



# MUSIC FUNDAMENTALS: What is STEADY BEAT?

**Age Range:** Elementary

**Learning Objective:** Students will identify and respond to steady beat through active movement.

## ENGAGE students

**MOVE.** Choose a song or chant from your classroom repertoire. While singing or chanting, have students demonstrate the steady beat by tapping their heads, knees, stomping, clapping, or jumping.

## EXPLORE sounds

**EXPLAIN.** "Music has a steady beat – a heartbeat that pulses underneath. When we listen to music, we often tap our foot, bob our head, or dance to the steady beat."

**MOVE.** Listen to [Jump in the Line](#) by Harry Belafonte. Depending on your space, have students shake, jump, clap, or stomp along with the beat.

**EXPLAIN.** "Beats can be split up into smaller sounds, or they can be held longer to make longer sounds."

**CLAP.** "Let's try this clapping experiment. First, let's clap four steady beats."

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

"Let's cut that beat in half and double the claps."

clap-clap clap-clap clap-clap clap-clap

"Now let's make the beats bigger by making them longer."

CLAP----- (hold) CLAP----- (hold)

**EXPLAIN.** "In music, these sounds can be stacked on top of each other. Rhythms fit inside each other, sort of like Russian nesting dolls." ([Show this image.](#))

**MOVE.** Listen to [Jump in the Line](#) again and try each kind of rhythm. For older groups, split the group and try two at once.

## EXTEND learning

*Choose one or both activities to extend learning.*

**LISTEN.** Dance, step, or move to these songs: [Twistin' Matilda](#) and/or [Hang on Sloopy](#).

**MOVE.** Use a theme to show beat and rhythm. Choose a short rhythm ostinato for students to move to. If possible, use a classroom instrument to play the rhythm while students move. Eventually, switch the ostinato. Ask students to pick the next rhythm pattern.

### Theme Examples:

- **WINTER:** Stomp in snow (quarter notes), throw snowballs (eighth notes), glide on skates (half or whole note)
- **BASKETBALL:** Pass (quarter), Dribble (eighth notes), Shoooooot (half or whole)
- **DANCE:** Kick (quarter), Tip Toe (eighth), Spin (half or whole)