



HOW TO START A BAND

Meets National Core Arts Standards 2, 5, 7, and 9

OBJECTIVES

- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work (Cr2)
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation (Pr5)
- Perceive and analyze artistic work (Re7)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work (Re9)

MATERIALS

- *Music Alive!* magazines (May 2017)
- Computer or mobile device with Internet access
- Classroom instruments

START

1. Have the students read “How to Start a Band” on pages 10–13 before reviewing the words below.
(This reinforces comprehension and vocabulary.)

WORKSHOP—to exercise and develop a creative idea, especially in a group

HONE—to improve

ARSENAL—collection of something

OBTAIN—to get

COURTEOUS—marked by good manners

DEVELOP

- ▶ 1. Play “Walk” by Foo Fighters (Hear the Music playlist track 5 on [musicalive.com](#)).

ASK

- What time signature is this in? (4/4.)
- Is it in a major or minor key? (Major—A major.)
- What’s the minimum number of musicians you’d need for this band? (Three.)
- What instruments are needed? (Electric guitar, electric bass, and drums.)
- Rhythmically speaking, how does the second verse differ from the first? (In the first verse, the guitar is playing arpeggios and the bass is playing in different rhythms, while in the second verse the guitar strums chords and is in rhythmic unison with the bass.)
- Does the chord progression change in the chorus? (No.)
- What makes the chorus different from the verse? (The guitar plays different rhythms.)
- What basic note value does the guitar strum during the chorus? (Steady eighths.)
- What about the electric bass? (Also steady eighths.)
- Do you think this song would be easy or difficult to learn? (Subjective.)

- ▶ 2. Play “Much Farther to Go” by Rosie Thomas (Hear the Music playlist track 6 on [musicalive.com](#)).

ASK

- What’s the first instrument you hear? (Acoustic guitar.)
- Can anyone name the technique being used? (Fingerpicking.)

- What’s the time signature? (4/4.)
- Is it in a major or minor key? (Major—B major.)
- What instrument group enters at 0:41? (Strings.)
- When the male singer enters at 0:56, are the vocals in unison or in harmony? (In harmony.)
- What fretted instrument comes in at 1:40? (Banjo.)
- What happens to the instrumentation at 2:04? (The strings drop out.)
- What’s something new that happens at 3:10? (Snare and kick drum are introduced.)
- What’s similar about the way the song begins and ends? (The instrumentation is just guitar and voice.)
- Do you think this song would be easy or difficult to put together in a band? (Subjective.)

- ▶ 3. Play “Devils Haircut” by Beck (Hear the Music playlist track 7 on [musicalive.com](#)).

ASK

- What time signature is this in? (4/4.)
- Is it in a major or minor key? (Major—D major.)
- What instrument plays the riff in the first few bars? (Distorted electric guitar.)
- How many notes does this riff have? (Three.)
- When the guitar riff drops out in the verse, what instrument continues to play it? (Electric bass.)
- In the verse, which beats feature chordal accents? (Beats 2 and 4.)
- Do you hear a chord progression in the verse? (No—it’s just a D chord.)
- When the chorus comes in at 0:47 is there a new riff? (No, it’s the same one heard in the intro and verses.)
- What keeps the music interesting? (Subjective. Some aspects include the introduction of strange sounds or samples in different sections, and the changes in rhythmic patterns. Also, the drumming in the chorus is more active than in the other sections.)
- Given all the different sounds, would this song be easy or difficult to play in a band? (Subjective.)

CLOSE

Have your students pair into groups of three or four to form bands. Ask them to create a short piece together, whether it’s a quick song or just a riff with a different part for each instrument. Then, have the students play their short band pieces together in front of the class.

ASSESS

- Did the students read the article?
- Did they listen to the three selections?
- Did they group together in bands, compose short pieces, and play them?