

Make Me a Rhythm!

A Composition/Movement Activity for 8-15(+) Players

Materials:

- 4 pieces of cardstock paper with large numbers 1-4 written on them. You can use the number pages included in the “Make Me A Rhythm!” pdf, or create your own with a marker and paper. Colorful paper and lamination is optional.
- Large area (indoors or out).
- Large whiteboard that everyone can see (optional).

Gameplay:

- Choose a time signature to work with ($2/4$, $3/4$, or $4/4$), and lay out the correct number of beats for one measure on the floor, spaced out evenly.
- Choose a student to be the Composer. For the first round, the teacher may choose to be the Composer in order to demonstrate the game to the students.
- The Composer’s job is to choose students to turn into rhythm values and place them by the beats, in order to compose a measure of rhythm. Quarter note people should stand with their arms at their sides. Half note people stand with their feet apart, one foot by each beat. Beamed eighth notes are formed by two people (same gender, preferably) linking elbows or running their arms across each other’s shoulders. Dotted half note people can sit on the ground with their feet out, and whole note people can lie across the floor. A quarter rest person can get on their knees and stick out their arms like a “Z”. Encourage students to be creative!
- Once the measure is finished, everyone can clap the rhythm together to see what it sounds like. If there is a large whiteboard available, the teacher can copy the rhythm onto the board to save it. The following measures composed by the next Composers can be added to the first rhythm, in order to create a phrase or an entire composition together.
- The previous Composer can choose who will be the next Composer.
- This game is easily adaptable for groups larger than 15 students by dividing students into two teams. Just print off another set of beat numbers. At the end, each team can share their composition with the other team.

Extensions:

- To make the activity more challenging, Composers can also choose pitches for each rhythm value, using solfege! To keep things simple, for example, the range could be limited to do-re-mi. If students are familiar with the Kodaly hand symbols for the solfege, those can be used. Otherwise, other symbols will suffice: “do” can be represented with hands on knees, “re” could be hands on hips, and “mi” could be hands on shoulder.

1

2

3

4