

UNIT ONE

Elements of Music I: Rhythm I

Course Learning Outcome(s)

By the end of the lesson, you would be able to:

- a) Explain the concept of rhythm
- b) The learner should be able to echo simple rhythmic patterns
- c) Extend given rhythmic patterns
- d) Create symbols to notate the rhythm of a simple song

Activities

1. Read the notes on Rhythm and practice clapping to different rhythms.
2. Watch the following documentary on rhythm.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_jEkNiYFNc

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3. Listen to music played on radio, TV, etc. and play back some of the rhythms you hear. Try to add your own rhythms to those you hear.

4. Create your own symbols to notate the rhythm of a simple song.

ELEMENTS OF MUSIC: Rhythm

Rhythm, in a broader sense, governs the whole universe. The sun rises from the “east” and sets in the “west” everyday. The moon moves rhythmically: we all know the lunar month, the twenty-eight days lunar month. We organize our human activities according to a certain pattern. This pattern becomes the rhythm of our life. We sleep and wake up at a certain time, walk at a certain rhythm, eat at a certain rhythm, speak at a certain rhythm, etc. We become disturbed when our rhythm of life is disturbed. All these point to the fact that rhythm is about time.

Rhythm is music's pattern in time. Sounds vary in terms of length. Some sounds are longer than others. Sing any song you know and think of the sounds. You will realize this fact about sound. This means that sound can be long or short. The length of sound is referred to as *duration*. In any given piece of music

sounds of varying duration are combined. This combination results in *rhythm*. The rhythm of a song is the way the various lengths of sound have been combined in that particular song. Sing one of your favourite songs. Sing the song again, this time using “la” instead of the words or syllables in the song. Now clap to the “las” in the song as you sing the words in your head. You are now clapping to the rhythm of the song.

The length of sound is measured in beats. The following explains this point. Sing the song and clap to the beat. Find how many beats each of the syllables or sounds in the song will get.

1. O-do Nyankopon



You will realize the following length of the syllables or sounds in the song in terms of beats.

O-do Nyan-ko-pon Ye-yi w'a - ye daa
 1 1 1 1 4 1 1 1 1 4
 A-som-dwee Nya-me Ye-kam-fo wo daa
 1 1 1 1 4 1 1 1 1 4

Do the same with *Da n'ase* and find out how long each of the syllables or sounds in the song is.

2. Da n'ase

Da n'a-se da n'a-a-se da O-nya-me a-se Da n'a-se da n'a-a-se da O-nya-me a-se E-fri
 re o - ye ma n'a - doo doo - so ma ya Da n'a-se da n'a-a-se da O-nya-me a-se

You will see that some of the sounds are four beats long. Some are also three beats long, two beats long, one beat long, and half beat long.

Da n'a-se, da n'a-a-se da O-nya-me a-se
 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 1 ½ ½ 1 1 4

Da n'a-se, da n'a-a-se da O-nya-me a-se
 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 1 ½ ½ 1 1 3
 E-firi se o-ye na n'a-doe dɔɔ-so (ma yen)
 ½ ½ 3 1 3 ½ ½ 3 1 1 (1 2)
 Da n'a-se, da n'a-a-se, da O-nya-me a-se
 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 1 ½ ½ 1 1 4

Try to device symbols to use to represent the given time values in the songs. You will have to create different symbols for 4 beats; three beats, 2 beats; 1 beat; and ½ beat. Use the symbols you have devised to write out the rhythms of the two songs.

Practice exercises

1. What is rhythm?
2. Create two rhythmic patterns to accompany a song you can sing.
3. Use your own symbols to notate the rhythm of one simple song you know.

UNIT TWO

Rhythm: Western Notation Symbols

Course Learning Outcome(s)

By the end of the lesson you would be able to:

- a) Draw the Western music notes for length of sound
- b) Give the relative values of the notes
- c) Use the notes to write the rhythm of simple songs they know
- d) Use the notes to notate simple rhythmic patterns they create

Activities






- a) Read the notes on the symbols or notes used to represent duration of sound
- b) Learn to draw the symbols
- c) Find out the relative values of the symbols
- d) Use the symbols to notate the rhythm of *Ɔdo* Nyankopon and Da N'ase

- e) Create simple rhythmic patterns and use the symbols to notate them.

