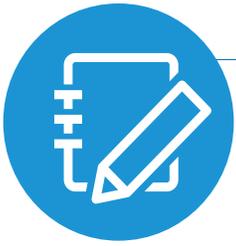
Step 2

See if you can find words that rhyme with words that you've written down. In the first example, JAM could rhyme with I AM. Or CAKE could rhyme with JAKE.

In the second example, LATE could rhyme with HATE.

Remember, a rhyme can be words that just sound good together because they share main sounds. Those kinds of rhymes are called "**near rhymes**" or "**slant rhymes**." For example, LATE could sound good with TODAY because they both share that "a" sound.

Write your rap by putting those rhymes together. Repetition is always a simple way to make a short rap longer! Remind kids there is no right or wrong.



Activity 4: Making Music with Words Writing Rap Song Lyrics

(continued from previous page)

Example 1:

I had a birthday JAM. It was fun just like I AM.

We had balloons and lots of CAKE. I had fun with my boy JAKE.

Example 2:

I slept LATE again TODAY. I HATE it when I sleep too LATE. Got DRESSED so fast I MESSED up.

But YES I think my SOCKS ROCK! YES I think my SOCKS ROCK!

Step 3

Give kids the chance to practice reading their raps out loud. Remind them that they can always take some words out — or add words — to create a tighter rhythm.

For example, after reading the Example 2 rap out loud, you could add a second “got” to one line to make the rhythm better. And taking out “I think” on two lines would tighten the rhythm and make it more fun to say.

I slept LATE again TODAY. I HATE it when I sleep too LATE. Got DRESSED so fast I got MESSED up. But YES my SOCKS ROCK! YES my SOCKS ROCK!

Step 4

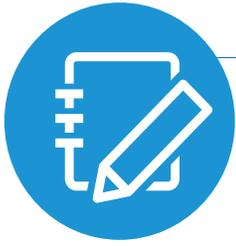
Add movements to your rap using your body. Use your hands and fingertips to tap out your rhythm on your knees, forehead, arms, neck, or legs.

Step 5

Be a role model by creating your own rap. Along with the kids, practice reading yours out loud and beating it out on your body. Bend your knees, shake your head, and tap your feet just like in the video! Kids will follow your example. Remember, older kids might laugh at you and think you’re corny, but showing them that you’re enjoying yourself as a creator and performer is a powerful example.

Step 6 (optional)

If desired, record the raps you have created. Play them for each other, and laugh, giggle, pose, and dance to the rhythm!



Activity 4: Making Music with Words Writing Rap Song Lyrics

(continued from previous page)

Additional resources

Percussive city sounds in the city and slant rhymes

In the first minute of the opening scene from the *In the Heights* movie, you can hear some cool percussive city sounds. And great slant rhymes, such as *awning* and *morning*.

<https://youtu.be/8EbXcVd8jWI>

Billy Collins on slant rhymes (Master Class)

Learn more about slant rhymes, why writers use them, and examples, from poet Billy Collins.

<https://tinyurl.com/bdf6wnyp>

“How to- Basic Beatbox Tutorial” (Binibining Beats)

<https://youtu.be/Bfmv3kTmYR8>

“How to Beatbox Basics in 1 Minute” (Spencer X)

<https://youtu.be/EAHExoZlgjM>

“Gayle Danley: Become a slam poet in five steps” (TED-Ed)

<https://youtu.be/9f8VcV8v2LE>



Open Mic

Encourage kids to perform any of the percussion routines, parodies, or raps that they either learned or wrote today. Other favorite songs are always welcome.

Giving kids a chance to be performers and audience members is the highlight of Tune In!

Learn about how to plan an Open Mic on page 8. Watching this video about how to enjoy performing can help to set the stage for sharing and generosity:

“How to Enjoy Performing” (by Mary Amato)

<https://youtu.be/lx1a8UoNCF8>

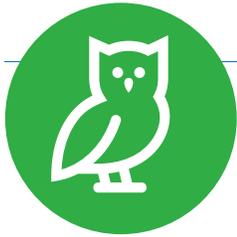


Tune In Tonight

Before kids leave for the day, send them home with this suggestion:

The family dinner table or any family time are great opportunities for music making. After dinner or when you are all together, teach your parody song or rap song to your family and ask them to sing along.





