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ART ACTIVITY
INSTRUCTIONS:

BEAT BATTLE

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BEAT BATTLE

Discipline: Music

Duration: 20 - 30 mins

Age Range: Ages 14 - 18

Creator:

Aaron Walker-Loud
Big World Breaks

Contact:

integration@artscorps.org

Materials:

A flat, clean surface
(like a table, desk, book,
notebook)

Vocabulary:

Fist
Slap
Knuckle
1/4 Note
1/8 Note
Beat
Instrumental
Freestyle/Improvise

Many of us have used random surfaces and objects to express our inner-drummer or our inner-producer, since we were young, tapping and beating on everything in our path consciously to have fun; or subconsciously because we just live rhythmically all the time.

With Beat Battle, we are going to leverage what we already do with our hands into a mentally and physically engaging challenge to highlight our natural strengths and push new boundaries of rhythmic learning.

Learning Goals:

- You will leverage your hands to express, learn, and create rhythm patterns.
- You will analyze rhythm structure in songs and apply new rhythmic inspiration into patterns and freestyle. (**Improvisation**)

Activity Opening:

Listen to these two episodes from the Rhythm Roulette beat production series on YouTube by Mass Appeal.

1. [DJ Jazzy Jeff](#)
2. [araabMUZIK](#)

While you watch and listen, try to tap along with bare hands on the selected surface with the beats these producers are making.

- What does your **fist** sound closest to in the beat's drum sounds?
- What does using your open hand **slap** sound closest to in the beat?
- Have you tried using your **knuckles**, a pencil or a pen to add more pitches /sounds to your personal remix of the beats being made on YouTube?
- Which of the producers' beat styles do you prefer based on watching and listening?

Steps/Instructions:

1. Pick a song that you like the drums or digital beat to, and if you can, please find the instrumental version of it. One of my favorite instrumentals is "[Spottieottiedopaliscious \(Instrumental\)](#)" – Outkast [1998].



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2. Find the “1/4th note” in the beat, which is usually where we will naturally nod our head to a beat, or where we may count: 1, 2, 3, 4.

3. Play your hands (fist, slap, knock) on the selected surface in 1/4th notes, alternating your hands four 1/4th notes at a time:

Right | Right | Right | Right | Left | Left | Left | Left

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

4. Now find the “1/8th note” in the beat (which is twice as fast as the 1/4th note), which we would count: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

5. Play your hands (fist, slap, knock) on the selected surface in 1/8th notes, alternating your hands two 1/4th notes at a time:

Right | Right | Left | Left | Right | Right | Left | Left

1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

5. If you play twice as fast as 1/8th notes, you will be playing “1/16th notes.”

6. If you play twice as fast as that, you will be playing “1/32nd notes”

Activity Closing:

Find a friend or loved one, and take turns experimenting with making up rhythms back and forth over instrumentals (aka beats with no vocalist), using your hands in person on two different clean surfaces, or in an online meeting app like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Make it fun, challenge yourself and challenge each other!

Some people call this improvising; some people call this freestyling; which is essentially creating in the moment without a plan made up in advance. This is an important element for making music fun for yourself, but also to improve the connection between your brain and your hands; one battle at a time :)

**CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO
VERSION OF THIS LESSON.**

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