

Dictation

Part I: Rhythm

Dictation skills are directly related to the development of musical memory, audiation, and reading and writing skills. Music reading and music dictation go hand in hand just like linguistic reading and writing. Dictation involves translating rhythm patterns, tonal patterns, melodies and chord progressions, heard aurally into staff notation. Echoing rhythm patterns using the three-step process outlined in “An Introduction to the Music Literacy Process” [pages xxi-xxiii] builds the aural-oral vocabulary and translation skills necessary for proficient dictation skills. Please notice that during the first and second steps of the Phase I process, the student echo chants first on a neutral syllable and then on rhythm syllables (names or labels the sounds). During the third step, the student listens to the instructor perform a rhythm pattern on a neutral syllable (bum) and then echo translates, chanting the pattern on rhythm syllables. This is in essence aural-oral dictation. The next step would be to notate it on the staff. To support building and reinforcing aural-oral vocabulary and translation skills, the Phase I process is integrated into most chapters in this book.

Chapter 1, Simple Meter: Quarter Note = Beat Unit

Developing Aural-Oral Translation Skills

Practice chanting and naming patterns (Section 1.3) using the three-step process with your instructor or student partner, or individually via the MP3 files of the rhythm patterns for Part I, Chapter 1 located on the companion website.

Rhythm Shorthand

Using a shorthand method can facilitate the writing portion of the learning process. Ultimately the goal is to develop the level of proficiency to the point where the shorthand is no longer needed.

Lines representing the beats are drawn in each measure. Notes with a duration long than one beat are tied together for the appropriate duration; rests are represented by an uppercase “R”.

Suggested shorthand symbols for Part I, Chapter 1 are illustrated below.

Simple Meter: Quarter Note = Beat Unit — Chapter 1, Part I

Dictation Shorthand	
Quarter Note = Beat Unit	

Rhythm Shorthand Procedure

Listen as your instructor or student partner plays or chants on a neutral syllable, a rhythm pattern from Section 1.3 or via the MP3 files for Part I, Chapter 1 located on the companion website. Notate the rhythm using the shorthand above and the procedure below.

- First playing: Write with one hand and quietly use a down-up motion with the other hand. Following the down-up (↓↑) motion of each beat can be visual and kinesthetic aids in determining the rhythm. Isolate each beat and mark the appropriate shorthand. If the rhythm on a particular beat or two cannot be determined, continue to move forward focusing on the ensuing beats.

Rhythm Shorthand Procedure, cont.

- Second playing: On the second playing, readdress the missing beats.
- Third playing: Review your shorthand and make any necessary adjustments.
- Transcribe the rhythm shorthand into notation on the staff.

As your skills improve, gradually increase the length of each dictation exercise. All or part of each reading exercise in Section 1.4 as well as the additional reading exercises available on the companion website can be used for dictation.

Rhythm Shorthand Templates — Chapter 1, Part I

Short Hand	1.						2.							
Notation	$\frac{2}{4}$						$\frac{2}{4}$							
Short Hand	3.						4.							
Notation	$\frac{2}{4}$						$\frac{2}{4}$							
Short Hand	5.													
Notation	$\frac{3}{4}$													
Short Hand	6.													
Notation	$\frac{3}{4}$													
Short Hand	7.													
Notation	$\frac{3}{4}$													
Short Hand	8.													
Notation	$\frac{4}{4}$													
Short Hand	9.													
Notation	$\frac{4}{4}$													
Short Hand	10.													
Notation	$\frac{4}{4}$													