

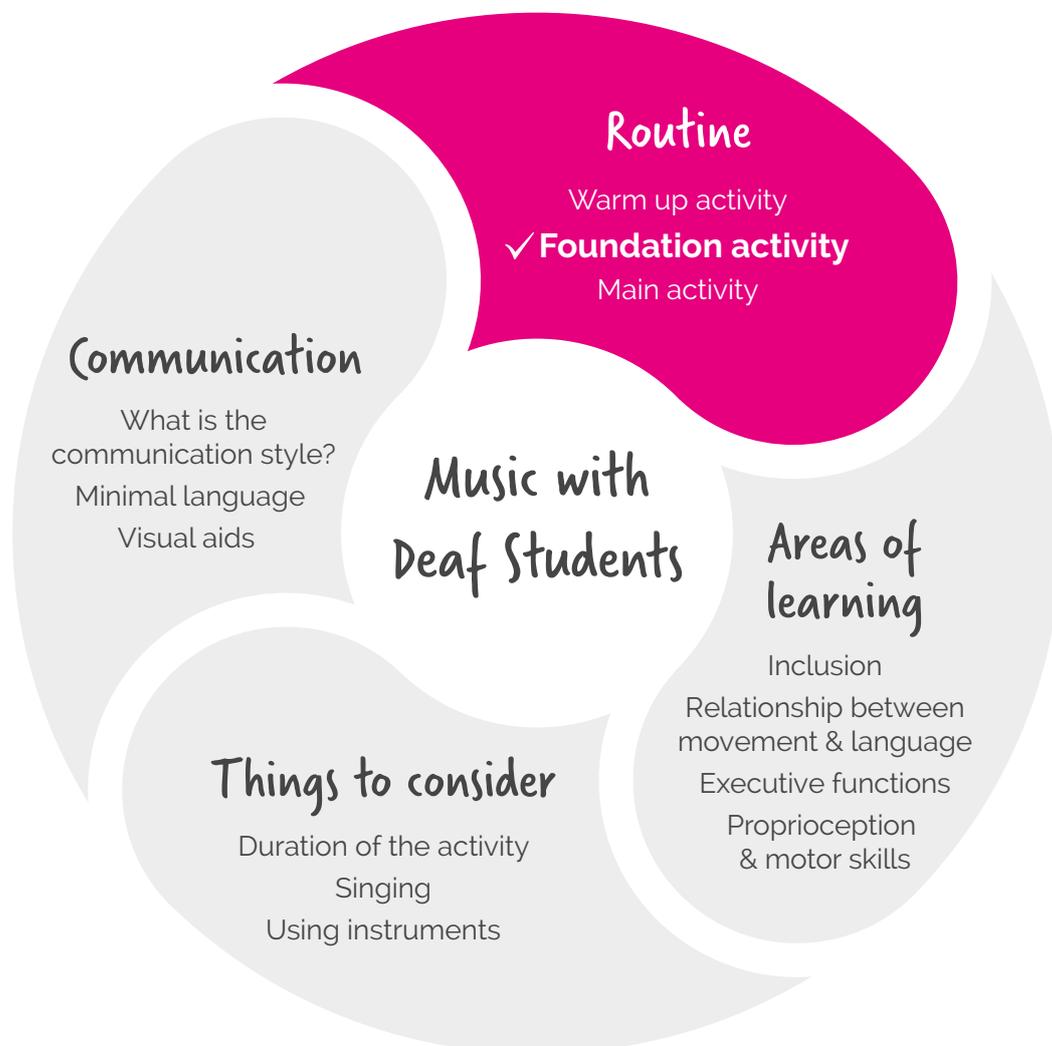
# Sounding Out

A toolkit for music practitioners  
working with deaf students

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## Rhythm Cards



# Rhythm Cards

## FOUNDATION ACTIVITY

This activity introduces notation to visually support time signature, note values and the staff. This is achieved through the use of cards with simple symbols that can be transformed into notes.

Children can read, write, compose and perform a short rhythmic sequence in front of their classmates, using body percussion or instruments.

in a circle  
small groups  
in a line

### PREPARATION OF THE ACTIVITY:

A circle represents the vocal sound DUM and a single tap on the thighs;

A square is the sound TA and a single clap;

An X is the sound TS and a single tap with two fingers against your palm (*Image 1*).

Each card shows one or more symbols, representing the musical figures: crotchet, quavers, semiquavers (*Image 2*).

