

# Inventing A Rhythm

## (a.k.a 'Rhythmic Invention')



It is one thing to be able to read poetry out loud in a certain rhythm, but quite another to know what the rhythm patterns should **look** like when you write them down!

Let's write down the rhythm of an extremely well known nursery rhyme:



Twinkle Twinkle little star  
How I wonder what you are

The first thing you should do is mark in the accents with upright lines. (Do this now)

Now imagine that each of these upright lines represents a bar line, and that each syllable between the lines represents a note.



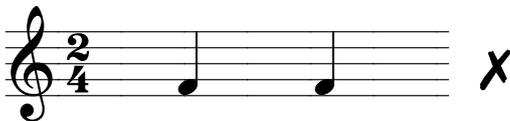
**Repeat:** Every **syllable** needs a note, not just every word!

Now we'll try to write a rhythm for the words in the time signature of  $\frac{2}{4}$   
(In the exam you will always be told which time signature to use)

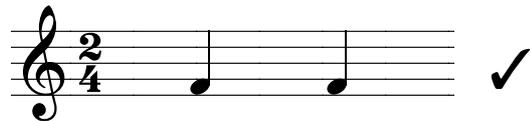
Here are some 'Groovy Guidelines':

- ★ for 1 syllable in the bar (e.g. 'star') use this rhythm:  $\frac{2}{4}$  ———— | } write these in!
- ★ for 2 syllables in the bar (e.g. 'How I') use this rhythm:  $\frac{2}{4}$  ———— | }

Another Important Point: Put a hyphen between syllables, otherwise you will lose marks! e.g

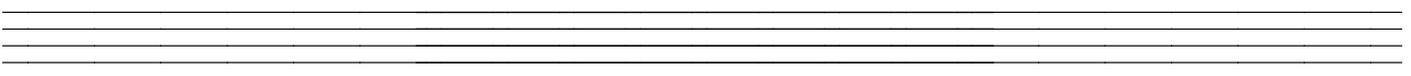
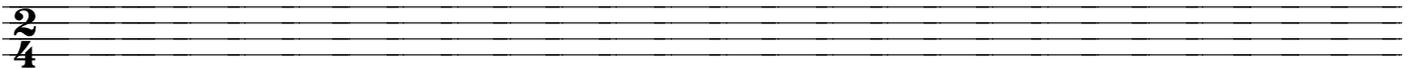


Twinkle



Twin - kle

OK, now you are ready to write down the rhythm, with the words written underneath. Remember to end with a double bar line.



Notice how the time signature is not written on the second staff. It didn't go missing...it should only appear on the first line!

Now let's try a rhythm in  $\frac{3}{4}$

Pat-a-cake Pat-a-cake baker's man,  
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.

(mark in the accents now with upright lines)



The 'Groovy Guidelines' for  $\frac{3}{4}$  are:

- ★ for one syllable, use  $\frac{3}{4}$
- ★ for 2 syllables, use  $\frac{3}{4}$
- ★ for 3 syllables, use  $\frac{3}{4}$

} Always remember to put a hyphen between syllables

Write the rhythm (with the words underneath the notes) on the staves below.  
Remember, the time signature should only appear once.

Two sets of blank musical staves for writing the rhythm.

Sometimes the first word or two is not accented. This means your rhythm will have an \_\_\_\_\_, which means you will need to adjust the \_\_\_\_\_ bar! If the first word of the second line is not accented, it simply belongs to the previous bar.

See? This will belong in the same bar as 'trees' → The wind was strong, it blew the trees  
And lots of branches fell down



Try this in  $\frac{3}{4}$ :

Two sets of blank musical staves for writing the rhythm.

### Handy Hints:

- ★ Your anacrusis should generally be a crotchet or quaver, which you must subtract from the last bar
- ★ Write the words or syllables under each note as you go, that way it will be nicely spaced
- ★ For rhythms in  $\frac{2}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  you should end up with 8 bars
- ★ If you only have 7 bars, simply tie the last note over to the 8th bar!
- ★ You don't have to start a new staff for a new line of poetry - use up the whole of the first staff first!

# Rhythms in $\frac{6}{8}$ or $\frac{4}{4}$

For these time signatures it makes it much easier if you remember this:

★ Each upright line represents HALF a bar ★  
(Very important)

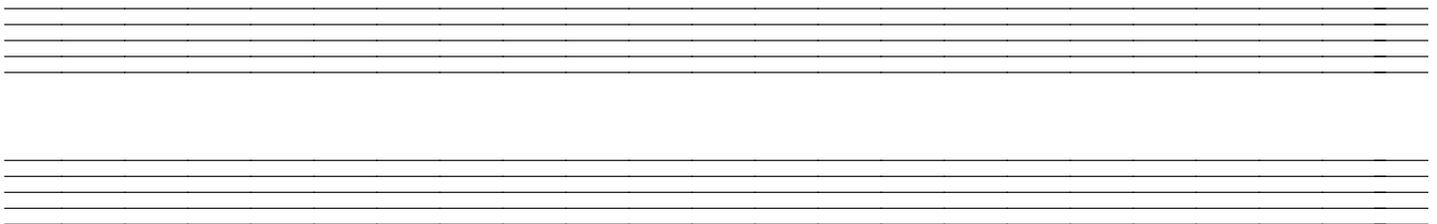
Try this couplet in  $\frac{6}{8}$

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick  
Jack jump over the candlestick.



Here are the 'Groovy Guidelines':

- 1 syllable per half bar =  $\frac{6}{8}$  \_\_\_\_\_ |
- 2 syllables per half bar =  $\frac{6}{8}$  \_\_\_\_\_ |
- 3 syllables per half bar =  $\frac{6}{8}$  \_\_\_\_\_ |



Another important fact: In  $\frac{6}{8}$  or  $\frac{4}{4}$  you will only have \_\_\_\_\_ bars instead of 8!

'Groovy Guidelines' for  $\frac{4}{4}$

- 1 syllable per half bar =  $\frac{4}{4}$  \_\_\_\_\_ |
- 2 syllables per half bar =  $\frac{4}{4}$  \_\_\_\_\_ |
- 4 syllables per half bar =  $\frac{4}{4}$  \_\_\_\_\_ |

3 syllables is a little tricky. It could either be  $\frac{4}{4}$  \_\_\_\_\_ | or  $\frac{4}{4}$  \_\_\_\_\_ |  
Say it both ways in your head and decide which sounds better, e.g.

  
Traf - fic light

or

  
Traf - fic light

Try the following couplet in  $\frac{4}{4}$  on some spare manuscript or plain paper

They went to the shops in the pouring rain  
The streets were flooded and the traffic insane!

