



**The Ark**



## **Beats & Rhythms from Around the World**

**At Home Activities – Part 2**

## Introduction

This pack is designed to help you use percussion as a way to learn about music. Everyone has innate rhythmic capacity and the various games and activities in this pack will help to activate and develop it. A good sense of timing and rhythm is fundamental to all music, not just percussion music, so you can use these activities as a way to develop general musicianship also. The activities and rhythms chosen come from many different parts of the world.

The activities have been selected and adapted from our full classroom activity pack which links to aspects of the primary school curriculum. If you would like further activities you can download the full document for free [here](#), or check out part one of our Beats & Rhythms Around the World At-Home Activities [here](#).

## Activity 1: Rhythm Game - Call and Response

*Aim: Call and response is a characteristic of West African drumming which has also influenced (and is heard in) a lot of modern music including hip-hop, R&B as well as Samba music (see below for more on Samba).*

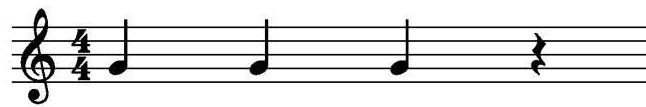





### Step 1:

You can do this activity as a pair as part of a small group at home. The leader claps any rhythmic phrase at all and you (or everyone else who is playing) claps the same phrase back. It is best to start with simple phrases and build up confidence from there.

For example:

Leader	Response
1-2 -3	1-2 -3
12345	12345
123456789	123456789

The notation for the above examples is given below by way of illustration.

<p>Leader</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1,      2,      3</p>	<p>Group</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1,      2,      3</p>
<p>Leader</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1,    2,    3,    4,    5</p>	<p>Group</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1,    2,    3,    4,    5</p>
<p>Leader</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9</p>	<p>Group</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9</p>

**Step 2:**

Take turns being the leader.

**Step 3:**

As you progress in ability, the leader can add more complexity, but making the call rhythm not just with claps but mixing it up using other body parts to create the sounds such as stamping, clicking fingers, gently slapping thighs or cheeks.

## Focus on an Instrument: The Djembe

The djembe is one of West Africa's best known instruments. This goblet-shaped drum is traditionally carved from a single piece of African hardwood and topped with an animal skin as a drumhead. In western understanding, the drum belongs to the membranophone class of instruments in the percussion family.

There are at least a dozen stories of the history of the drum told by many master drummers. One story says that the name of the djembe came from the Bamana people in Mali, who said "Anke dje, anke be" (which means "everyone gather together") to call their people. "Dje" means "gather" and "be" means "everyone", which gave the drum used in these gatherings its name. In the Bamana mythology, the original djembe was made of the hide of a giraffe-zebra hybrid called the gebraffe.

It is thought that the Blacksmiths made the first djembes, making each drum custom-fitted to the drummer who would play it. This makes sense as they would be the people who cut the tree. The making of the drum was spiritual and the blacksmith was obliged to make offerings to the spirits of the trees to ask for permission to cut the tree to make a djembe. Once the blacksmith finished making the djembe, it was



delivered to the drummer who commissioned it, who would be a member of the jeli caste. The jeli are musicians who are responsible for the oral history of their people. This remains true today.

The djembe drum is most likely about 400 to 800 years old, becoming widespread in use particularly during the time of the Malian Empire. This empire began in an area known as Mande which is in present-day northern Guinea and southern Mali. The empire was originally established as a federation of Mandinka tribes but over time grew to rule millions of people from nearly every ethnic group in West Africa. It spanned the modern-day countries of Senegal, southern Mauritania, Mali, northern Burkina Faso, western Niger, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, the Ivory Coast and northern Ghana. The playing of the djembe spread to all of these countries through the influence of the empire.

## Activity 2: Rhythm Activity - Jamaican Rhythm

Here is a 3 part rhythmic pattern from Jamaica in the Caribbean. Try this out by using clapping or body percussion or any simple hand percussion you may have at home.

### Pattern 1:

Ka da Ka Boom, Ka da Ka Boom Boom

### Pattern 2:

Bom Be Bom Be Bom Bom, Bim Bim

### Pattern 3:

Boom bap ba, Boom bap ba, Boom bap ba, Boom Ba

The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each with a treble clef and a repeat sign at the beginning and end. The notes are placed on the first four lines of the staff, corresponding to the syllables below. Group 1: 'Ka da Ka Boom' (first measure) and 'Ka da Ka Boom Boom' (second measure). Group 2: 'Bom be Bom be Bom' (first measure) and 'Bom Bim Bim' (second measure). Group 3: 'Boom bap ba Boom bap ba' (first measure) and 'Boom bap Ba Boom Ba' (second measure). The notes are quarter notes, with some eighth notes and rests used to create the specific rhythms.

To help you learn the rhythms, listen to the rhythmic patterns being played separately and together on this audio link:

<https://soundcloud.com/the-ark-music/3-jamaican-rhythms/s-hIXOz?in=the-ark-music/sets/beats-and-rhythms-from-around-the-world-classroom-pack/s-9NPAr>

*You can do this activity as part of a group of 2 or 3*

**Step 1:**

Learn each of the 3 patterns in turn.

**Step 2:**

Once you are comfortable with each of the rhythms, try the parts one on top of the other.

Start with putting 2 rhythms together first. Once that is steady, add in the 3rd one.

**Step 3:**

Everyone should try playing each of the different rhythms!



We hope you have enjoyed these at-home activities. Please let us know how you get on by asking a grown-up to email us at [boxoffice@ark.ie](mailto:boxoffice@ark.ie) or tagging us on social media **@TheArkDublin** using the hashtag **#TheArkAtHome**.

**Stay tuned for more fun at-home music activities exploring Beats & Rhythms from Around the World!**

These activities are taken from our Beats & Rhythms Around the World Classroom Pack, created by musician Robbie Harris and edited by The Ark's Creative Arts Manager, Aisling O'Gorman.



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agus Scileanna  
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