

# LESSON PLAN: Alternate Picking

## Objective:

*Students will be able to use a pick to play in both directions, resulting in more control over the instrument and the ability to play faster notes*

## Resources:

Handouts in teacher manual titled “Simple Rhythms”.

## Procedures:

- 1 Demonstrate for students that picking can happen on the “down stroke” (picking toward your toes) or the “up stroke” (picking toward your chin). Use the 1st string for the demonstration. Walk around the room with your guitar making sure that every student gets a good look at this as you do it.
- 2 Show students that using a “pinky anchor” can help keep your hand in one spot so that you don’t have to worry about your hand drifting up to other strings. Demonstrate that without a pinky anchor your hand drifts far and wide from the string you are trying to alternate pick, but with a pinky anchor your pick stays so close to the string you’re picking that you could even close your eyes and do it!
- 3 Ask students to volunteer to demonstrate for the class, using the open 1st string and a good “pinky anchor”.
- 4 Have students do this together as a group, in smaller sub groups, or in pairs, making sure everyone gets the alternate picking idea and the pinky anchor concept.
- 5 Demonstrate that when these ingredients are working together you can play a lot faster than if you only picked in one direction, or picked without a pinky anchor. Alternate pick for them a bunch of notes as fast as possible.
- 6 Ask the students to do the same seeing how fast they can play notes using alternate picking on open strings.

## Extensions:

- 1 Use the strum patterns from Teachers Manual 121 as picking rhythms.
- 2 Try alternate picking the same rhythm on several different strings, moving from the 1st string, to the 2nd string, etc.
- 3 If students have already done the lesson on fret numbers and hand positions, have them apply alternate picking or a picking pattern to various fingers in different positions along the fretboard.

### **National Core Arts Standards (Music):**

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. Example: General Music MU:Pr5.1.4 b. Rehearse to refine technical accuracy and expressive qualities, and address performance challenges. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5.C Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms). (“up stroke” and “down stroke” as opposites)

