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Illustrations by Karen Musick  
visit her online gallery at www.musickscape.com
Learning to Speak the Language of Music

The way a note looks tells you how long that note should sound.

This is a Whole Note: 
It should sound for 4 full beats.

Clap and count Exercise A. Do not clap on 2, 3 or 4, but keep your hands together.

**Exercise A**

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | damp

Now ring Exercise A using good bell or chime ringing and damping technique as you have been shown. Ring first with the right hand, then with the left hand, and finally both hands at the same time. Try to keep the chime/bell moving the entire time it is sounding.

**RULE**

A ringing chime or bell should never be still. The movement should resemble the value of the note being rung.

Follow the same procedures for Exercises B and C, clapping first and then ringing.

This is a Half Note: 
It should sound for 2 beats. Do not ring or clap on beats 2 or 4.

**Exercise B**

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | damp
This is a **Quarter Note**: ♩

It should sound for one beat. Be certain not to rush. Keep a steady beat or pulse.

**Exercise C**

```
\[\color{red}1\] \[\color{red}2\] \[\color{red}3\] \[\color{red}4\] \[\color{red}\text{damp}\] \\
\[\color{blue}1\] \[\color{blue}2\] \[\color{blue}3\] \[\color{blue}4\]
```

This is a **Musical Staff**:  

It has 5 lines and 4 spaces. Notes will be placed on a line so that the staff line goes through the note head, or in a space sitting between two lines.

To make music easier to read, the notes are grouped together in **Measures** separated by **Bar Lines**.

In handbell music, the measures are always numbered for easy reference.

At the beginning of each piece, you will find a pair of numbers stacked on each other. This is called a **Time** (or meter) **Signature**.

```
\[\text{measure}\] \[\text{measure}\] \[\text{measure}\] \[\text{measure}\] \[\text{measure}\] \[\text{measure}\] \\
1 \hphantom0 \hphantom0 \hphantom0 \hphantom0 \hphantom0 \hphantom0
```

The first time signature (or meter) we will learn is \(\frac{4}{4}\).

The top number 4 tells you there are 4 beats in each measure.

The bottom number 4 tells you a quarter note receives one beat.

We will use 4 as the bottom number throughout this book.
Ringing Rhythm

Do each exercise in these ways:
• Clap and count aloud.
• Ring with the right hand. Count aloud. You may use the left hand pointer finger to follow the notes.
• Ring with the left hand. Count aloud. Use the right hand pointer finger to follow the notes.
• Ring with both hands and count aloud.

Divide the class into two groups:
• One group ring only the black notes (quarter notes).
• The other group ring only the white notes (half and whole notes).
• When you are not ringing, touch your chime/bell to your shoulder so that the sound stops.
• Make sure the sound continues for the correct amount of time.
You can put only a certain number of notes in a measure. If the top number of the *time signature* is a $4\left(\frac{4}{4}\right)$, you can put notes that *add up to 4* in the measure. If the top number of the *time signature* is a $3\left(\frac{3}{4}\right)$, you can put notes that *add up to 3*.

A note that looks like a half note but has a dot after it is called a *dotted-half note* $\frac{3}{2}$. It will be given *3 counts*. Circle the *dotted-half note* in the exercises below.

Here are some math problems to draw with notes.

1. $1 + 2 + 1 + 4 = \bullet + \bullet + \bullet + \circ =$

2. $2 + 1 + 3 + 2 =$

3. $2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 1 + 2 =$

*Make up a math problem for someone else to draw. You can only use the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4.*

**Ring these measure following the directions on the previous page.**

**A**

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\frac{4}{4} & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

**B**

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

**C**

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

**D**

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
\bullet & \bullet & \bullet & \bullet \\
1 & 2 & 3 & \\
\end{array}\]
Silence in music is very important. There is the silence when no one is ringing. There is also your silence when your chime/bell should not make a sound. When all ringers are to be quiet you will see rest signs. We call stopping the sound of the chime or bell damping. Your director will show you how to damp (stop) the sound.

Whole rest —— equals ○

Half rest ——— equals ♩

Quarter rest ‾‾‾‾ equals ♩

1. How many counts does the whole rest get?
2. How many counts does the half rest get?
3. How many counts does the quarter rest get?

Think: A whole rest “holds” onto the line. A half rest looks like a hat.

Ring these measures following the directions on page 6.
More Silence

Remember, there is also a $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature. This means that you can count only to three in each measure.

Note: A whole rest always fills the measure, no matter which time signature is used (see m. 3).

Ring your letter, then damp. Keep a steady beat of “ring-damp-ring-damp” ($\frac{4}{4}$). Follow the lines of letters with your eyes, moving across the lines so that you will get to ring on your turn. Everyone say the letters aloud as they are being rung.

**Line 1:** A C G D E B F G C A E B F D

**Line 2:** G A C E D F B A C E B G D F

**Line 3:** D F B E A C G F B E D G C A

**Line 4:** F D G B E C A B F D E C A G
Silent Night and Away in a Manger

Franz Gruber
Arr. Kirsty Mitchell

Handchimes/Handbells used: A, B♭, C, D, E♭, F, G

Violin or Flute

Handchimes/Handbells used: A, B♭, C, D, E♭, F, G

Bells:

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When Should You Damp a Sound?

Pretend that the note in the box is your note.

Then ask yourself these questions:
1. On what count should I ring it?
2. How many counts (beats) does it get?
3. On what count should I damp it?

In the examples below:

Everyone ring as though the note in the box were yours.
Notice that these notes are not repeated.
Everyone count aloud.
Everyone damp on the correct beat.

A  Ring  Damp on 1

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

R = Ring
D = Damp
¡ = Ring
Ring-Damp On Time

There will be many notes in chime/bell pieces, but most of them will not belong to you. Your challenge is to find your notes, figure out on what count they are to be rung and on what count they are to be damped.

In these exercises each ringer (at the director’s direction) should:

1. Put your finger on the number on which a circled note should be damped.
2. Ring the exercises with your right hand only and damp correctly.
3. Ring the exercises with your left hand only and damp correctly.
4. All ringers ring all the boxed notes.
Damping

These boxes stand for beats in a $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature. In each row, put your finger in the box where the note should be damped.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Director’s Note: This game may be drawn on poster board using the note values you need to work on. Students may move a chime/bell to the space where it should be damped.