

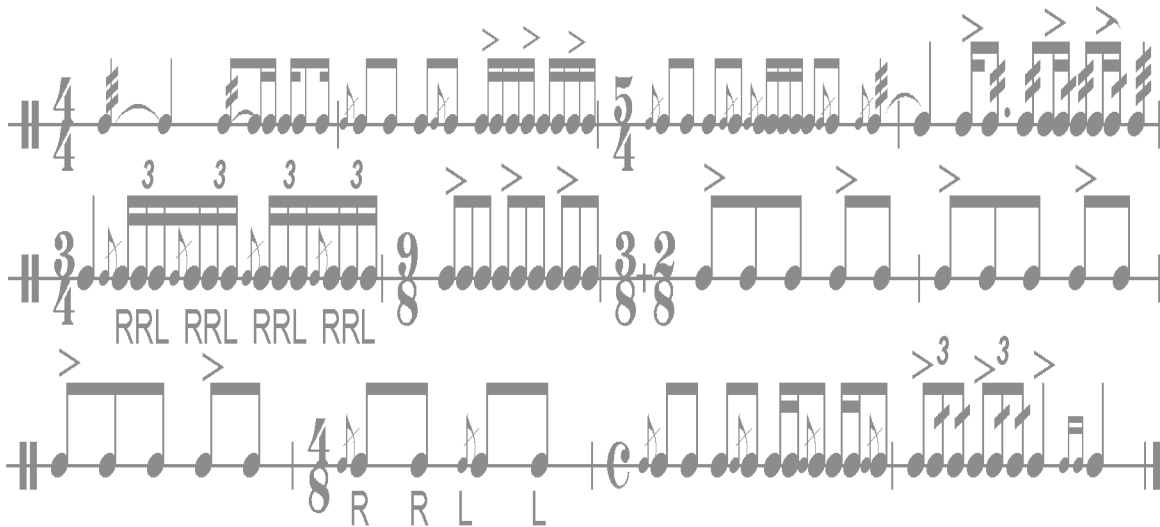
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Sight Reading Complete for Drummers

Volume **1** of 3

By Mike Prestwood

An exploration of rhythm, notation, technique, and musicianship



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Dedication

I dedicate this method series to my first drum instructor Joe Santoro. Joe is a brilliant instructor and an exceptional percussionist. With his guidance, I progressed quickly and built a foundation for a lifetime of drumming fueled by his encouragement and enthusiasm.

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Introduction

This thorough and balanced exploration of rhythm, notation, technique, and musicianship has several purposes. You can use this series as a complete primer to playing orchestral snare or as a precursor to playing rudimental snare, drum set, timbales, or any other percussion instrument that uses drumsticks. Advanced players and professionals can use this fast-paced exploration of their craft to fine-tune their timing and sight-reading abilities and to fill in holes in their education. I have tried to use a practical approach and I hope you find it valuable during your entire career.

Here is what I tried to do with the lessons:

- **Rhythm** – Each lesson introduces new rhythmic elements. I tried to keep a fast pace while providing a thorough exploration. After completing the lessons, you will be equipped to correctly interpret and understand nearly any rhythm. If you play along with the audio files available with this series, your timing will improve and, with consistent practice, you will be able to play nearly anything you want.
- **Notation** – When appropriate, the lessons include clear explanations and alternative notation styles such as the use of 1-line and 5-line staves, stems up or down, flams and ruffs with and without ties, and many other commonly occurring variations in drum notation.
- **Technique** – This series covers most drumstick-based techniques including grip, building chops, flams, ruffs, closed roll techniques, and more. Although most of the technique information is included in “Lesson 1 – Technique”, there are gems of knowledge spread throughout. All three volumes contain an appendix A and B. In each of the three volumes, appendix A is a warm up and appendix B contains chop building exercises.
- **Musicianship** – Having the ability to sight-read is one thing, but music notation is just part of the bigger picture. Where appropriate, this series delves into such subjects as interpretation, playing with others, dynamics, tempo, etc.

While developing these lessons, I strove for a fast pace and an even amount of coverage for each topic. In addition, each lesson is as complete as possible and is as independent from the other lessons as reasonable. This allows you to review a lesson and focus on the topic of the lesson. You will find yourself returning to various lessons throughout your career to review or re-enforce your playing abilities. Some of the lessons serve as excellent reference sources including such lessons as repeats, dynamics, tempo markings, etc.

What’s not included?

The title “Sight Reading Complete for Drummers” is a lofty and daunting title. This series presents the elements of drumming as interpreted by me. It focuses on the elements used by non-pitched percussionists who use drumsticks. In addition, this series focuses on the common elements. For example, it does not include outdated notation techniques and obscure new inventions.

