

# PERCUSSION COURSE

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



↑ LEVEL 1 ↓



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Canada and Bermuda Territory  
2 Overlea Blvd. Toronto ON M4H 1P4**

**Original Author: Marcus Venables**

**Contributors: Rachel Ewing, Matthew Moore, Nicholas Samuel, Jacob Slous**

## **Introduction to the Instructor's Guide**

Welcome to the Instructor's Guide for the Percussion Course. This book is meant to be used by the teacher/instructor of the course, either at music camps or in other programs.

Each student should have their own copy of the student workbook. In addition to these books, the students should be learning from our Music Theory course to help with all things music related. Learning percussion involves a lot of musical knowledge. At times, this course will work under the assumption that the students have already grasped certain music theory concepts. This course is functional for any number of students, and is also usable for self-teaching purposes.

Each lesson is designed to take approximately 30-45 minutes long including teaching and practice time. Do not let the students take shortcuts. It is important to practice each exercise at multiple speeds (fast and slow). Be sure to use additional ideas to re-enforce specific concepts to meet the needs of your students. Keep in mind that not every student will progress at the same pace. This may require working one bar at a time, or repeating more complex lessons and material.

Wherever you see boxed text with written instructions, this indicates teaching instructions that are not included in the student workbook.

Each student should take a placement test before being placed in a level. After a student completes a level, there is a separate final test that should be completed and passed before moving on to the next level. Be sure you have these materials.

If you are unfamiliar with percussion playing yourself, the workbook, along with this instructor's guide, should give you the necessary information to learn as you go.

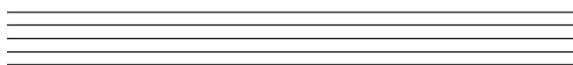
Let's get teaching!

## Introduction – Staff, Clefs, Note Names

Before you start learning how to play percussion, there are a few basic concepts we need to review. You may have learned this before so it will be a good review. If this is new, take your time and read through each explanation.

### Staff

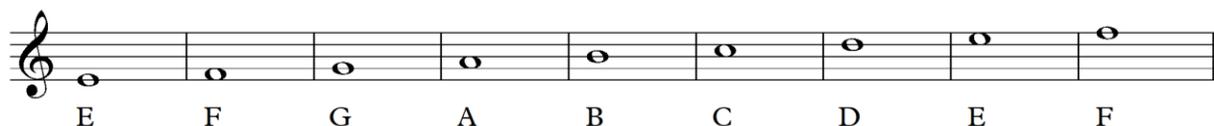
Musical notes are written on a staff of five lines and four spaces. Notes can be written on the lines or in the spaces.



### Treble Clef

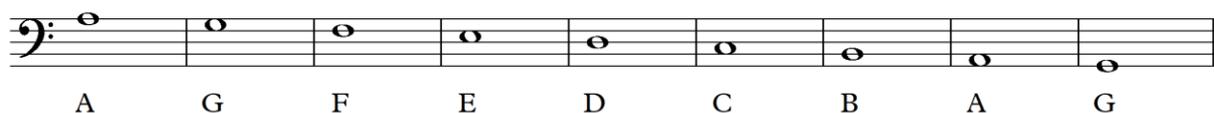
All music has a symbol at the start of every staff. These are called clefs. They are used to indicate the pitch of the notes written on the staff.

This symbol is called the **Treble Clef**.



