



LESSON PLAN GUIDE

QUARTER 1 — FEEL IT!

Lesson 1 — The Heartbeat of Music

QUARTER Feel It!	LESSON 1 of 36	DURATION ~20–25 min	AGES 5–8 years
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MATERIALS LIST

REQUIRED

- A device to play the lesson (phone, computer, or tablet)
- Space to move — enough room to clap, stomp, hop, and swing arms safely
- A pot, box, oatmeal container, or any tappable surface — becomes the child's “drum” for Activity 2
- A wooden spoon, pencil, or fist — anything safe to tap with

PARENT TEACHING NOTES

Read these notes before pressing play on the intro video. They give you the musical context and the child-development awareness you need to facilitate this lesson with confidence — no music background required.

What Is a Steady Beat?

A steady beat is an unwavering, equal pulse — like a ticking clock or a heartbeat. It runs through almost all music continuously. It is NOT the rhythm (the pattern of sounds layered on top of it). Beat = the foundation. Rhythm = what sits on top of it. That distinction comes later in the curriculum — for this lesson, beat only.

Why the Heartbeat Comes First

The lesson opens with the child feeling their own heartbeat before any music is introduced. This anchors ‘beat’ to something concrete and familiar the child already carries with them, rather than an abstract musical term. Children ages 5–8 learn music primarily through their bodies before their minds — participate alongside your child in the clapping and movement throughout.

Managing Off-Beat Clapping

Many children this age will clap slightly off the beat or inconsistently. This is completely normal and expected. Do NOT correct or draw attention to it. Simply keep your own clapping steady and clear — children naturally synchronize over time. Correction at this stage creates anxiety, not improvement.



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The Echo Drums Game

In Activity 2, the instructor claps a short pattern and the child echoes it back, then the instructor changes the speed. If your child's echo doesn't match exactly, that's fine — the goal is participation in the call-and-response, not precision. You can always add complexity later; you cannot undo discouragement.

Using the Word 'Beat' Consistently

Every time you clap to music today — and throughout the week — say 'we're keeping the beat' or 'I hear the beat.' The more casually and naturally you use the vocabulary, the faster it becomes part of your child's musical language. Don't quiz — just model. By the end of this lesson, the word 'beat' should feel like something your child owns, not something they have to remember.

Your Role Today

- Participate alongside your child in every activity — clap, move, and drum with them. Your enthusiasm normalizes all of it.
- Have a tappable "drum" object ready before the lesson begins — the instructor asks for it heading into Activity 2 (Echo Drums).
- Use the word 'beat' casually throughout — 'I can hear the beat in this song!' builds vocabulary naturally.
- After the lesson, post the Weekly Music Mission page in your learning space. The mission is designed for daily life, not a dedicated music time.

ASSESSMENT BENCHMARKS

These benchmarks describe observable behaviors indicating the lesson's core concept has been understood at the expected level for ages 5–8. Assess informally by observation — no formal testing.

TYPE	OBSERVABLE BENCHMARK	REFERENCE
Observational	Maintains a steady clap, pat, or stomp independently for at least 8 consecutive counts.	Activities 1–3
Observational	Notifies and responds when their heartbeat speeds up after movement, and claps the faster beat.	Activity 1
Verbal	Uses the word 'beat' correctly and unprompted at least once during or after the lesson.	Any activity
Echo / Imitation	Echoes a 4-count clapping pattern modeled by the instructor on 2 of 3 attempts, matching approximate rhythm.	Activity 2
Identification	Physically shows a difference (faster or slower movement) between at least two songs of different tempo.	Activity 3
Engagement	Remains engaged and participatory for the full activity period — enthusiasm carries equal weight to accuracy.	All activities

Important: at ages 5–8, enthusiasm and willingness to engage carry equal weight to technical accuracy. A child who claps off-beat but tries joyfully is meeting the lesson's primary goal.



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ACTIVITY PLANS

Reference for facilitation — not a script. The instructor leads all activities on video. Your role is to participate alongside your child, pause when needed, and support using the notes below.

ACTIVITY 1 · 2–3 minutes (standing)

Heartbeat Check-In

GOAL: Anchor the concept of ‘beat’ to something the child already knows and feels — their own heartbeat — before any musical context is added.

How It Unfolds on Video

1. Instructor asks the child to place a hand on the left side of their chest, be still, and feel for the heartbeat. Offers an alternative: the pulse at the top of the neck, below the jawbone.
2. Instructor claps a slow, steady beat and invites the child to clap along — ONE, two, THREE, four — steady and even, like a clock.
3. Instructor reveals the connection: ‘Music has a heartbeat too. We call it THE BEAT.’
4. Instructor leads energetic movement — jumping, hopping, arm circles, dancing — for about 30 seconds to raise the heart rate.
5. Everyone freezes, quickly finds their heartbeat again, and claps the new, faster beat together. Key insight: the beat can speed up or slow down, but it's always steady.