Each percussion instrument has its own unique playing techniques. For example, percussionists can play the snare drum with either a rudimental style or an orchestral style. They will interpret (play) the same drum part differently depending on which style they are playing. Percussionists play timpani, a pitched percussion instrument, using soft mallets and a modified grip and stroke. As a final example, drummers play drumset differently depending on the genre they are playing. Rock drummers typically play 8th notes straight and jazz drummers typically play 8th notes with a rolling (triplet) feel – to name just one difference. This series does not attempt to cover all playing variations. Instead, it focuses on snare drum techniques and introduces enough of the other playing techniques to raise awareness.

About Volume 1

Volume 1 covers the basics of drumming -- the fundamentals. It starts with this introduction, a technique lesson, and a meter lesson. Then it follows with lessons that explore rhythm and various aspects of drumming.

Getting the Most Out of this Book

Since Volume 1 serves the dual purpose of first method book and review book, beginners and advanced players will get different things out of it.

For those just getting started in drums, read the introductory material and proceed straight through Volume 1 from lesson 1 through lesson 23. Start each practice session with a warm up using either lesson 1 or 2 of this volume. If you already know 8th notes and accents, then build your chops after you warm up using Appendix B as written. Play along with the audio files as part of your daily practice sessions. Except for lesson 1, play only to the 100 BPM files.

Advanced players can skip certain lessons or parts of lessons that are obviously targeting new drummers. Start each practice session with a warm up either using the exercises in lesson 1 or appendix A, and build your chops using appendix B as written or using one of the variations. Strive for a very high quality musical sound. Play the audio files as part of your daily practice sessions focusing on the slowest and fastest audio files.

Review: After completing the lessons in this method series, you can use these books for review material and chop building. If you own all three volumes of this series, here is a formula for getting the most out of them:

1. **Warm Up** - Warm up using appendix A of any one volume. The volume 1 warm up, this volume, is quick and easy while the warm ups in volumes 2 and 3 are more complex. Strive for loose and relaxed muscles.
2. **Build Your Chops** – Build your chops using appendix B of any one volume.
3. **Take a Lesson** - Choose one lesson from each volume (three lessons total) and review the material.

Practicing Drums

How much you practice depends on your goals. If your goals include becoming a world-class drummer, practice several hours every day. After all, world-class pianists practice piano for many hours every day. On the other end of the spectrum, if you are a student just getting started, practice at least 30 minutes every day. If you cannot practice the usual 30 minutes a day, squeeze in at least 15 minutes or even 5 minutes a day along with a one to two hour practice session at least once a week. It is better to practice a little every day, than to practice a lot a couple of times a week. Your goal is to get in the habit of daily or near daily practice.

Advanced Drummers

I developed this series with both the student and the professional in mind. (In fact, I developed it with myself in mind. I wanted something I could use with my practice sessions.)

Here is some advice:

- **Drum Set Practicing** – If you are a drum set player, play the beat count with your hi-hat foot, the bass part with your bass foot, and the snare part on the snare.
- **Video Tape** – Set up your video camera and record yourself playing. When you watch yourself play, you will notice subtle areas you need to work on. In addition, video taping yourself lets you see your good habits and reinforces them.

Student Guide

Be patient with yourself and have many years of fun with this book. You can use a practice pad or a snare drum to practice each exercise. However, you should practice on a snare drum as much as possible. No practice pad can replace a real drum.

Get a Drum Teacher! Unless you are an advanced student, a drum teacher is necessary if you expect to progress at a rapid pace.

Tempo Advice - Use a metronome wisely!

If you have a metronome, use it. If you do not, buy one. For percussionists, a metronome is part of your fundamental gear and as important as your drumsticks.

It is a good idea to alternate playing to a metronome and playing without one. If you always practice to a metronome, you might develop a need to play only with a metronome. If you practice at various tempos with and without a metronome and play along to the audio files for this series, you will develop good time. Tapping your foot is also a useful timekeeper. Practice playing while tapping your foot and not tapping your foot.

Unspecified/Specified Tempos: Lesson 2 briefly introduces tempo markings and I usually specified the tempo starting from lesson 17 through the lessons in volume 3. Practice the exercises in this series at the specified tempo first. Then practice at other tempos as desired. Start each exercise at a slow comfortable tempo and work up to the specified tempo or, when not specified, use a comfortable tempo. Repeat each exercise several times. In general, repeat sight-reading exercises until you are comfortable with the rhythm and notation. Repeat technique exercises a minimum of 10 times.

Sticking Styles

There are two common sticking styles: right hand lead and alternating. With the right hand lead style, you use your right hand primarily for downbeats and the left hand primarily for upbeats. With the alternating style, you alternate your sticking as you see fit. You might find right hand lead is easier to play because you play the same rhythms using the same sticking each time. Some of the exercises in this series indicate both styles below the notes. I suggest you master both styles.

