MUSICAL NOTES & RESTS

A Music Curriculum for Special Education Classrooms

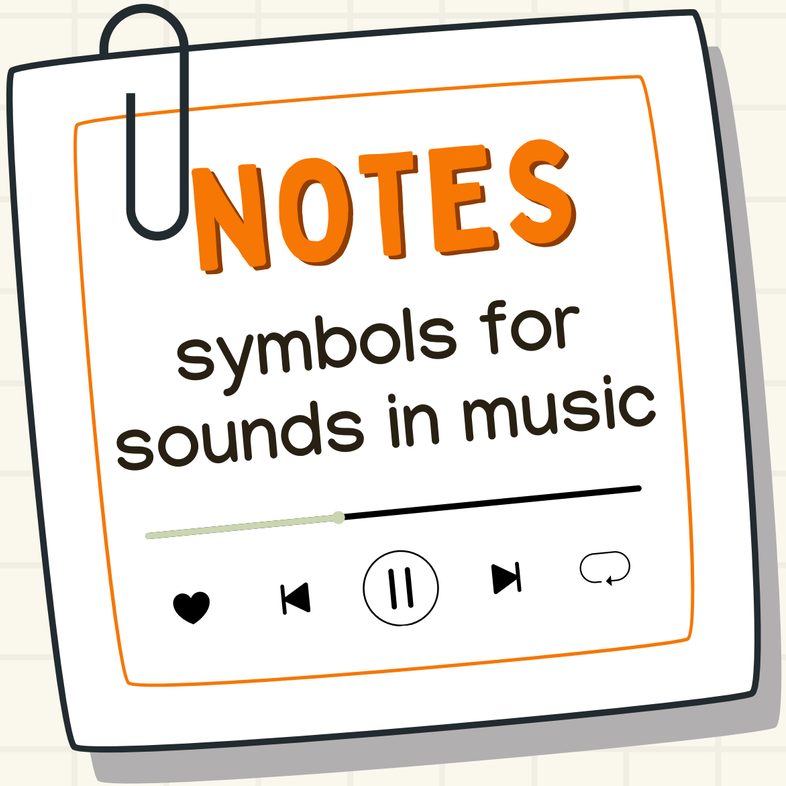
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Identify basic rhythmic symbols (notes and rests).

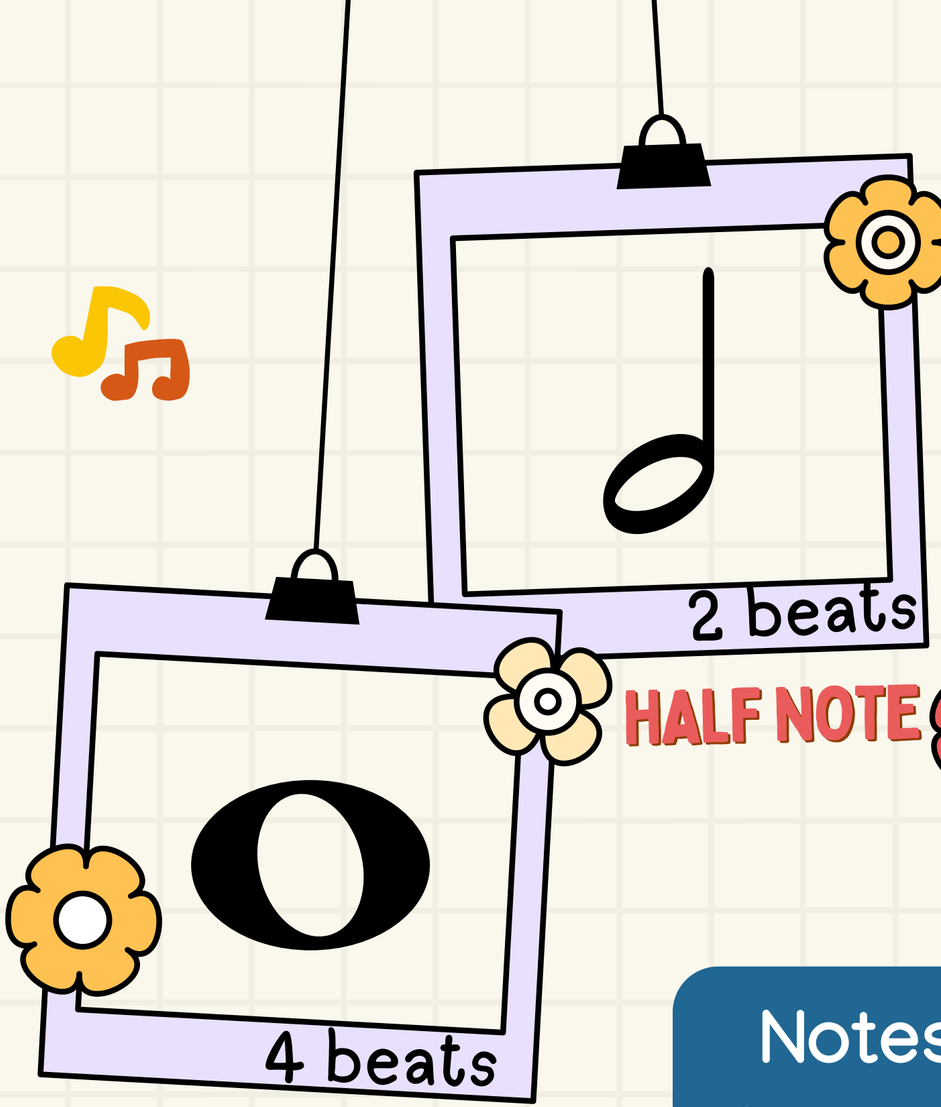
Understand how many beats each symbol represents.