Facilitation Notes

IF THIS HAPPENS...	TRY THIS
<i>Child can't feel their heartbeat at rest</i>	Have them jump a few times and stop — the heartbeat will be much more noticeable right after movement.
<i>Child is too wiggly to sit still for the heartbeat moment</i>	Skip the stillness — go straight to the movement portion. The physical connection is what matters, not the quiet.
<i>Child already knows about heartbeats</i>	Perfect — let them make the connection themselves: ‘Did you know music has one too?’



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ACTIVITY 2 • ~3 minutes (seated, with a “drum” prop)

Echo Drums

GOAL: Train the ear and body to hear and reproduce a beat pattern, and give the child a first turn as the musical leader.

How It Unfolds on Video

- Before this activity, the child gets a tappable “drum” ready — a box, pot, pencil and table, or hands on chest. Safety first: nothing sharp or heavy.
- Instructor explains the game: ‘I’ll play something on my drum, then it’s your turn to play it back.’
- Instructor demonstrates a 4-count pattern (1, 2, 3, 4), then nods to the child to signal their turn.
- Child echoes the pattern. Instructor keeps the beat going by nodding along.
- Instructor repeats for several rounds, varying the pattern slightly and changing speed (faster or slower) to keep the child listening closely.

Facilitation Notes

IF THIS HAPPENS...	TRY THIS
<i>Child just bangs freely instead of echoing</i>	Gently pause and re-explain the turn-taking: ‘My turn, then yours — like passing a ball.’ The turn-taking is the lesson.
<i>Child’s echo doesn’t match the pattern exactly</i>	Completely normal — celebrate the attempt. Participating in the back-and-forth matters far more than precision.
<i>Child loves this and wants to keep going</i>	Extend it freely — try faster or slower rounds, or let them lead a pattern for you to echo back.

ACTIVITY 3 • ~4 minutes (seated, with music playback)

Beat Detectives on the Case

GOAL: Apply the beat concept to real songs across different tempos and styles, reinforcing that finding the beat is a skill the child can use with any music.

How It Unfolds on Video

- Instructor explains the game: as each song plays, the child’s job as ‘Beat Detective’ is to find the beat and move with it — clapping, tapping, or stomping.
- Song 1 (medium tempo) plays — instructor claps and moves to the beat alongside the child, calling out encouragement.
- Song 2 (faster tempo) plays — instructor and child clap/move at the new, quicker speed.
- Song 3 (a toe-tapping, Nashville-style song) plays — instructor highlights tapping toes as another way to feel the beat.



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15. Song 4 (fast and energetic) plays — instructor claps and stomps enthusiastically with the child.
16. After each song ends, the instructor notes: 'No beat, no music. No music, no beat' — reinforcing that the beat is what drives the song forward.

Facilitation Notes

IF THIS HAPPENS...	TRY THIS
<i>Child struggles to find the beat in a song</i>	Clap or tap very visibly and slightly exaggerated next to them so they can watch and copy — most children pick it up within a few counts.
<i>Child loses interest partway through a song</i>	It's fine to skip ahead to the next song, or pause and try a favorite song from home instead — the concept works with any music.
<i>Child wants to keep detecting beats after the activity</i>	Encourage it! The instructor suggests trying this with favorite songs from movies, the radio, or TV all week.

WEEKLY MUSIC MISSION

Announced by the instructor in the outro video and printed on the companion Weekly Music Mission page. Post it in the student's learning space — somewhere visible every day.

The Mission

Be a Beat Detective everywhere you go this week — in the car, at the store, on TV. When you hear music, find the beat and clap it, tap it on your leg, or nod your head. It can be a secret mission, or invite the whole family to join in!

Parent Note

The single best thing you can do this week is use the word 'beat' casually whenever music is playing. 'Hey, can you find the beat?' is all it takes. That small habit, repeated over weeks, builds enormous musical intuition over time.



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LESSON CONNECTIONS

WHAT LESSON 1 ESTABLISHES

- The steady beat is the foundational concept of the entire curriculum — every future lesson adds new layers on top of this single idea.
- The heartbeat analogy gives children an intuitive, body-based understanding they carry forward permanently.
- The Echo Drums game introduces turn-taking and pattern reproduction — foundational to all future rhythm work.
- The word 'beat' becomes the child's first genuine piece of musical vocabulary.

WHAT LESSON 1 PREPARES FOR

- Next lesson: the instructor teases that the beat can be 'big and bold and LOUD' or 'tiny and soft and whispery' — setting up dynamics (loud/soft) as a new layer on top of the steady beat.
- Tempo: fast and slow will return as a named concept, building on the fast/slow beat experience from Activity 1 and Activity 3.
- Call & response: the Echo Drums game is a direct precursor to future call-and-response rhythm work.
- 'The beat' remains active vocabulary for the entire curriculum.