Play-Drums.com

You will find supplemental information at the following internet address:

www.play-drums.com/sightreading

This is the official website for this series and includes free movies that demonstrate various techniques included in this series as well as related material such as marching snare, drum set playing, and other exercises.

Download the MP3 Audio Files

In order to perfect your timing and ability to play at various tempos, you need to hear the rhythms and play along with them. Free MP3 audio files for the lessons in this series are available for download. You can play them on your computer, download them to your MP3 player, or burn them to CD. Get the files now at

www.play-drums.com/sightreading/download

Here is a guide to the file naming convention:

- **1-Lesson + ## + Ex + ## + ### BPM** = The exercise(s) at the given tempo. This will either be snare only, or snare and bass, depending on the exercise.
- **Bass** = If “Bass” is indicated, then this version is the bass drum only part, which is helpful with learning to play along with other instruments.
- **Click** = If “Click” is indicated, then this version is a click track at the given tempo. These versions are particularly helpful with the time switching exercises.
- **Check** = If “Check” is indicated, this version contains a rhythmic check pattern. This is particularly helpful with the timing and accent exercises.

Online Message Board

Post your questions and comments on our message board.

Online Teacher Guide

An online teacher’s guide is available at play-drums.com.

Drum Notation & Reference

This section introduces enough music notation theory so that you will both be able to get started playing the lessons in this book and have a fundamental understanding of how composers notate drums and percussion. In addition, you will gain a general understanding of how composers notate music for pitched instruments. I divided this reference between notating pitch and notating rhythm.

Note Some of the material in this lesson is advanced. For now, read over the material and understand what you can. Later, return to this lesson and review the material.

About Music Notation

Western music notation represents music graphically. Composers represent pitch vertically up and down and rhythm horizontally left to right. However, the combination of pitch and rhythm is an incomplete representation of music without the other markings such as tempo (the speed of music), dynamics (the volume of music), and other markings that direct the performer. This method series covers all of these topics in depth except for pitch, which I briefly cover next.

Notating Pitch

Composers notate pitch graphically using lines and spaces. Composers place lower pitched notes lower than higher pitched notes. This graphical representation up and down clearly notates the pitch of music.

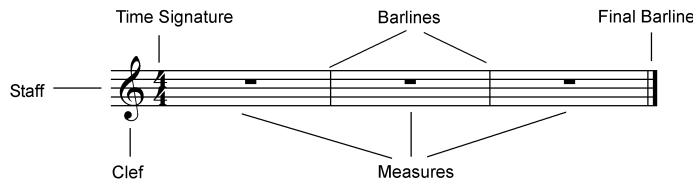
Pitch Defined

All sounds have pitch. The number of vibrations per second determines the *pitch* or *tone* of a sound. The term *pitched instrument* means the instrument, when played, produces a specifically known pitch. The term *non-pitched instrument* means the pitch of the instrument is not specified -- it is what it is.

A pitch an octave above a given pitch has twice the vibrations of the given pitch, and to our ear, the two pitches sound like the same tone. In western music, composers divide an octave into 12 tones and we call each tone a half step. A series of notes is a *melody* and the playing of two or more notes at the same time is *harmony*. Melody and harmony are beyond the scope of this book. What follows is just enough music theory to bring context to drum notation.

Staffs

The staff is the foundation for engraving music and consists of vertical lines and spaces. The standard staff consists of five lines and four spaces. With pitched instruments, the lines and spaces represent pitches with higher pitches placed higher on the staff. For non-pitched percussion, the composer assigns instruments to the lines and spaces.

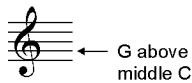


Clefs

A composer uses a clef to indicate a pitch range and reference pitch for the musical notes on the staff. The following are the common pitched clefs. Each clef indicates what pitches are represented by the lines and spaces of the staff.

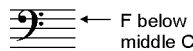
Treble Clef

The treble clef is also known as the G-clef because the circle indicates the G note.



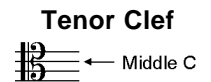
Bass Clef

The bass clef is also known as the F-clef because the two dots mark the F-note.



Moveable C Clef

This clef marks middle C with the line located by the center of the clef. Middle C is the center key of a piano. This clef has several common variations, all of them mark middle C.



The Great Staff

The great staff combines the treble and bass clefs into a single system with higher notes on the top treble clef and lower notes on the bottom bass clef. Composers use the great staff to notate music for piano, xylophone, and many other instruments that have the full range of pitches used in western music. The great staff is also known as the grand staff.

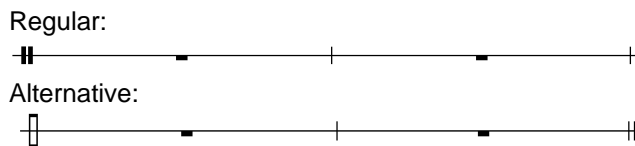


Pitched Percussion

If you learn to play a pitched percussion instrument such as a xylophone or steel drums, you will learn to read music notated with the appropriate clef. Composers notate music for pitched percussion the same as they notate for any other pitched instrument.