Start by creating your own cards (minimum two for each symbol) up to a total of 18 (*Image 3*).

You can also add more cards with your own symbols, to represent other sounds and movements.

### Visual cues, multimodal and intermodal musical game:

- Reading rhythmic cards
- Composition
- Body percussion
- Polyrhythm
- Drum circle and other instruments

*From a body music game by Pedro Consorte*



*The students working on their composition with the Rhythm Cards.*

# Rhythm Cards

## The Symbols

With profoundly deaf children with severe learning difficulties, developmental disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders and physical impairment, you can simplify the activity by using just 2 symbols (DUM and TA) and two different musical figures (crochets and quavers).

Some children might want to create their own symbols to represent a sound. Peter created the blue star describing the sound *shhh* (Image 4).

IMAGE 4

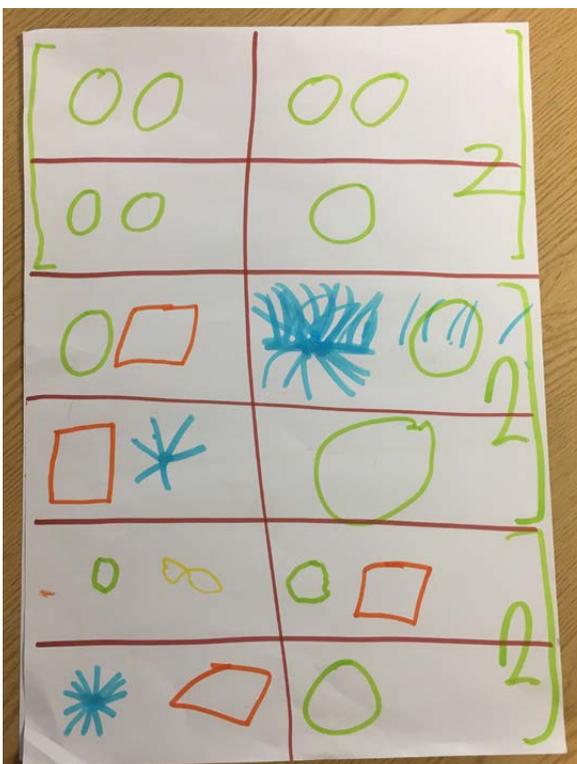


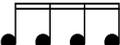
IMAGE 1

- = **DUM** = Tap on your thighs
- = **TA** = Clap
- × = **TS** = Tap two fingers against the palm

IMAGE 2

- 2 cards ○
- 2 cards **DUM**
- 2 cards ○ ○
- 2 cards **DUM DUM**
- 2 cards ○ ○ ○ ○
- 2 cards **DUM DUM DUM DUM**
- 2 cards □
- 2 cards **TA**
- 2 cards □ □
- 2 cards **TA TA**
- 2 cards □ □ □ □
- 2 cards **TA TA TA TA**
- 2 cards ×
- 2 cards **TS**
- 2 cards × ×
- 2 cards **TS TS**
- 2 cards × × × ×
- 2 cards **TS TS TS TS**

IMAGE 3

○	○ ○	○ ○ ○ ○
<b>DUM</b>	<b>DUM DUM</b>	<b>DUMDUMDUMDUM</b>
□	□ □	□ □ □ □
<b>TA</b>	<b>TA TA</b>	<b>TATATATA</b>
×	× ×	× × × ×
<b>TS</b>	<b>TS TS</b>	<b>TS TS TS TS</b>
		

## Step 1. Introduction of the Cards – Musical Memory Game-1

VIDEO REFERENCE: Rhythm cards: Step 1

STEP	DESCRIPTION / MUSIC
1a	<p><b>MUSICAL MEMORY GAME*:</b> The teacher introduces the rhythmic cards through the memory game.</p> <p>Distribute the cards according to the time signature in which you want to play. The teacher lays out the cards face down in rows forming a large rectangle on the table or floor. Make sure the cards are not touching each other. They need to be able to be flipped over without disturbing any cards around them.</p> <p><u>Example 2/4:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher/student starts, chooses a card and carefully turns it over and reads it.</li> </ul> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px; text-align: center;">TA</div> <div style="margin-left: 10px;">The teacher reads TA and claps (which represents a crochet).</div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher/student selects another card and turns it over.</li> </ul> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px; text-align: center;">DUM DUM</div> <div style="margin-left: 10px;">The teacher reads DUM DUM and taps the thighs twice (which represents two quavers).</div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher links the two cards together creating a first rhythmic sentence. Then they read them and the group repeats.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px; text-align: center;">TA</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px; text-align: center;">DUM DUM</div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- if the cards are a match the player takes the two cards and starts a stack;</li> <li>- if the cards are not a match they are turned back over and it is now the next player's turn.</li> </ul> <p>With the help of the teacher, each player reads a rhythm.</p> <p>Children start associating the sounds and the movements to the symbols/musical figures.</p> <p>* There is a different rule compared to the usual memory game: even if the cards found from the player are a match, the turn passes to the next player. This happens to allow all the children to play their rhythms without waiting too long. The game continues in this way until all the cards are played.</p>