Notes

In Unit 1 we discussed the concept of rhythm. We noted that sound has duration. We make use of sounds of various length or duration when we sing or speak. We created our own symbols to show the length of sounds in some of the songs we sing. This unit looks at the symbols that are used in Western music traditions to represent sound duration.

Names of the symbols for sound duration.

Whole note	
Half note	
Quarter note	
Eighth note	
Sixteenth note	

We can use any of these as 1 beat. If the half-note (η), is used to represent one beat then the value of the whole note would be two beats, the Breve would be

four beats and the quarter note (θ) would be worth half of a beat. The eighth note (η) would worth a quarter part of a beat and the sixteenth (ξ) note would worth an eighth part of a beat, and so on.

Example; illustrates this point.

η = 1 beat	θ = 1 beat	η
θ = $\frac{1}{2}$ beat	ε = $\frac{1}{2}$ beat	ξ = $\frac{1}{2}$ beat
$\eta.$ = $1\frac{1}{2}$ beats	$\theta.$ = $1\frac{1}{2}$ beats	$\varepsilon.$ = $1\frac{1}{2}$ beats
ω = 2 beats	η = 2 beats	θ = 2 beats
$\omega.$ = 3 beats	$\eta.$ = 3 beats	$\theta.$ = 3 beats
Ω = 4 beats	ω = 4 beats	η = 4 beats

Relative values of the symbols:

(a) If the beat is represented with the one half-note (η) as one beat “ $\mathcal{O}do$ Nyankopon” can be notated thus:

$\eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \Omega \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \Omega$
 $\eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \Omega \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \Omega$

(b) With a one quarter note (θ) as one beat:

$\theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \omega \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \omega$
 $\theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \omega \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \omega$

(c) With the one eighth note (ε) as one beat:

$\varepsilon \varepsilon \varepsilon \varepsilon \eta \ \varepsilon \varepsilon \varepsilon \varepsilon \eta \ \varepsilon \varepsilon \varepsilon \varepsilon \eta \ \varepsilon \varepsilon \varepsilon \varepsilon \eta$

2. Da N'ase

(a) Using the one half-note (η) as one beat:

$\eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \omega \ \eta \ \theta \ \theta \ \eta \ \eta \ \Omega$
 $\eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \omega \ \eta \ \theta \ \theta \ \eta \ \eta \ \omega. \ \theta \ \theta$
 $\omega. \ \eta \ \omega. \ \theta \ \theta \ \omega. \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \omega \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \eta \ \omega$
 $\eta \ \theta \ \theta \ \eta \ \eta \ \Omega$

(b) With the one quarter note (θ) as one beat:

$\theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \eta \ \theta \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \theta \ \theta \ \omega \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \eta \ \theta \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \theta \ \theta \ \eta.$
 $\varepsilon \ \varepsilon$
 $\eta. \ \theta \ \eta. \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \eta. \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \eta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \theta \ \eta \ \theta \ \varepsilon$
 $\varepsilon \ \theta \ \theta \ \omega$

(c) With the one eighth note (ε) as one beat

$\varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \theta \ \varepsilon \ \xi \ \xi \ \varepsilon \ \eta \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \theta \ \varepsilon \ \xi \ \xi \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \theta. \ \xi \ \xi$
 $\theta. \ \varepsilon \ \theta. \ \xi \ \xi \ \theta. \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \theta \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon \ \theta \ \varepsilon \ \xi \ \xi \ \varepsilon \ \varepsilon$
 η

Dotted Notes



A dot put against a durational note increases the duration of the note by half its value. For example:

- (a) $\omega.$ means one and a half whole notes.
- (b) $\eta.$ means one and a half one-half notes.

- (c) θ . means one and a half one-quarter notes.
- (d) ε . means one and a half one-eighth notes.
- (e) ξ . means one and a half one-sixteenth notes,
etc.

Rests

Music is not always made up of continuous sound. There are occasions when there is silence. These periods of silence are known as rests. The duration for the silence or rest, like that of sound, is measured in beats. Each durational note has its corresponding rest. The rests for the various durational notes have the following symbols known as rest signs.

Name of Note	Symbol	
Rest Sign		
Whole note	ω	
Half note	η	
Quarter note	θ	\in
Eighth note	ε /	7
Sixteenth note	ξ	\oplus

N.B. Rest signs can be dotted in the same way as symbols for sound,



Practice exercises

1. Create two rhythmic patterns to accompany a song you can sing.
2. Use Western traditional symbols to notate one simple song you know.