LESSON PLAN: Hearing Beats With Chords

Objective:

Students will be able to understand rhythm and beat position by using an ear training activity that helps them focus on this musical fundamental.

Resources:

JAM CARD 5a (Major Scale)

Procedures:

1 Have students manufacture a back beat for you (Figure A), either using the kick and snare sounds on their keyboards or using their right foot and left hand (see lesson plan "Classroom as Drumset"), or even on a drumset!

2 While the beat continues, play a C chord on one of the beats. Do it at least two times in a row, asking students afterward what beat you played the chord on.

3 Continue the activity playing your chord on different beats until you're confident they can recognize when the chord is played on any one of the four beats in a measure. After you're confident they have it, ask other students to play a chord on one of the beats for the rest of the class to guess. Have them do it two times in a row before allowing anyone to answer to make sure that they're choosing a beat on purpose.

4 After it is obvious that they can hear when a chord is played on any beat, talk about playing a chord on the "up beat" with them. Demonstrate several times what it would be like to play a chord on the "and" of 3 (Figure D), or the "and" of 1 (Figure E), etc.

5 Get the back beat going again, and this time your chord can happen on a beat or on the "and" in between beats. As before, invite other students to participate by playing their chords on beats or up beats if they choose while the rest of the class guesses.
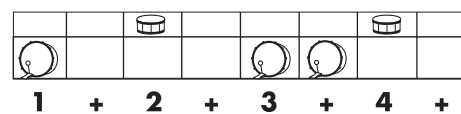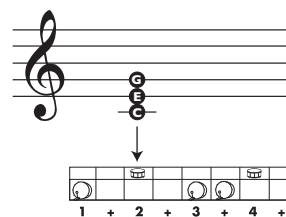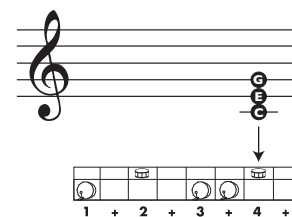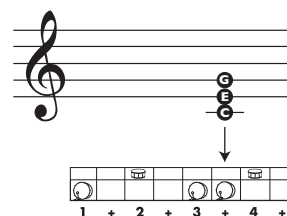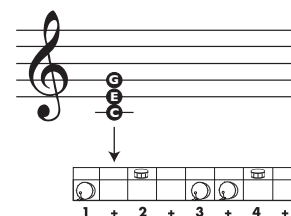

Fig. A

Fig. B

Fig. C

Fig. D

Fig. E

National Core Arts Standards (Music):
Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.4 b. When analyzing selected music, read and perform using iconic and/or standard notation. Example: General Music MU:Pr4.2.5 a. Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance. Common Core Correlation: CCSS.Math.Content.3.NF.A.1 Understand a fraction 1/b as the quantity formed by 1 part when a whole is partitioned into b equal parts; understand a fraction a/b as the quantity formed by a parts of size 1/b. (division of the beat into equal parts; division of a measure into four beats)

KEYBOARD