Non-Pitched Clef

For non-pitched instruments such as drums, composers use the non-pitched clef.



5-Line Staff

To notate music for multiple drums, composers use a standard 5-line staff and assign instruments to the lines and spaces.



1-Line Staff

For notating a single non-pitched percussion instrument, you will often see a 1-line staff.



Other Non-Standard Staves

Some composers use a 2, 3, or 4-line staff to notate non-pitched percussion.

Drum Stroke Variations

You can strike a percussion instrument with a stick using several different variations including the following:

- **Single and Bounced Strokes** – You can use single, double, triple, and multiple bounce strokes.
- **Bead or Butt** – You can use either the bead or butt of the drumstick.
- **Dynamics** – You can control volume with the height and strength of a stroke from the softest to loudest of strokes.
- **Rim Shot** – You can hit in the middle of the head and the rim at the same time.
- **Ping Rim Shot** – You can hit the edge of the snare head and rim with the shoulder of the stick at the same time.
- **Cross Stick Rim Shot** – You can put one stick across the snare so that it rests on the head and rim and strike it with the other stick. This stroke is useful only with isolated rim shots because executing it quickly is difficult.
- **Muffled** – After you strike some instruments, such as a cymbal, you can muffle the sound with your other hand.

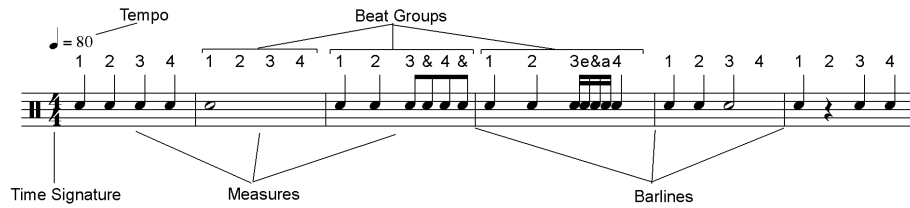
Legend*

When notating non-pitched percussion, the lines and spaces of a staff represent instruments instead of pitches. A legend is usually included to indicate what each line and space represents along with any additional information required to interpret the notation correctly. The following is a legend for this three volume series:

*The appropriate lesson includes explanations of these symbols.

Notating Rhythm

Composers notate rhythm horizontally from left to right. Although not as precise graphically as the vertical notating of pitches, you will quickly learn the left to right graphical representation of rhythm.



Measures and Barlines

A composer divides a staff into measures using barlines. The tempo (the speed of the music) and the time signature (the underlying beat count) gives each measure a defined duration and a composer can divide the duration into multiple notes per measure using rhythmic notation (the subject of this method series).

Time Signatures

A *time signature* defines each measure. It is comprised of two numbers: a top number and a bottom number. The top number notates the number of beats per measure (the beat grouping) and the bottom number notates what type of note gets those beats. Musicians also refer to the beat as the *beat duration* or *beat count*.

Common Time

Western music notation is based on $\frac{4}{4}$ time. The $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature is also known as common time because the early symbol for it was a broken circle that looked similar to the letter "C", and it is the most commonly used time signature in popular music. The beat grouping is four beats per measure, indicated by the top number, and the beat duration is the quarter note, indicated by the bottom number. In $\frac{4}{4}$ time, the quarter note gets the beat and there are four quarter notes per measure. Therefore, the whole note or rest fills a $\frac{4}{4}$ measure and receives four counts.

Rhythmic Notes and Rests

Composers notate rhythm using notes and rests. The whole note is the foundation rhythmic note of western music. It represents a whole measure and in common $\frac{4}{4}$ time it gets four counts.

Common Notation for Subdivisions:

	1	2	3	4
Whole Note (4 counts in $\frac{4}{4}$)	o			
Whole Rest (4 counts in $\frac{4}{4}$)	—			
Half Note (2 counts in $\frac{4}{4}$)	♪		♪	
Half Rest (2 counts in $\frac{4}{4}$)	—		—	
Quarter Note (1 count in $\frac{4}{4}$)	♪	♪	♪	♪
Quarter Rest (1 count in $\frac{4}{4}$)	z	z	z	z
Eighth Note (1/2 count in $\frac{4}{4}$)	♪	& ♪	♪ ♪	♪ ♪ ♪
Eighth Rest (1/2 count in $\frac{4}{4}$)	z	z	z	z
Sixteenth Note (1/4 count in $\frac{4}{4}$)	♪	e ♪	e ♪	e ♪
Sixteenth Rest (1/4 count in $\frac{4}{4}$)	z	z	z	z

Theoretically, you can keep subdividing infinitely. However, from a practical point of view, only two more subdivisions commonly occur in western music: 32nd notes (♪) and rests (z) and 64th notes (♪) and rests (z).