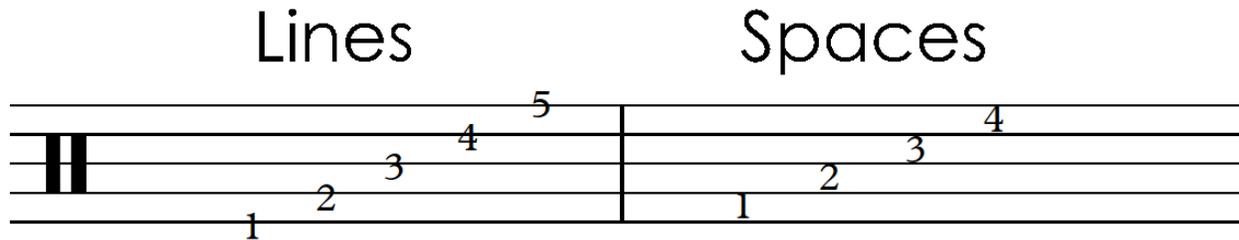
### Bass Clef

The **Bass Clef** is another clef that is used in music. The Treble Clef is used for high notes and the Bass Clef is used for low notes.



## Percussion (Natural) Clef

The Percussion Clef **||** is another clef that is used in music. This is what is used to assign certain percussion instruments to a line or space. We don't use alphabet letters for the percussion clef, but instead they are numbered.



Here are some basic notes for percussion instruments that you should learn. When you see a note on the third space, you should play snare drum. The first space is bass drum, and the second space is the suspended cymbal.

Diagram illustrating basic notes for percussion instruments on a five-line staff with a Percussion Clef (||). The notes are placed on the following lines and spaces:

- Snare Drum: Note on the third space.
- Bass Drum: Note on the first space.
- Cymbal: Note on the second space.

Below the staff, the instruments are labeled: Snare Drum, Bass Drum, and Cymbal. Images of each instrument are provided below the labels.



The snare drum, bass drum and cymbal are all unpitched instruments. Later on, you will learn about pitched percussion instruments that use treble and bass clef, with changing notes.

**Instructor's tip:**

For additional material on the names of notes in treble and bass clef, see Level 1 of Music Theory pages 11-14. It isn't that important at this point for everyone to know the names of notes, but make sure they are aware of this fact.

## Lesson 1.1 – Note Values

Notes can be played for different amounts of time. Some notes are played for a short time, some are played longer.

Let's start learning about **rhythm** by talking about some of these short and long notes: **whole notes, half notes, and quarter notes.**



Whole Note



Half Note



Quarter Note

Most music has a **beat** (or **pulse**).

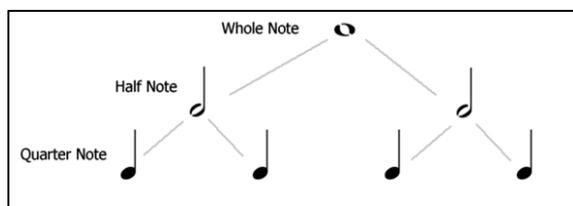
- Sometimes the beat of the music is fast.
- Sometimes the beat of the music is slow.

Each of these notes has a different length. Here's how you count them.

Whole note = 4 beats     = 1 2 3 4

Half note = 2 beats     = 1 2

Quarter note = 1 beat     = 1



**Instructor's tip:**

Be sure to have all of your students count out loud for all of the note values. This is a good way for them to understand note lengths and it will help them on the path of thinking about the speed of counting. This will prepare them for tempo, coming up in lesson 1.4.

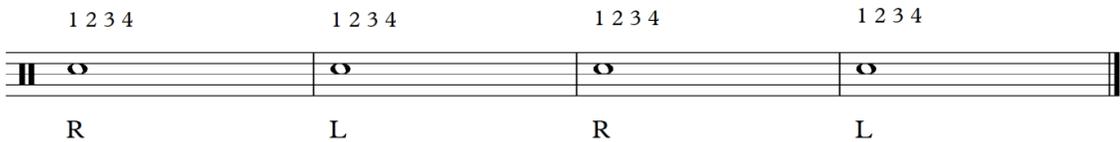
## Let's practice

**Instructor's tip:**

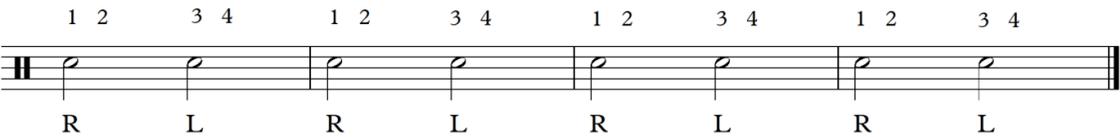
Set up your students in a formation that puts you in the best position for giving instructions. Sticks and drums are not required for these exercises. The most important thing to work on is playing in time.