### WHAT WE OBSERVED

During this game the children might need help inhibiting their impulse to turn over more than two cards, developing self-control and turn-taking, which is an important skill in the children's development.

# Rhythm Cards

## IMPORTANT

It's really important to point the symbols with your finger while reading the cards, to guide the children and allow them to understand the speed and the beat value of the figures.

This is a particularly good game for non verbal deaf children as they are supported by the body percussion.

## Steps 2–4. Sight-reading and Body Percussion

VIDEO REFERENCE: Rhythm Cards: Step 2, Rhythm Cards: Step 3 and Rhythm Cards: Step 4

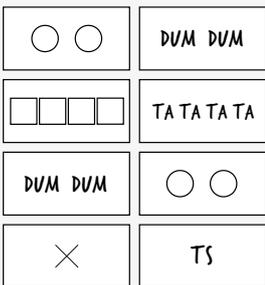
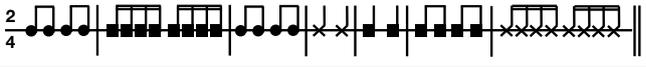
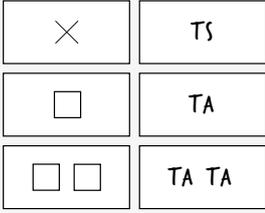
STEP	DESCRIPTION	MUSIC
2	Once all the cards have been taken, the group creates a sequence of cards ( <i>Image 5</i> ) in a line or in circle ( <i>Image 6 and 7</i> ).  <b>IMAGE 5</b> 	With the help of the teacher, the whole group reads the whole rhythmic sequence out loud. Teachers who are working with non-verbal students can go directly to step 4 of this activity.  <b>RHYTHM OF IMAGE 5</b> 
3		Now, each student reads their own cards, maintaining the pulse.
4		The whole group goes through the sequence again, adding body percussion.  This develops the association between voice and movements.

IMAGE 6



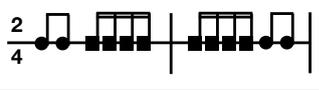
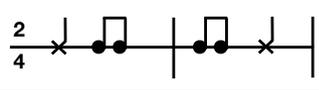
### WHAT WE OBSERVED

This is a good activity to develop sight-reading and visual-spatial skills. The body percussion helps memorising and internalising the rhythm.

# Rhythm Cards

## Step 5. Sight-reading and Body Percussion

VIDEO REFERENCE: Rhythm cards: Step 5

STEP	DESCRIPTION	MUSIC
5	<p>The teacher divides the class into smaller groups. Each group practices its own part many times before coming back together as a class.</p> <p>The teacher moves between the different groups to help the children practice their rhythm.</p>	<p>Introduction of the concept of musical form / structure of the piece (group 1 first, then group 2, group 3 at the end).</p> <p>Each group plays in turn with no rest between them. They don't play in unison.</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Group 1</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Group 2</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Group 3</span> </div> </div>

### WHAT WE OBSERVED

Development of turn-taking.

Development of ability to stay focused and maintain concentration: children are required to pay attention when the other groups are performing and be ready when its their turn. To do this they will rely on visual aspects of the activity which is why it is important to keep moving according to the beat and to conduct with clear gestures.

Due to the fact that in this stage of the activity the groups are smaller, some children might feel reluctant or under pressure. The teacher should try to assign the groups according to the ability levels of the children.