To Count or Not to Count

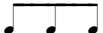
Having the ability to both count rhythm when needed and to feel the rhythm is important. Practice each of the exercises counting each note, counting just beats (1, 2, 3, etc.) and not counting at all.

Tuples (Artificial Groups)

Tuples are irregular note divisions. In addition to subdividing by the common subdivision of two, you can subdivide by three, five, seven, etc. Because the common subdivision is two and multiples of two, any other subdivision is known as a tuple or artificial group. For example, you can play three notes, a triplet, in the same time as two.

For example (visually):

Time: 123456789
In the space of two notes: 

Time: 123456789
You can play three: 

Counting Triplets

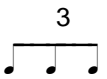


Some drum instructors do not teach their students to count triplets and some do. My preference, if you are going to count triplets, is to count them with "1 ti ta, 2 ti ta, etc."




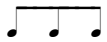

Common Tuples:

Composers notate artificial groups with a number directly above the group of notes. The number indicates how many notes to play in the given duration.




Triplets:

 Play in the same time of  or 




Duplets:

 Play in the same time of  or 

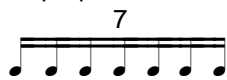


Quarter Note Triplets:

 Play in the same time of  or 

Quintuplets:

 Play in the same time of  or 

Septuplets:

 Play in the same time of  or 

We will revisit playing triplets later in this volume. Volume 2 covers quarter note triplets and volume 3 covers duplets, quintuplets, and septuplets as well as advanced tuple rhythm.

Lesson 1: Technique

Technique is about how you approach drumming. This includes everything physical that goes into playing a drum including grip, the angle of your arms, the height of your drums, how you sit, tension in your body, etc. Good technique leads to more natural sounding, faster, and smoother playing. Good technique takes patience and time to develop. Every time you pick up a drumstick, keep good technique in mind. Remember, consistency in technique is one of the keys to great playing. The following introductory rules are generally accepted and are an excellent start to your long journey into the many aspects of technique.

Technique Guidelines

Your goal with technique is to abide by all the following guidelines without having to think about technique.

- **Play Loose** - Always play with loose and relaxed muscles. This includes wrists, fingers, arms, shoulders, neck, back, legs, feet, toes, etc. If you feel the slightest tightness or pain, especially in your hands or arms, stop and either start over at a slightly slower tempo or take a short break.
- **Use Equal Motion** – Watch your stick height and path. Both sticks should move down and up with equal height and in a straight line.
- **Use the Bead, not Shoulder** - The bead of the stick, not the shoulder, should hit the middle of the drumhead.
- **Stay Above Drum** - Keep your arms and wrists above the drum. This guideline is automatic if you succeed at the “Flat Top of Wrists” guideline.
- **Bounce Hit** - The stick should move up, down, then up, in one motion. Let the stick bounce up naturally. Do not try to stop the stick at the point of impact.
- **Attack Note** - The *attack* is the start of your stroke. In order to play the note on time, you need to attack the note at the appropriate time.

Match Grip

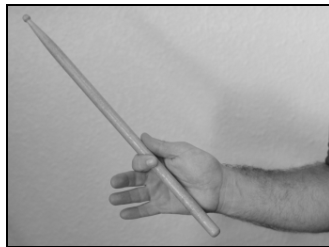
Use match grip (both hands the same) unless your teacher teaches traditional grip. Grip the stick only as firmly as necessary. Use only your wrists and fingers for drum strokes. Do not let your arm move up and down. This is particularly important in the beginning. Later, you will learn how to use slight arm movements, for example, with accents.

- **Flat Top of Wrists** - Keep your wrist flat and tilted at an angle respective to the horizontal plain (pinky lower than thumb).
- **Pivot Point** – Pivot point is either the pointing finger (orchestral grip) or middle finger (marching grip).
- **Thumb on Side** - Keep your thumb about 1/3 down the stick and on the side -- not below or above the stick. Your fingers should always loosely touch the stick.
- **Check Point** – Make sure there is a straight line from your elbow through your pointing finger's first knuckle.

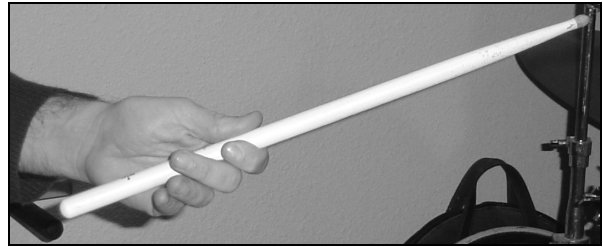
Match Grip



Orchestral Pivot Point



Marching Pivot Point



Traditional Grip (left hand)

With a traditional grip, your right hand is the same as explained above. The left hand uses a different grip to increase the stick angle. The pivot point is between your thumb and pointing finger and the stick rests on the tip of your ring finger (center of first digit). As a checkpoint, make sure your thumb is pointing in a straight line with your arm.

