

Beat Science

Music Technology Lessons for Grades 6-8



Students will learn how to use GarageBand, a Digital Audio Workstation well suited for beginner music producers. Writing drum patterns, composing melodies, crafting chord progressions, sampling, recording, and mixing are just a few of the essential skills this course will cover. Students will study examples of great production in the worlds of hip-hop, electronic music, pop music, and more.

Lesson 1 & 2:

DAWs, GarageBand, drum beats

Students will learn what a DAW is, how GarageBand is organized and how to navigate it. They will also learn some basic drum patterns, and how to use them as a basis for writing their own beats.

Lesson 3 & 4:

Riffs, bass, smart controls

Students will learn about riffs and listen to examples across various genres. They will write their own riffs in A minor and pair them with one of their original beats from Lesson 1 & 2. Students will also explore some of GarageBand's bass and synthesizer instruments and how to customize them using Smart Controls.

Lesson 5 & 6:

Chords, more drum beat skills

Students will learn how to construct some basic chords in A minor and use them to write a chord progression. We will also discuss some advanced drum beat writing skills including longer phrases, the split drums technique, hi-hat tricks (triplets, rolls, swing), and velocity.

Lesson 7 & 8:

Anatomy of a beat: Smooth Criminal

Students will learn how to recreate a track by the legendary producer Quincy Jones. Drumbeats, riffs, and chords, all work together in this classic hit.

Lesson 9:

Recording, effects, sampling the classroom

Students will learn how to record sound using a microphone. We will record sounds made from objects in the classroom, which will then be manipulated with effects, and used to make a beat.

Lesson 10:

Sampling YouTube

Students will learn how to sample any song from YouTube and use it in a beat while taking inspiration from some of hip-hop's greatest producers.

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