



# Ear Training: Finding the Pulse

🔊 Beginner ⌚ 20 Minutes

Pulse/Steady Beat

Slow/Fast

## Preparing for the Lesson

Material Prep

Print/Copy Handouts

Correct and incorrect pulse choices for each music example

Unpitched instrument or metronome to perform pulse choices

Board Prep

Concept Definition for Pulse/Steady Beat

Ear Training Practice Instructions

Accessible Strategies and Accommodations

Create space for students to move to the music

Instead of collecting written responses, have students demonstrate the pulse of each music example individually or as a group



## Running the Lesson

### Part 1: Class Discussion

Begin by reviewing pulse/steady beat and slow/fast with students. Prompt students on their memory of pulse/steady beat and slow/fast. Then, display the definition for pulse/steady beat when appropriate. Note that there is an opportunity for a longer discussion about determining if a musical piece is slow or fast.

### Example Questions

#### Keyword Responses from Students

Steady beat, pulse, steady beat is the music heart beat, it's non-stop, it's repeating, it keeps the music going, it can be fast or slow, if it's fast you move faster, slow you move slower, my fast was different than my friend's

### Part 2: Ear Training Demonstration

Introduce the ear training practice and provide students with the instructions both verbally and on the board or slide projection.

#### Example Educator Demonstration:

Today we will be practicing identifying the pulse in music. You will hear a music example, then find the pulse as quickly as you can. You can use one of the approved movements to help you keep the steady beat. When the music stops, keep the pulse going either in your head or with your movement. You will then hear two pulse options and must decide which matches the pulse you found. We will practice one together.

#### Instructions:

1. Take out a piece of paper, write name at top



2. Number your paper 1 through 7
3. Listen to the music example
4. Silently, tap the pulse of the music
5. When music stops, keep tapping the pulse
6. Choose which beat (option A or B) matches the pulse you found
7. Write the answer (A or B) on your paper

#### Alternate Instruction

If you have the space and ability in your classroom to allow for movement, this activity can be done by having students find a safe spot in the room with enough space to move to the pulse. Students should take a piece of paper and writing utensil with them to record their answers. You may also decide to do group responses and tally how many students choose option A or B for each answer instead of recording their answers individually. Finally, you may decide to have students tap out the pulse for the class instead of having them choose between two pulse options. This can be done by calling on students to perform for the class with the music example, or as a group. You can also mimic the pulse they perform on an unpitched instrument and play it back with the music example to check.

#### Materials

When the class is ready, complete a demonstration example together before starting the ear training practice.

#### Example Educator Demonstration

Play your demonstration music example for the students. Describe how you are finding the pulse and show students the type



of movements they can use to display the pulse. Ask students to mimic the pulse with you and to keep going when the music stops. Stop the music example and continue to demonstrate your movement (if possible) while describing how they will now hear two pulse options. Play both pulse options (either on an unpitched instrument or on a metronome) labelling them option A and option B. Ask the students which option fit the pulse best. Finally repeat the demonstration music example with the correct answer to show students how the are aligned.

### Part 3: Ear Training Practice

After answering any additional student questions, students will complete the ear training practice.

Example process for the practice

1. Educator plays example one
2. Students react to the music using identified appropriate movements
3. Educator informs students to prepare for the music to stop
4. Educator stops music and prompts students to select the correct option: "Is the pulse option A? Is it B?"
5. Educator plays the options on an unpitched instrument or metronome, giving students time to think between each option before choosing an answer
6. Educator repeats the example or answers if necessary before moving to the next music example
7. Repeat the process for the remaining music examples

### Part 4: Summary Activity



When the students have listed the answers to all examples, you may either collect or have them exchange papers and grade the work before turning them in.

Finish with a short discussion about the ear training practice and hand out the homework assignment if applicable. Discuss the difficulty for each music example and consider replaying certain examples to get second opinions or if any were particularly hard to figure out. Make time to discuss which examples felt slow or fast and consider discussing how slow/fast may be difficult to determine if it feels to fall in the middle. This discussion can be a good introduction to metronome markings and tempo markings in the future.