Traditional Grip



Pivot Point



Note Marching snare drummers invented the traditional grip to address the angle of a carried drum. To carry a snare, they used a strap around their shoulder, attached to the snare. This produced a playing surface with a severe angle, so playing match grip was nearly impossible. In general, match grip is easier to learn and is a stronger grip. For more information and help deciding on your grip, go to www.play-drums.com/lessons/grip

14 Minute Daily Chop Builder

Warm up at the beginning of your daily practice session with the following sticking exercises. Warming up and building your playing strength and dexterity takes daily or near daily practice. My intention with the following sticking exercises is to generate enthusiasm for drumming. In addition, these exercises will help you build great chops!

Isolated Exercises:

After you can play these exercises smoothly, focus on increasing speed and using a smooth musical stroke. Your challenge is to build up to a smooth fast playing speed.

1. **Right Hand** (1 minute) - RRRR...
2. **Left Hand** (1 minute) - LLLL...

If you have a weak hand (usually your left hand, for right-handed drummers), do an extra minute with your weaker hand.

No Arm Movement

Use your wrists and fingers only. Your arm should not move up and down. If you have trouble keeping your arm from moving up and down, practice one hand at a time and hold your wrist with the other hand.



Core Sticking Exercises:

Perform the following exercise as fast as comfortable. Make sure your left and right hand strokes use the same height. To execute the double strokes, two taps with one stick, utilize the bounce of the stick.

3. **Singles** (4 minutes) - RLRL...
4. **Double Strokes** (4 minutes) - RRLL...
5. **Paradiddles** (4 minutes) - RLRR LLLL...

Optional sticking exercises:

At least once a week add the optional exercises (6-10).

6. **Inline Doubles** (2 minutes) – RLRL RLRL RRLL RRLL...
7. **Inline Paradiddles** (2 minutes) – RLRL RLRL RLRR LLLL...
8. **Inline Inverted Paradiddles** (2 minutes) – RLRL RLRL RRLR LLRL...
9. **Doubles and Paradiddles** (2 minutes) – RRLL RRLL RLRR LLLL...
10. **Review Exercise** (4 minutes):

RLRL RLRL RRRR LLLL
RLRL RLRL RRLR RRLL
RLRL RLRL RLRR LLLL
RLRL RLRL RRLR LLRL

Lesson 2: Tempo and Beat Grouping

This lesson enforces tempo and beat grouping. Practice these exercises with and without a metronome and strive for a smooth, relaxed, and mistake free performance. Let the music flow, let your playing flow.

Tempo Markings

The term used for the speed or pace of music is *tempo* (an Italian word for time). There are two commonly used ways of notating tempo: beats per minute (metronome marks) and language (tempo markings or tempo marks). A composer may indicate tempo precisely by indicating the beats per minute or generally using language. Although you will see English words such as slow and fast, Italian is the traditional language of music and is more common than other languages.

Note This lesson is an introduction to tempo. Later you will learn more about tempo markings in the lesson titled, "Lesson-Tempo Markings". The later lesson is a more complete lesson.

Metronome Marks: Beats Per Minute

Composers use metronome marks to specify a precise pace of the music. A metronome mark is indicated in beats per minute so 60 beats per minute is one beat per second and 120 beats per minute is two beats per second.

Practice Tempo

Having the ability to keep a tempo is important for all musicians and particularly important for drummers because the other musicians look to the drummer to control tempo. Practice the following tempo exercise with a metronome at the following speeds and in the order specified below:

1. Moderate -- *Moderato* (♩ = 100)
2. Slow -- *Andantino* (♩ = 84)
3. Fast -- *Allegro* (♩ = 120)
4. Very Slow -- *Adagio* (♩ = 60)
5. Very Fast -- *Vivace* (♩ = 160)

Repeat exercise #1 at each tempo indicated above until you are comfortable with the tempo. Use your weak hand (your left hand for right-handed drummers) then do each exercise again using alternating singles (RLRL...).

①

The notation shows a sequence of 16 notes on a staff. The notes are grouped into four sets of four. The first set of four notes has sticking patterns L, R, R, L. The second set of four notes has sticking patterns L, L, L, L. The third set of four notes has sticking patterns R, R, L, L. The fourth set of four notes has sticking patterns L, R, L, L. The exercise starts with a C-clef and a common time signature (C).

Tempo control is very important to drummers. Therefore, come back to this exercise occasionally and practice it at various speeds, increasing and decreasing speed.

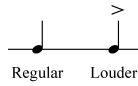
Take the Tempo Test

Have someone listen to a metronome with headphones and count off a tempo (1, 2, 3, 4). Play the exercise above, repeat it several times, and see how long you can keep the tempo going. Have them stop you once you speed up or slow down (and you will do one or the other). Most drummers tend to slow down fast tempos and speed up slow tempos. What are your tendencies? Can you correct your tendencies?

