

Animal Rhythms

Rhythm can be an excellent starting point for composition and an easy way to link composing to an area of study. This sheet can be adapted to suit the level of your pupil and will help introduce or reinforce rhythm concepts you are working on.

- Stage 1 Use the animal names on the sheet to create different rhythms. If your pupil needs support, you can have some rhythm cards ready to show them and match to the animal. The easiest way to begin is to make each animal worth one bar.
- Stage 2 Let your pupil choose their own animals to write rhythms for. It's a good idea to demonstrate and join in the activity by choosing your own!
- Stage 3 Make sure they can clap the rhythms fluently. Letting your pupil choose an order gives them the opportunity to take the lead and challenges them to move between rhythms fluently.
- Stage 4 Make sure your pupil writes their animal rhythms down clearly on a new piece of paper. They may choose several or have one favourite. Be flexible and let them take the lead.
- If they choose one animal only, extend their rhythm work by writing some descriptive words or lyrics about their favourite animal.
- Stage 5 Suggest appropriate hand positions that your pupil can comfortably work in, depending on their level and experience. If they are less confident, take the lead by demonstrating. You could choose 3 notes only for one of the animals and let your pupil copy you. Play a game of call and response alternating who starts! By using just small building blocks your pupil will begin to feel more confident.
- Make sure you or your pupil writes down the names of the notes of their melody as they go along. This may need to be by phrase or a longer section depending on your pupil.
- Stage 6 Now let your pupil create 'sound effects' for their animals. Let them be as creative as they like - they have the whole keyboard and pedals to play with! This is a good stage to encourage your pupil to think about dynamics, tempo and articulation.
- Stage 7 Finally, let your pupil decide on an order for the piece - this will give it structure. For example, they may like to play their animal tunes first followed immediately by 'sound effects', or it may work better for all of the sound effects to be the final section.