



# BEYOND THE BATON

*a conductor's journey*

## Lesson Summary

*The goal of this lesson is to reinforce the beat and internalize the beat in the student.*

*Elementary school level students will be introduced to the role of the conductor and simple conducting gestures.*

*At the upper elementary level, students can begin learning simple conducting patterns by keeping the beat.*

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# TEACHER GUIDE

## CONDUCTING FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

### ERIKA HIEMSTRA

Elkhorn Public Schools, Omaha, NE

### Time frame

2-3 days

### Outcome

Understanding the role of the conductor. Demonstrating simple conducting gestures and patterns.

### Learning Objectives

Students will be able to describe the role of the conductor. Students will be able to demonstrate simple conducting gestures.

### Essential Questions

Can students keep a steady beat? Are students able to lead their peers as the conductor and then follow their peers when they play the role of the conductor? Can students demonstrate conducting gestures?

### Media Elements

"Movement" playlist:

- See play list in Support Materials of this resource.
- Recommended book: The Remarkable Farkle McBride by JohnLithgow

Flipgrid - to use for formative assessment:

- <https://info.flipgrid.com/>

Clips from the documentary - see related resources for this resource.



## Learning Activities

1. The teacher starts by putting students in a circle facing each other. The teacher will start the activity and then go clockwise around the circle, each student will have a chance to be the leader.
2. Introduce the "Copy Game": The teacher will start as the leader and each student will have a chance to be the leader. When you are the leader, you are to keep the beat of the music somewhere on your body. You can march in place, you can pat your belly, you can clap, as long as we can see the beat, visually. When the teacher says "switch", the next student will go and they choose a different movement that the rest of the group will copy.
3. The teacher chooses a song (or two depending on the size of the group) from the "Movement" playlist. Once the song starts, the teacher shows the beat as movement, and the students copy the teacher. The teacher says, "switch", and the student on her left chooses a new movement to keep the beat of the song. This continues until all students have had a chance to be the leader.
4. This activity helps students internalize the beat, which is very important.
5. The teacher can talk about the role each student played as a leader. When they were the leader choosing the movement and everyone followed them, they were demonstrating being a conductor.
6. Reading the book, "The Remarkable Farkle McBride" by John Lithgow is great for not only introducing the instruments of the orchestra, but also the conductor.
7. After reading the book, the teacher demonstrates conducting gestures and patterns.
8. K-2 students can learn simple gestures such as preparatory gestures for starting, cut-offs, and dynamics.
9. 3-5 students can practice these gestures as well as keeping the beat in a simple conducting pattern.
10. The teacher assigns instruments to students. These instruments can be Orff instruments (glockenspiels, xylophones, metallophones) or other instruments (rhythm sticks, boomwhackers, shakers).
11. The teacher is the first conductor. It is the responsibility of the students to watch and follow the conductor. The conductor shows the preparatory gesture to start to tell students to play, at which time students will start playing their given instruments. They also will watch for the conductor to use the gesture to cut-off, at which time students will stop playing. While they play, the conductor can show the gestures for students to play louder and softer. The teacher can also show the beat for students to play and follow along with.
12. After the teacher has demonstrated these gestures, students will take turns being the conductor. As students get more comfortable, they can add more and more gestures.

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### Culminating Activities

1. Students can practice conducting their peers as they practice music for upcoming performances.

### Extension Activity

- Students can self and peer evaluate. The web-based technology tool, Flipgrid, can be used on any device to record students as they play the role of the conductor. Students can evaluate their video of themselves as well as leave positive feedback on other students' videos on the grid.

### Reteaching Tips

1. Playing the "Copy Game" at the beginning of every class will help reinforce keeping the beat when music is played.
2. Conducting patterns in simple meters can be posted in the room.

