

4.11 *Drum the Poem to Find the Rhythm*

Strategy Read the words. Drum the beat of the poem with your fingers on the desk, clap it, or come up with a beatbox rhythm to say to the beat. Read it again, this time to the beat.

Teaching Tip Making children aware of rhythm in poetry may support their phrasal reading and help them to internalize syntax in a way that's helpful for both fluency and comprehension. Try this with poems that have a predictable meter, nursery rhymes, or rap or songs where the “drum beat” will be easy to find. For example, Eloise Greenfield's poem “Rope Rhyme” is a great choice. Show students how to find the beat by clapping it or drumming it (bum bum bum-de-dum bum bum bum . . .), practice it a few times, then have students try it with new poems on their own.

Prompts

- Can you hear the beat? Drum it on the table.
- I'll drum it for you; you read the words.
- I'll read the words; you drum the beat you hear. Now you try to read it and drum it on your own.



Skills

- phrasing
- pacing

Progression

Reads word by word and is ready to practice reading in longer phrases.



Research Link

In a study of 150 preschoolers, those who performed well on a beat synchronization task outperformed their peers on all preliteracy measures (Bonacina et al., 2021). In another study, rhythm was positively related to both phonological awareness and naming speed among first graders and was a predictor for their reading ability in grade 5 (David et al., 2007).