Using your drum sticks, practice playing whole notes on whatever percussion instrument you have. If you don't have sticks, just use your hands on a table or even your lap. Try using your left and right hand at the correct time.

L = Left hand      R = Right hand

a) 

Keep repeating until you can play and count it perfectly. Now try playing half notes. Half notes get 2 counts each.

b) 

Once you have mastered half notes, you can start playing quarter notes. Each quarter note will get 1 count each.

c) 

**Instructor's tip:**

Try doing each exercise at various speeds. Don't let the students just place their hands randomly, be sure they follow the labeled stickings. Ask some students to play one at a time.

Now we'll try putting all of these types of notes together.

d)

1 2 3 4      1 2      3 4      1 2 3 4      1 2 3 4

R                  R                  L                  R L R L                  R

e)

1 2      3 4      1 2      3 4      1 2 3 4

R                  R L                  R                  R                  R

**Instructor's tip:**

For additional material on note values, see Level 2 of Music Theory pages 1-8. For additional work, ask the students to play and count certain notes. Example: play 8 half notes at this speed.

## Lesson 1.2 – Rest Values

Rhythm in music does not only include notes. It also includes **rests**.

Like notes, **rests** last for a specific length of time. Rests are silence in music.

There are **whole rests**, **half rests**, **quarter rests** and more that you will learn later.

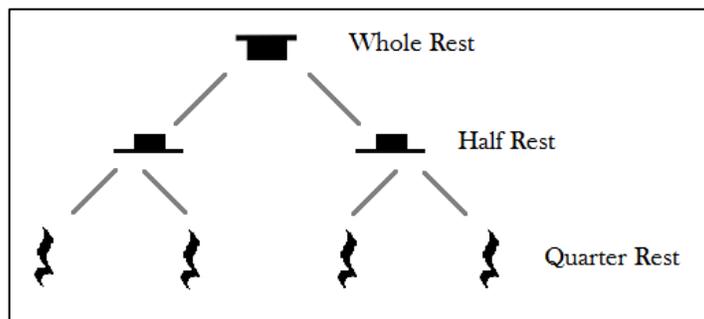


A whole rest has the same value as a whole note – 4 beats. The same is true of the other rests – they have the same value as the note with the same name:

Whole rest = 4 beats       = 1 2 3 4

Half rest = 2 beats       = 1 2

Quarter rest = 1 beat       = 1



# Let's practice

**Instructor's tip:**

Sticks and drums are not required for these exercises.

Once again, we'll practice on our percussion instruments. This time, we have to consider the rests. Count them but don't play during them.

First we'll start with whole notes and whole rests.

a)

Now let's try doing half notes and rests.

b)

And now quarter notes and rests. Count carefully.

c)

It's time to put them all together now.

d)

e)

f)

**Instructor's tip:**

For additional material on rest values, see Level 2 of Music Theory pages 9-15.

## Lesson 1.3 – Stick Technique

Now that you've learned how to count different types of notes and rests, let's look at how drum sticks should be held.

Learning to hold the sticks properly is essential for improving technique. Use the photos below as a guide and make sure to memorize the feel of the following guidelines:

- #1 Fulcrum (thumb and first two fingers)
- #2 Finger contact (comfortably wrap all fingers around the stick; not too tight)
- #3 Bead placement (as close together as possible for an even sound) and then striking area (center of the drum head)
- #4 Wrist motion (down position and up position)



#1 Fulcrum



#2 Finger Contact



#3 Bead Placement



#4 Down Position



#4 Up Position

It is important for your grip to feel comfortable and relaxed. It is designed to give you perfect control over the sticks. The power comes from the thumb and forefinger while the other fingers control the bounce off the drum.