Note Once you master the exercises in this lesson, you can use them as a warm up to your practice session. First, run exercise #1 four times. Then play exercises #2 through #10 using all three sticking patterns without stopping.

Beat Grouping

Music is broken down into measures and each measure is assigned a meter with built-in stress points. For example, a waltz is counted, "one, two, three, one, two, three, etc." You count each measure with "one, two, three", and you put a stress, a slight pulse or accent, on the first beat of every measure. Time signatures such as $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and $\frac{4}{4}$ indicate the underline default rhythmic meter (pulse pattern). Although we will formally introduce accents (>) in a later lesson, play the notes as follows:



Common Beat Grouping Exercises

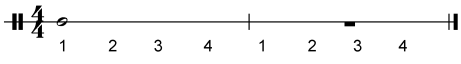
Practice each exercise at a minimum of two tempos and use one of the sticking patterns below.

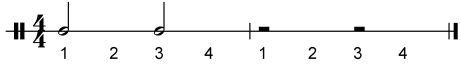
Lesson 3: Whole, Half, Quarter


What is a percussion instrument? A *percussion instrument* is an instrument you play by striking, shaking, or plucking. Drums are a subcategory of percussion. A *drum* is a cylinder frame with an animal skin or synthetic imitation stretched over it. A *snare drum* adds a device called a snare to the bottom head that vibrates very quickly. This snare device is usually made of wire but sometimes it's made of cat gut or a synthetic material. It's what gives the snare drum its unique sound and name.

The snare drum is a staccato instrument. In music, the word *staccato* means to play notes in a detached, separated and distinct manner. When you hit a snare drum once, you get a staccato sound – a short sound. Although you will encounter notes of various lengths, on the snare drum, you always strike the instrument once at the start of the note.

Notation Review

Whole notes (\circ) and rests (—) = 1 note per $\frac{4}{4}$ measure (4 counts) 

Half notes (♩) and rests (—) = 2 notes per $\frac{4}{4}$ measure (2 counts) 

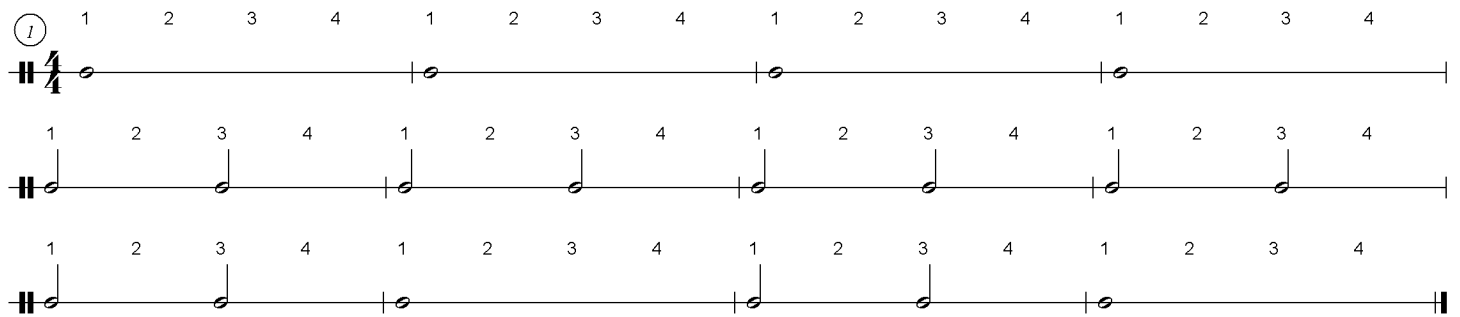
Quarter notes (♩) and rests (♩) = 4 notes per $\frac{4}{4}$ measure (1 count) 

\circ , ♩ , and ♩ Exercises

Use alternating strokes for all of the exercises in this lesson (Right, Left, etc.).