Clap and count simple rhythmic patterns.

Music is made up of different kinds of notes and rests to represent duration of sounds and silence. They are used in making compositions.

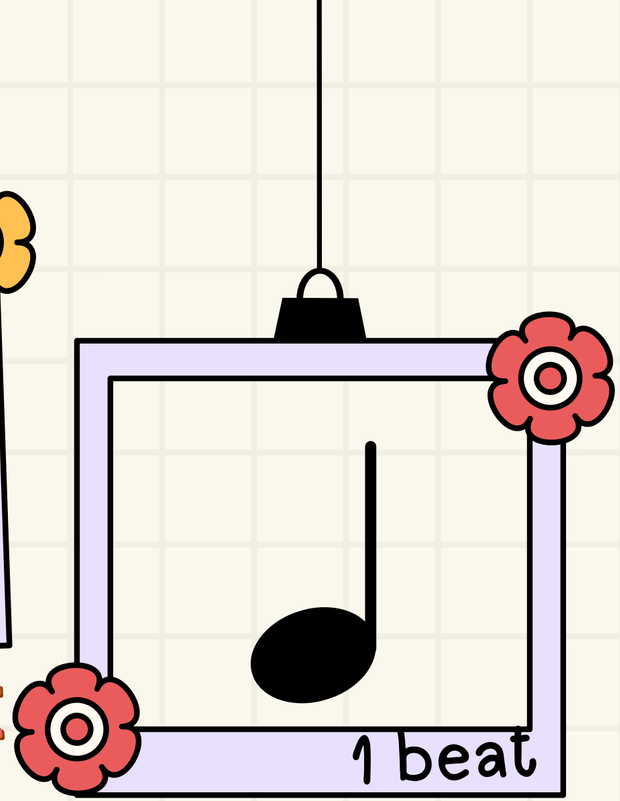


KINDS OF NOTES

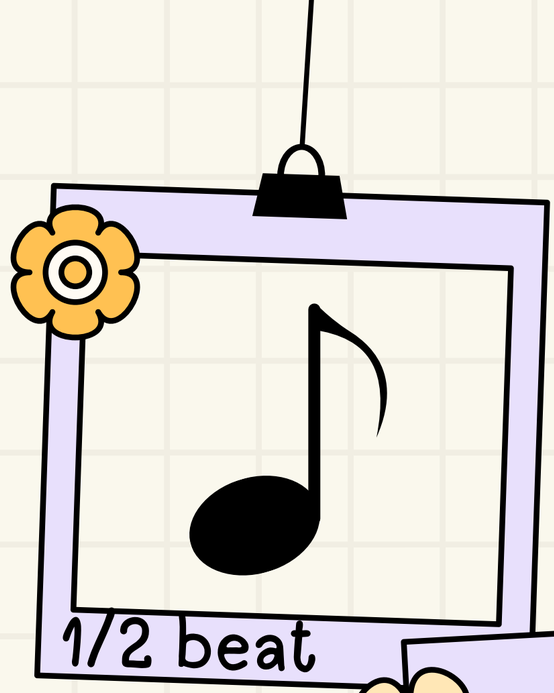


WHOLE NOTE

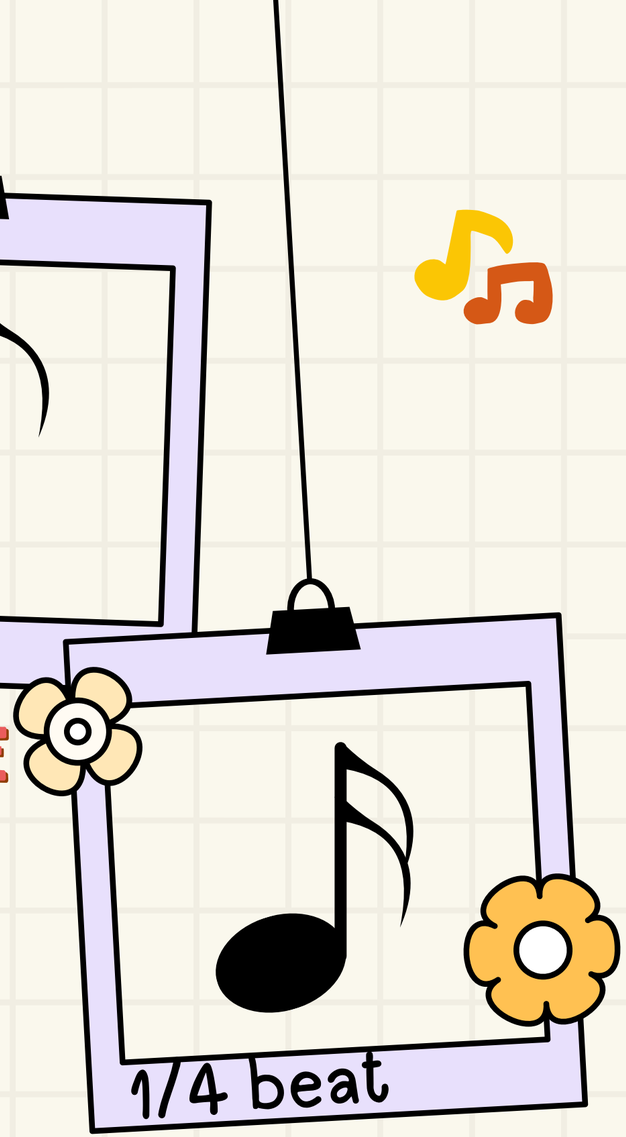
HALF NOTE



QUARTER NOTE



EIGHTH NOTE



SIXTEENTH NOTE

Notes tell us how long to play or sing a sound.

KINDS OF RESTS

4 beats

WHOLE REST

2 beats

HALF REST

1 beat

QUARTER REST

1/2 beat

EIGHTH REST

1/4 beat

SIXTEENTH REST

LET'S COUNT AND CLAP!

1 2 3 4

LET'S COUNT AND CLAP!

TRUE OR FALSE

1. A quarter note gets 1 beat.
2. A rest is a sound.
3. Two eighth notes equal 1 beat.
4. You play music during a rest.
5. A whole rest gets 1 beat.

Use a familiar song with a steady beat such as:

- BINGO
- 5 Green and Speckled Frogs
- Old McDonald Had A Farm

Use drums or other percussion instruments to keep the steady beat

Music Lesson Idea:

Materials

- Storybook: Choose a simple children's book with a clear plot and interesting characters (e.g., The Very Hungry Caterpillar, The Gruffalo).
- Sensory instruments: Gather a variety of instruments that offer different textures and sounds. You can also use "found" objects as instruments.
- Shakers: Filled plastic bottles or maracas with different materials
- (rice, beads, bells).
- Drums: Hand drums, bucket drums, or pots and pans.
- Wind chimes: Metal chimes or a bell.
- Texture: A cabasa or a soft djembe for students who enjoy or dislike certain textures.
- Visual cues: A simple chart or flashcards showing pictures of the instruments to be used.

Lesson plan

