

# Your Turn, My Turn

## Conversation in Rhythm

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**Time Needed:** 15-20 minutes

**Arts Focus:** Music

**Age Range:** 5-8

### Mini-Lesson Description:

In this lesson, we will explore how to play and communicate using rhythm and our bodies. Learners will practice listening, responding, and expressing themselves by making different sounds with their hands.

### Key Concepts:

Rhythm; Counting; Improvisation; Patterns; Call and Response; Taking Turns; Active Listening.

### Materials Needed/Prep:

- A clean, flat surface that is safe to hit with bare hands (a table, a desk, etc.)
- An environment where you can make some noise

### Step-by-Step:

1. Explain to the learner that people throughout time and place use music, sound, and rhythm to communicate. People can make music and rhythm together using just their bodies!
2. Explain that you are going to use the surface or table as a drum today and that together you are going to use 3 pitches. In music the word “pitch” is used to describe different kinds of sounds.
3. Together explore 3 Pitches: low pitch (make a fist use it to bump the table), mid pitch (use an open hand slap), and high pitch (knock lightly with your knuckles).
4. Explain that musicians use the word “Rudiments” to describe rhythm patterns we can practice together.
5. Practice learning some “rudiments” or patterns: Show them a pattern first, then the learner can echo back. You can practice each pattern with a fist bump, hand slap, and knuckle knock.
  - “Singles” = lead the student(s), alternating hands on the table: RIGHT | LEFT | RIGHT | LEFT
  - “Doubles” = lead the student(s), alternating hands: RR LL RR LL RR LL RR LL
6. Play the Echo Game:
  - Play a short rhythm you make up and encourage the learners to do their best to copy or echo your rhythm.
  - Keep repeating that process several times with simple rhythms that the learner can follow.
  - Encourage the learner to volunteer to lead the echo game as well.
7. Play Beat Battle: Making up beats can be called improvising or freestyling. *This is when we create in the moment without making up a plan made in advance.*
  - Play a short rhythm as a “call” and encourage the student(s) to do their best to “respond” by making up their own different pattern or response in the same amount of time (4 counts for example).
  - Keep repeating that process several times with simple rhythms the learner can respond to.
  - Encourage the student(s) to volunteer to lead the Beat Battle game as well.

### Variations and Next Steps:

- Select songs that you like with a steady rhythm or beat to it as a back-drop accompaniment, and try the Rudiments, Echo Game, or Beat Battle activities with your own soundtrack of choice!