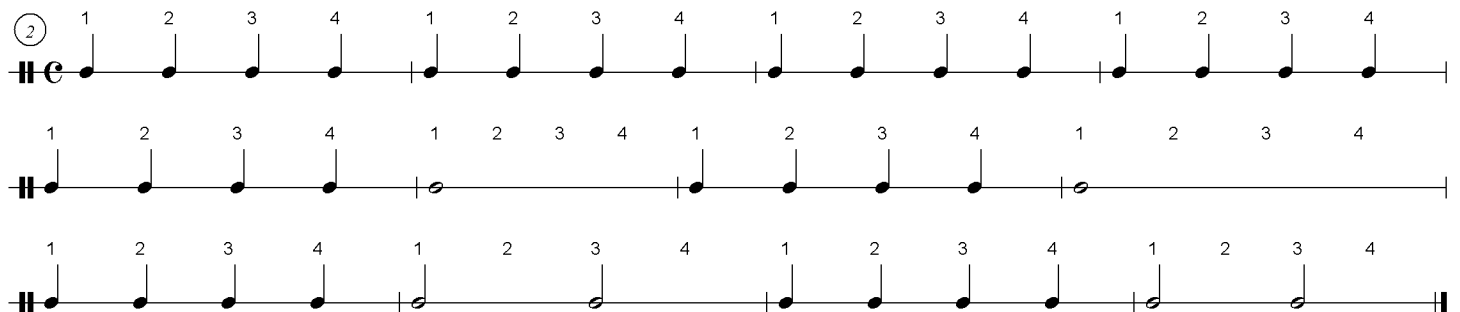
$\frac{4}{4}$ Time

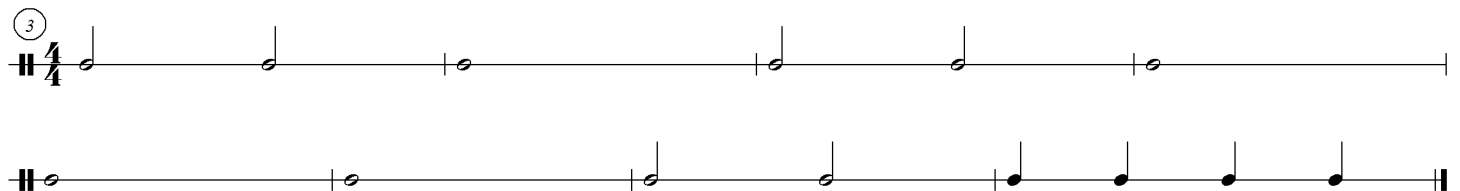
In $\frac{4}{4}$ time the quarter note gets the beat because the bottom number is a 4, and there are 4 beats per measure because the top number is also a 4.

① 

Common Time

$\frac{4}{4}$ time is also known as common time (C) and is the time signature western music notation is based upon. $\frac{4}{4}$ time can be represented by a C as in the following exercise.

② 

③ 

4

Exercises #5 through #12 specify sticking. R = Right Hand, L = Left Hand

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12

The following exercise presents two distinct sticking styles: alternating and right hand lead. With the top alternating style, you alternate your sticking patterns. With the bottom right hand lead style, you lead with your right hand and, in general, you use your right hand for downbeats (1 & 3) and your left hand for upbeats (2 & 4). Practice the following exercise using both sticking styles notated below. With the other exercises, use either sticking style.

13

Lesson 4: Snare and Bass

Learning to play with other musicians is an important musical skill. In this lesson, you will learn to play with a bass drummer.

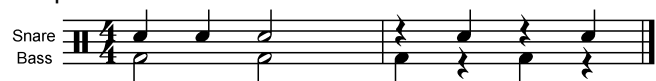
Notating Snare and Bass

Although you may see snare and bass notated on a 1-line staff, and less commonly on a 2, 3, or 4-line staff, the traditional approach is to notate multiple percussion instruments on a standard 5-line staff.

1-Line Snare and Bass Sample:



Standard 5-Line Snare and Bass Sample:



Snare and Bass Exercises

The following exercises require two drummers. Preferably one drummer plays the snare and another plays the bass. However, you can play any two instruments and achieve the same experience. Most of the remaining exercises of this book contain both snare and bass parts. However, this is the only lesson where two drummers are required.

Note If you have downloaded the audio files from play-drums.com, the audio files with “Bass” after the exercise number, are the bass drum only part. These versions are helpful with learning to play along with other instruments. The audio files for this lesson include “1-Lesson 04 Ex 1-5 100 BPM.mp3” and “1-Lesson 04 Ex 1-5 Bass 100 BPM.mp3” along with several other versions at various tempos.

“Thank you for downloading and reading the introduction pages to my book Sight Reading Complete for Drummers: Volume 1 of 3. To order this book (60 pages) and the other two volumes, please visit <http://www.play-drums.com/sightreading/>” -Mike Prestwood

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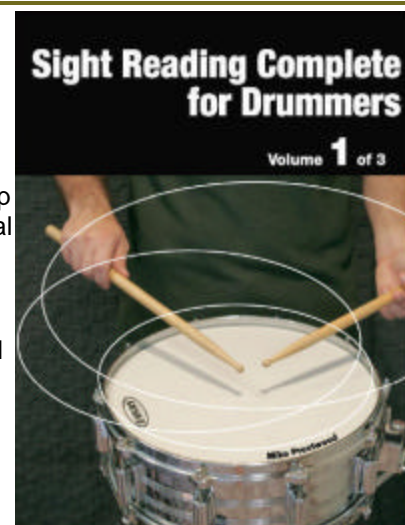
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