

**Elk Grove Unified School District**  
**Visual and Performing Arts Resources**  
**Dance**

**Grade 3: Lesson 3**

**Title: Rhythm Sticks**

**Standards Addressed**

**Artistic Perception**

*Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Dance*

1.2 Demonstrate the ability to start, change, and stop movement.

**Creative Expression**

*Creating, Performing, and Participating in Dance*

2.4 Create a wide variety of shapes and movements, using different levels in space.

**Historical and Cultural Context**

*Understanding the Historical and Cultural Dimensions of Dance*

3.1 Describe commonalities among and differences between dances from various countries.

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Floor Plan:** Inside or outside area with marked boundaries.

**Materials Needed:**

- Two rhythm sticks per person (they can be made out of anything, including inexpensive 1-inch diameter PVC pipe cut into one foot sections, markers, or pencils)
- Video tape of Disney's *The Lion King* or another sample of clave music (optional)
- Cassette or CD player (optional)
- Cassette or CD of rhythm stick songs—see reference (optional)

**Purpose:**

Given two rhythm sticks and appropriate music, the purpose of this lesson is for the students to be able to demonstrate artistic perception by listening, dancing, and tapping their sticks together in rhythm with the music. The students will be introduced to the historical and cultural context of rhythm sticks and be shown how these instruments continue to be heard in some of today's contemporary music.

**Background:**

It is assumed that students have never used rhythm sticks before.

**Key Questions:**

Do students understand the new vocabulary?

Are the expectations regarding the use of the rhythm sticks clear?

<u>Steps of the Lesson</u>	<u>Thoughts for the Teacher</u>
<p><b>1 Set up purpose/goals</b> We are going to use rhythm sticks to learn how to move our bodies and tap our sticks to the rhythm of a particular song.</p>	<p><b>How are you making your purpose clear to the students?</b> Show students what rhythm sticks are.</p>
<p><b>2 Engage students</b> Introduce two rhythm sticks to the class. Show the class how they are to be tapped together to make sound. Explain that when music is played, rhythm sticks are tapped together in time with the rhythm of the music. In music, a pattern that repeats over and over again is called rhythm.</p>	<p><b>How can I effectively get the students interested in the content of the lesson?</b> Write the word “rhythm” on the board with its definition next to it. Many songs they may know use rhythm sticks (<i>The Lion King</i>).</p>
<p><b>3 Learning Sequence</b> a) Introduce historical and cultural context. b) Brainstorm different ways to tap sticks. c) Model singing and dancing activity. d) Pass out sticks to the class. e) Review activity with the whole group. f) Turn on the music and have fun.</p>	<p><b>What are the BIG idea(s) of your presentation? How will students understand/experience the material that you present?</b> Rhythm sticks are a distinct way to establish and maintain a rhythm for dancers.</p>
<p><b>4 Assessment</b> Teacher observation and validation of student ideas through discussion.</p>	<p><b>How will you allow your students to deepen their understanding of content presented? (Reflect, revise, retell, refine, practice)</b> How is the clave used in music? Are there other things used in music to establish and maintain a rhythm for dances?</p>

### Actual Lesson Sequence

1. Explain to the class that rhythm sticks came to us in America from the people of Africa. The Africans called their rhythm sticks “clave” (Klah-Vey). When the African people went to Latin America, they brought their music with them. You may also hear rhythm sticks or clave instruments in Latin music or songs that people call “Salsa.”
2. At this point only the teacher has rhythm sticks. While tapping your sticks together normally (in front of your body), ask the class: *I’m tapping my rhythm sticks in front like this. Can anyone think of different ways these rhythm sticks could be tapped together?* As students brainstorm answers, demonstrate what they say. Possibilities include: above your head, down low to the ground, behind your back, on one side or on the other, lift a leg and tap under that leg, etc.
3. (Teacher note—do not pass out the rhythm sticks until you have made clear what your expectations are regarding the use of the rhythm sticks. If a student does not use his/her sticks properly, appropriate consequences might be to take them away for a short period of time.) At stop signal, the students place sticks by their feet.
4. Using an overhead of attached black line, have the students read the song first. Then, model what to do for each verse, where clapping the sticks should be used. When everybody has learned the song, pass out the rhythm sticks and have the students get into a circle. Next, have the students mirror you while you go through the song. Together as a class go through the steps of the song and dance slowly. Encourage the class to sing the song while they are learning the steps.
5. When everyone is ready, do the dance and song, and have fun.