### IMAGE 7



# Rhythm Cards

## Alternative Option – Instruments

VIDEO REFERENCE: Rhythm cards: Step 6

STEP	DESCRIPTION	MUSIC
6	<p>Substitute the body percussion with the instruments.</p> <p>If the teacher is introducing melodic instruments, they can write the symbols on a music staff, helping the children to recognise the notes though the use of colour (<i>Image 8</i>).</p>	<p><b>Example:</b></p> <p>○ = <b>DUM</b> = Drums</p> <p>□ = <b>TA</b> = Boomwhakers / claves</p> <p>× = <b>TS</b> = Maracas</p>

### WHAT WE OBSERVED

Before playing the rhythm make sure that the children know the instrument they want to play and how to produce sounds using it (see the section *Using instruments* in the Introduction).

Working step-by-step (voice only; voice and body percussion) helps the children to internalise the rhythm, making it easy for them to transpose it onto instruments.

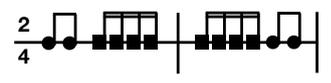
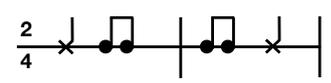
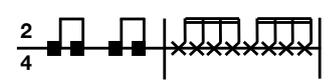
**IMAGE 8**



# Rhythm Cards

## Alternative Option – Polyrhythm

VIDEO REFERENCE: Rhythm cards: Step 7

STEP	DESCRIPTION	MUSIC
7	Using the rhythm created in Step 5, each group plays their rhythm to form part of a round.	<p>Introduction of the concept of polyrhythm.</p> <p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group 1 starts. After two repetitions of their rhythm Group 2 joins in with their own rhythm.</li> <li>• Group 3 enters two repetitions later and so on.</li> </ul> <p>To finish, the teacher stops each group, one at a time, starting with Group 1.</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Group 1</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Group 2</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Group 3</span> </div> </div>

### WHAT WE OBSERVED

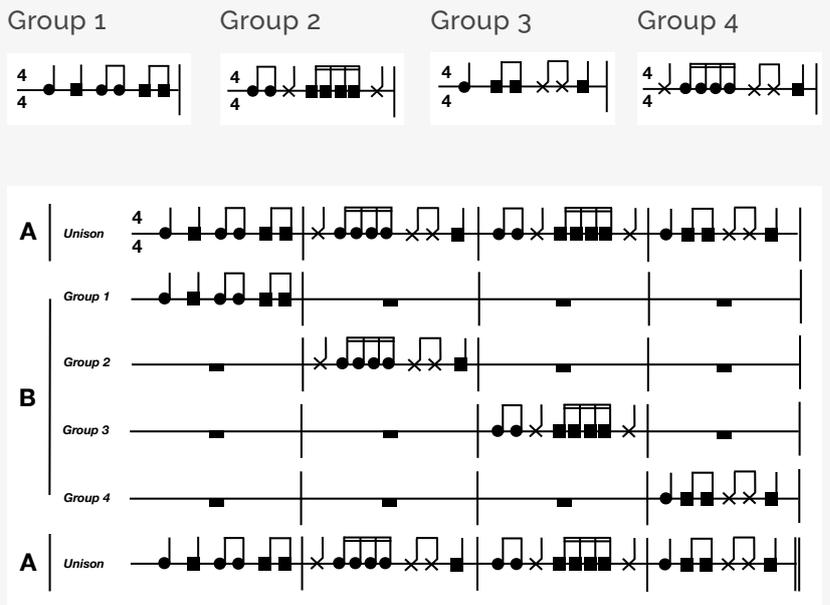
This activity helps the students to develop their musical independence.

#### IMPORTANT

In this case, the teacher needs to be sure that each group can play on their own before starting the activity.

# Rhythm Cards

## Alternative Option – Composition

DESCRIPTION	MUSIC
<p>The teacher divides the class into groups and asks each group to compose their own rhythm, choosing from the pack of cards.</p> <p>Each group practices its own part (body percussion) many times alone and with the teacher, to learn it properly.</p> <p>Eventually, the whole class will get together again to play all the rhythms following the structure ABA:</p> <p>A. The whole group reads all the new rhythms in unison;</p> <p>B. Each group reads its own part in turn, keeping the tempo;</p> <p>A. Last part in unison again;</p>	<p>Introduction of the concept of musical form / structure of the piece.</p> <p>Through this activity, the children develop their ability to play together waiting for their turn to play.</p> <p>Group 1      Group 2      Group 3      Group 4</p> 

**IMPORTANT**  
 Giving the children the opportunity to perform their compositions in front of their classmates will help to build confidence for performing in front of larger audiences in the future.