In this lesson, we're also going to work on different hand combinations. So far, we've gone back and forth between R and L which is called a **single stroke**. The next step is to feel comfortable using different patterns.

**Instructor's tip:**

Proper stick form is very important. You want to start students off correctly. Be sure to fix any bad habits. It is important to note that not all percussion sticks are held the same way. For regular drum sticks, your palms face down towards the drum. With timpani mallets, your palms face each other. This is something to keep an eye on.

# Let's practice

**Instructor's tip:**

Drum sticks are required for these exercises. Drums are optional.

R vs L

a)

1 2    3 4    1 2    3 4    1 2    3 4    1 2    3 4

R    R    L    L    R    R    L    L

RRRRLLLL

b)

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

R R R R    L L L L    R R R R    L L L L

RRLL

c)

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

R R L L    R R L L    R R L L    R R L L

Watch the rests

d)

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

R R    L L    R R    L L    R R    L L    R R    L L

e)

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

L R    R L    R R    L R    R L    R R    L R    R L

f)

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

R    L L    R    L L    R    L L    R    L L    R    L L

## Lesson 1.4 – Dynamics and Tempo

Music can be made more meaningful, expressive, and interesting in a number of ways. Some of the ways to achieve this is by adding **Dynamics** and changing the **Tempo**. In this lesson, we will explain and work on these important elements of music making.

### Dynamics



In music, **dynamics** refer to the volume – how loud or soft the notes are sung or played.

When the music is to be played **loud**, the music has a marking ***f*** which stands for ***forte***.

When the music is to be played **soft**, the music has a marking ***p***, which stands for ***piano***.

When the music is to be played at a medium dynamic, we say that it is to be played ***mezzo piano*** (medium soft) or ***mezzo forte*** (medium loud). We write these as ***mp*** and ***mf***.

From soft to loud, we have the following **dynamic markings**:



**Instructor's tip:**

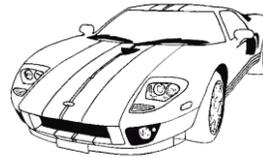
For additional material on dynamics, see Level 1 of Music Theory page 25-29.

# Tempo

**Tempo** is how fast or slow a piece of music is played.

When the piece is to be played quickly, the **tempo** word is **Allegro**.

**Allegro** is Italian for “fast.”



When the piece is to be played slowly, the **tempo** word is **Adagio**.



When the piece is to be played at a medium speed, the **tempo** is referred to as **Moderato**.

The tempo is always written at the beginning of the piece and might change somewhere in the middle, so stay alert.

From slow to fast, we have the following **tempo markings**:

<b>Adagio</b>	<b>Moderato</b>	<b>Allegro</b>

**Instructor's tip:**

For additional material on tempo, see Level 1 of Music Theory page 26-29.

## Let's practice

### Instructor's tip:

Drum sticks are required for these exercises. Drums are recommended.

To start off, let's practice playing with dynamics. Before you play all of these exercises, take a look at the rhythms. You'll notice that there are no counts above the notes. It is up to you to count while you play. Try counting out loud, and then work towards counting in your head.

a)

*p* R L R R L R

*f* R R L R R L R L R

b)

*p* R R L R *f* R R L R

*p* R R L *f* R R L R L R

Next, we will work on the tempo. Remember the different terms for slow, medium and fast.

### Adagio

c)

R L R R L R R

R R L R R L R L R R

**Allegro**

d) 

Now we will combine both dynamics and tempo together.

**Adagio**

e) 

**Allegro**

f) 

Did you notice both of those exercises were the same rhythms, but the tempo changed how it sounded? The same will happen for the next two examples. This time, the tempo will only be slightly different but the dynamics will change.