More Kid-Friendly Media

Websites

Chrome Music Lab

<https://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/>

Citizen DJ (Library of Congress)

<https://citizen-dj.labs.loc.gov/>

Dallas Symphony Orchestra for Kids

<https://www.dallassymphony.org/community-education/>

Little Kids Rock

<https://www.littlekidsrock.org/free/>

San Francisco Symphony for Kids

<https://www.sfsymphony.org/EducationCommunity/Music-Connects-Kids>

Smithsonian Folkways

<https://folkways.si.edu/>

Educational apps

Beat Sneak Bandit

<https://www.commonensemedia.org/app-reviews/beat-sneak-bandit>

Incredibox

<https://www.commonensemedia.org/website-reviews/incredibox>

The Orchestra

<https://www.commonensemedia.org/app-reviews/the-orchestra>

Tiny Orchestra

<https://www.commonensemedia.org/app-reviews/tiny-orchestra>

Podcasts

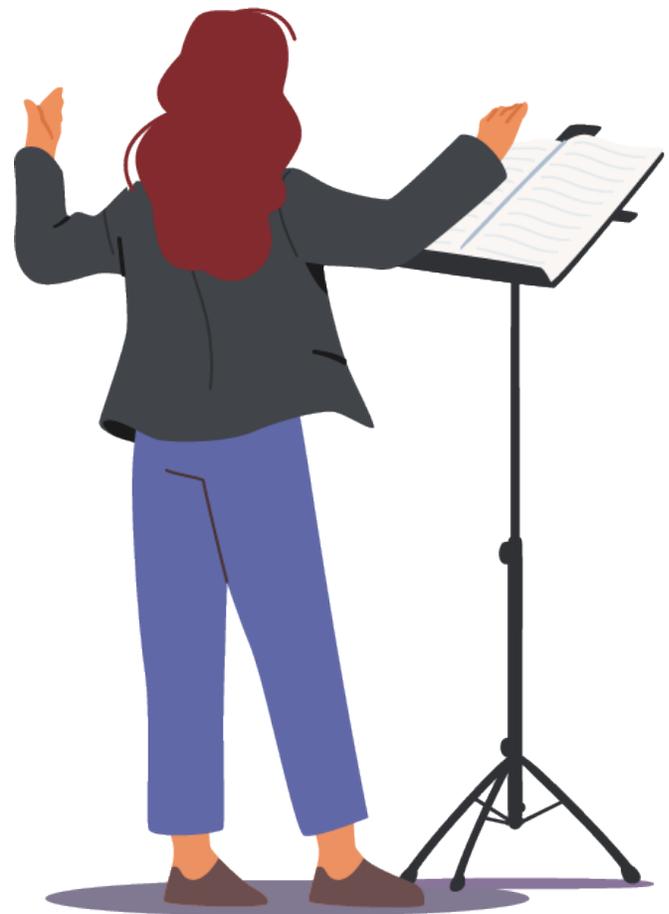
The Music Box audio (Louisville Public Media)

<https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/the-music-box-louisville-public-media-UZdhBxkRSas/>

Clapping hands



Conductor



Parodies to Sing

Happy Birthday Parody

*Happy birthday to you
Let's go to the zoo
We'll feed all the monkeys
And we'll act like them, too.*

Parodies to Sing

Row, Row, Row Your Boat Parody

Sniff, sniff, sniff my feet

Quickly with your nose

Yuck! Yuck! Yuck! Yuck!

My stinky feet smell gross.

Parodies to Sing

Twinkle, Twinkle Parody

Twinkle, twinkle little bug

Why are you upon my rug?

Are you sleeping? Are you dead?

Did you bump your little head?

Twinkle, twinkle little bug

Why are you upon my rug?

Write a Parody

You can make up your own **parody** by writing new words for a song you already know.

Read through the original and then the parody example. Both of these songs use **repetition** and **rhyme**. Which words repeat? Which words rhyme?

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Original

Line 1: Row, row, row your boat

Line 2: Gently down the stream

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily

Line 4: Life is but a dream.

Example

Sniff, sniff, sniff my feet

Quickly with your nose

Yuck! Yuck! Yuck! Yuck!

My stinky feet smell gross

My New Idea

There is no right or wrong way to write a parody. If you want, you can follow the pattern by having lots of repetition on lines 1 and 3. You can also make the last word of line 2 and line 4 rhyme or almost rhyme.