- Welcome song (5 minutes): Begin with a familiar welcome song using a repetitive melody. Sing students' names and encourage them to vocalize or make a gesture in response. This helps with transitions and sets a routine.
- Instrument exploration (10 minutes):
- Lay out the sensory instruments and allow students to explore them freely.
- Encourage touch and sound exploration. Describe the instruments using sensory words: "This one is smooth," "This one is bumpy," "Listen to the shakers!"
- Use visual cards to help students identify and choose an instrument.

The story begins (10–15 minutes):

- Read the storybook aloud, but stop at key moments.
- Before you read, assign a different instrument to represent a character, action, or emotion in the story. For example, a shaker for a character walking, a drum for a loud event, or soft chimes for a calm part.
- Use the visual cue cards to show students when it's their turn to play their assigned instrument.
- This provides a clear, non-verbal instruction.

Interactive story creation (10 minutes):

- After reading, retell the story by having students create their own sound effects and music.
- Say "The hungry caterpillar ate a green leaf," and point to the shaker card for the "eating" sound.
- If a student is non-verbal, you can gently guide their hand to the instrument or have an aide provide assistance.

MOVEMENT TO MUSIC (5 MINUTES):

PLAY A CALM, INSTRUMENTAL TRACK AND GIVE STUDENTS SCARVES OR RIBBONS.
ENCOURAGE FREE MOVEMENT, ALLOWING STUDENTS TO SWAY OR
DANCE TO THE RHYTHM.
YOU CAN ALSO PLAY MUSICAL FREEZE DANCE,
WHERE STUDENTS FREEZE WHEN THE MUSIC STOPS.

GOODBYE SONG (5 MINUTES):

END THE LESSON WITH A CONSISTENT GOODBYE SONG.
THIS HELPS WITH TRANSITION AND SIGNALS THE END OF THE ACTIVITY.
GIVE EACH STUDENT A FINAL MUSICAL SOUND
OR TOUCH BEFORE THEY LEAVE THE CIRCLE.

THANK YOU!