**Moderato**

g) 

**Adagio**

h)

*f* R L R L R R L R R L R R L

*p* R L R L R R L L R R L L R

This next exercise is very slow, and has long notes and rests. Try to keep the same speed for all the counts. You will also have to figure out the stickings for yourself.

**Adagio**

i)

*p* *f*

*p* *f*

**Allegro**

j)

*f* *p*

*f* *p*

Great work! Continue to practice these different dynamics and tempos in all the lessons that follow.

## Lesson 1.5 – Playing Duets

Part of the fun in making music is playing songs with lots of people. When we play in a band, there are several different parts that combine together to make the correct sound. In this lesson, we are going to work on reading different parts at the same time.

Most of the time, you'll have your own part on a separate page that you have to read and count without being able to follow the other parts. This takes a lot of concentration and counting.

The image shows two separate musical staves for Percussion 1 and Percussion 2. Both are in 4/4 time, marked 'Moderato' and 'mf'. Percussion 1 has a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Percussion 2 has a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Both parts end with a whole note C4. Measure numbers 5 and 9 are indicated below the staves.

When playing duets, we want to see our own part and the other part at the same time. This will help us to avoid getting lost, stay together, and be aware of what the other person is playing.

Look below to see the two parts one above the other.

The image shows the two percussion parts from the previous block stacked vertically. The top staff is Perc 1 and the bottom staff is Perc 2. Both are in 4/4 time, marked 'Moderato' and 'mf'. The notation is identical to the previous block, showing the two parts together to illustrate how they would be read simultaneously.

**Instructor's tip:**

It might be beneficial to show examples of real percussion music so the students can understand the concept of individual parts.

## Let's practice

### Instructor's tip:

Drum sticks and drums are recommended for these exercises. Divide the students evenly. Try to have a mix of stronger students on both parts. It is also important to switch parts to help them improve their reading skills.

Let's split up into groups 1 and 2. Follow and count the staff you're assigned to play.

### Moderato

a)

Exercise a) consists of two parts, 1 and 2, in 4/4 time. Part 1 (top staff) plays a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, and a half note C5 in the first measure, followed by rests in the second, third, and fourth measures. Part 2 (bottom staff) has rests in the first two measures, then plays a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, and a half note C4 in the third measure, followed by a half note C4 in the fourth measure. A grand staff version of the exercise is shown below, with the right hand playing Part 1 and the left hand playing Part 2.

### Moderato

b)

Exercise b) consists of two parts, 1 and 2, in 4/4 time. Part 1 (top staff) plays a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, and quarter note C5 in the first measure, followed by rests in the second and fourth measures, and a quarter note C5 in the third measure. Part 2 (bottom staff) has rests in the first measure, then plays a quarter note G3, quarter note A3, quarter note B3, and quarter note C4 in the second measure, followed by rests in the third and fourth measures. A grand staff version of the exercise is shown below, with the right hand playing Part 1 and the left hand playing Part 2.

The next two exercises are going to be slightly more complicated. The rests are just as important as the notes. Remember to look at the dynamics and tempo before starting.

**Allegro**

c) 1 

2 





**Allegro**

d) 1 

2 







**Instructor's tip:**

Try having the students clap and count their rhythms out loud. This is especially important with the bars that have rests included. Ask them to read the dynamics exactly as printed. Try to instill this discipline early on.

## Level 1 Wrap-up

To finish Level 1, we will take a look at most of the material we have learned throughout this book. We must remember all of the values for notes and rests, how to hold the sticks, and what the written tempo and dynamics are for each exercise. With all of these in mind, you are now ready to play in a band!

**Allegro**

a) 

**Adagio**

b) 

**Instructor's tip:**

This is the conclusion of Level 1. The next step is to have the students take the Level 1 final test. To prepare them for this, the Level 1 Wrap-up includes most of the material from the entire level. However, for some students, additional review might be necessary. Do this in a planned way so that you do not single out or embarrass any student.