

Making Beats: Groove

Teacher Facilitation Guide

Concept or Skill	Explanation	Example in context	Why this is important
Groove	Groove can be created through velocity and timing variations that follow the natural stress patterns of a measure	When creating a beat you can take a rigid sequence and create a sense of groove	Integrating groove gives music excitement and interest

Context:

This guide is intended to give you some ideas or springboards rather than a set of required steps. Some programs might want to take a much more informal approach where students create music and the teacher scaffolds and highlights issues related to this unit. Others might want to have students move through a series of activities as a class or in small groups. Others might want to provide students with choices or versions of these activities and projects in a format that they can engage with at their own pace while the teacher circulates around the room. All/any of this is OK. Adapt these resources in a way that makes the most sense to you and the students in your program. This unit was designed to provide a focal point of addressing aspects of groove in relation to beatmaking in an introductory and exploratory manner.

Overarching Essential/Generative question(s)

- What is groove? What makes music groove?
- When does music groove?
- Why are some drum patterns more exciting than others?
- How does timing and changing how loud or soft a sound is (aka velocity) affect groove?
- How can people humanize drum patterns?

Facilitation Approaches

Introduction / Exploration

- Mess around with this [web-based drum sequencer](#) or the drum sequencer of a DAW of your choice
- For the web-based drum sequencer:
 - Press the play button to run the sequence
 - Notice how some hits and sounds are louder than others.
 - To add a sound, click once in the circle, to make it louder click twice, and click again to remove the sound.
 - Add 'swing' and see how it changes the pattern.

The image shows a digital drum machine interface with several sections. At the top is a 6x12 grid of pads for Tom 1, Tom 2, Tom 3, Hi-Hat, Snare, and Kick. Red arrows point to specific pads with labels: 'softer hit' points to a pad in the Tom 1 row, and 'louder hit' points to a pad in the Tom 2 row. Below the grid is a control section with a 'Kit' dropdown (set to 'Kit 3'), an 'Effect' dropdown (set to 'Living Room'), a 'Tempo' display (100 bpm) with minus and plus buttons, and a 'Swing' slider. Red arrows point to the 'Tempo' and 'Swing' controls with labels: 'speed up or slow down the pattern' points to the tempo controls, and 'try adding swing' points to the swing slider. Below this is a 'Beat' section with a play button, 'Save', 'Load', and 'Reset' buttons, and a 'Demo' section with buttons 1-5. A red arrow points to the play button with the label 'press play'. At the bottom are 'Input' and 'Output' dropdown menus.

Activities/Projects

1. Watch these videos about what groove is and see if you can understand what 'groove' means in relation to timing and velocity
 - a. <https://youtu.be/inF0DETEHec>
 - b. <https://music.tutsplus.com/tutorials/how-to-create-more-expressive-midi-music--audio-1577> - read through the 'Velocity' section
2. Let's take a break from the learning and see how we do if we give this another try ourselves. Let's go [back to the same app](#) (or DAW) but this time introduce some new parameters.

- a. Make sure you choose a new demo sequence to build off of, try swapping out the kit and changing the effect as well as adjusting the pitch of each of the samples.

The image shows a digital drum machine interface with several sections. At the top, there is a grid of 14 columns and 6 rows of circular buttons, labeled Tom 1, Tom 2, Tom 3, Hi-Hat, Snare, and Kick on the left. Red arrows point from text annotations to specific parts of the interface: 'Swap out the Kit' points to the Kit dropdown menu; 'Change the pitch of the drum samples' points to the pitch sliders for Tom 1, Tom 2, and Tom 3; 'Choose a new effect' points to the Effect dropdown menu; and 'Pick a new sequence' points to the Demo sequence buttons (1-5). The interface also includes a Beat play button, Save, Load, and Reset buttons, a Tempo display (60 bpm), a Swing slider, and Input/Output dropdown menus.

- 3. Teacher guides class through the following videos to link to prior activity, generative questions, and facilitate discussion:

- a. [Residential Advisor interactive document on Groove](#) or sharing with students to engage with at their own pace.
 - i. Note: The amount and density of text may make it difficult for students to move through the document on their own.

- b. Watch [this video](#) for creating timing and velocity variations in Garageband
- c. Now - listen to this performance by Gregory Hines and see if you can pick out the timing and velocity variations each instrument is playing and how the groove changes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZuYM-xA-8k>

Questions for Reflection & Learning

- What is groove? What makes music groove?
- When does music groove?
- Why are some drum patterns more exciting than others?
- How can people humanize drum patterns?
- How can timing and changing how loud or soft a sound is (aka velocity) affect or influence a sense of groove?
- How can you use what you are learning about groove in your own music making?

Project

1. Using a web-based app, or DAW with MIDI sequencer like garageband, Live, or FL Studio to create your own drum sequence that has a sense of groove by creating velocity and timing variations similar to what you saw in the second to last video.
2. Experiment with different velocity and timing variations until you end up with a groove you like.
3. Create a screen-recording that includes your music and explanation of how you created the groove.

Optional Assessments

You can use the screen-recording or some other reflection and discussion of students' music and their decisions regarding groove as a summative assessment.

You can also use students' answers to the following or other questions as an assessment:

- What is groove? What makes music groove?
- When does music groove?
- Why are some drum patterns more exciting than others?
- How can people humanize drum patterns?
- How can timing and changing how loud or soft a sound is (aka velocity) affect or influence a sense of groove?
- How can you use what you are learning about groove in your own music making?