## Closure:

For closure, see if you can find and play a contemporary song that uses the clave instrument. Possibilities include the following:

- \* Songs categorized as “Salsa.”
- \* Songs by Carlos Santana (*Black Magic Woman, Oye Como Va*)
- \* *Iko-Iko*, by the Dixie Cups (soundtrack from the movie *Rainman*)
- \* *I Just Can't Wait to be King* (soundtrack from Disney's *The Lion King*)

Most third graders have seen *The Lion King* video. If you have it, fast-forward about 25 minutes from the very beginning of the tape (not the beginning of the movie) to get to the part where Simba sings the song *I Just Can't Wait to be King*. It's difficult to hear but you can just make out the clave in the background if you listen carefully.

As you and your class listen to the cassette player of the video tape, ask the children if they can remember how the clave is used in the music. The answer you're looking for is rhythm, and that's why we call our clave rhythm sticks.

## Other Considerations:

- Special Needs: Adjust the lesson according to the student's abilities.

## Reference

Cassette titled *Simplified Rhythm Stick Activities*, Kimbo Educational, by Barbara Johnson, 1976. You may find some rhythm stick music at a local teacher supply store or order directly from:

Kimbo Educational  
P.O. Box 477  
Long Branch, NJ 07740  
Phone: 1-800-631-2187  
Fax: 732-870-3340

The following cassettes/CDs were found in the Kimbo catalog. Use the product number when placing an order and check the title and recommended age.

<u>Title of Audio Cassette/CD</u>	<u>Recommended Age</u>	<u>Product Number</u>
Lively Music for Rhythm Stick Fun	9-12 years	KIM2000
Rhythm Sticks for Kids	3-8 years	KIM2014
Simplified Rhythm Stick Activities	3-6 years	KIM2015
Multicultural Rhythm Stick Fun	3-6 years	KIM9128

## **Narration of Song (followed by Movement Description)**

Our sticks tap high, our sticks tap low. (Tap sticks twice above your head then tap twice near the ground.)

We tap again and around we go. (Stand up, tap sticks once and turn around in place.)

We shake our hips and shake our sticks. (Shake hips and then shake sticks. (Variation: turn slowly in place as you shake sticks in the air.)

To music, music, music!

Our sticks tap high, our sticks tap low. (Repeat as before.)

We tap again and around we go.

We shake our hips and shake our sticks.

To music, music, music!

Up, down, up, down (Kick one leg forward and tap sticks under raised knee.)

Up, down, up, down (Return leg to floor and repeat—with same leg or opposite leg.)

Up, down, up, down

Up, down, up, down

Front, front, back, back (Tap sticks twice in front, then twice behind your back.)

Front, front, back, back (Repeat as before.)

Front, front, back, back

Front, front, back, back

Our sticks tap high, our sticks tap low. (Repeat as before.)

We tap again and around we go.

We shake our hips and shake our sticks.

To music, music, music!

Kick, kick, kick, kick (Tap sticks together as legs kick up.)

Kick, kick, kick, kick (As you kick, tap toe of raised foot with one stick.)

Kick, kick, kick, kick (Repeat as before.)

Kick, kick, kick, kick

Our sticks tap high, our sticks tap low. (Repeat as before.)

We tap again and around we go.

We shake our hips and shake our sticks.

To music, music, music!