Grade 2 Piano, Week 2: Fun with Note Durations!

Student: Mrvacupanda

Lesson Focus: Understanding the relationship between different note values (Quarter, Half, and Whole Notes) through listening, playing, and creating.

Materials Needed:

- Piano or Keyboard
- Pencil and eraser
- Music notebook or blank staff paper
- Metronome (a phone app or Google's online metronome works great!)
- Small, lightweight objects (e.g., animal crackers, Lego bricks, or colorful pom-poms)
- **Resource:** Printable Note Value Worksheet

Structured Lesson Plan (30 Minutes)

1. Warm-ups: Finger Wiggles (3 minutes)

- **Goal:** To wake up the fingers and introduce rhythmic counting.
- **Activity:**
  1. **Away from the piano:** Let's make a "finger tent" by touching the fingertips of your right hand to your left hand (thumb to thumb, pointer to pointer, etc.). Gently press and release.
  2. **At the piano:** Place your right hand in the C Major 5-finger position (thumb on Middle C). We are going to play a "secret code."
     - Play each key and hold it while we say its "secret code name":
       - **Quarter Note:** Play C and say "Walk" (1 beat)
       - **Half Note:** Play D and say "Ste-p" (2 beats)
       - **Whole Note:** Play E and say "Hoo-old Fooo-ur" (4 beats)
  3. Repeat with the left hand. This helps connect the feeling of holding a key down with the count.

2. Technical Work: Rhythm Climbers (3 minutes)

- **Goal:** To play with a steady beat and practice different note durations.
- **Activity:**
  1. Set the metronome to a slow, steady speed (around 70 bpm).
  2. **Quarter Note Climb:** Play the C Major 5-finger scale (C-D-E-F-G) up and down, with each note getting one click (beat) from the metronome. Count "1, 1, 1, 1, 1" for each note.
  3. **Half Note Climb:** Now, play the scale up and down again, but hold each note for TWO clicks. Count "1-2, 1-2, 1-2..." This will feel much slower and more deliberate.
  4. **Challenge:** Try playing C as a whole note (4 beats), D as a half note (2 beats), and E as a quarter note (1 beat). Feel the difference!

3. Ear Training: Echo Claps (4 minutes)

- **Goal:** To listen to and identify rhythms by ear.
- **Activity:**
  1. I will clap a simple, 4-beat rhythm. Your job is to be my echo and clap it right back! We

will use "Ta" for quarter notes and "Ta-a" for half notes.
2. **Pattern 1:** Ta, Ta, Ta, Ta (Four quarter notes)
3. **Pattern 2:** Ta-a, Ta-a (Two half notes)
4. **Pattern 3:** Ta, Ta, Ta-a (Two quarter notes, one half note)
5. **Role Switch:** Now it's your turn, Mrvacupanda! You create a rhythm, and I will be your echo.

4. Repertoire Work: Rhythm Detective (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** To apply note duration knowledge to your actual piano piece.
- **Activity:**
  1. Open your piano book to the piece you are learning. Let's look at the first two measures.
  2. **Be the Detective:** Before you play, let's investigate the rhythm. Point to each note and say if it's a quarter, half, or whole note.
  3. **Clap & Count:** Let's clap the rhythm of just those two measures while counting the beats out loud. This isolates the rhythm from the notes.
  4. **Play & Count:** Now, play those two measures on the piano, counting out loud just like we practiced. Make sure to hold the half notes for their full 2 beats! We can use the metronome to be our steady partner.
  5. We'll repeat this process for any tricky spots in your song.

5. Composing/Improv: A Rhythmic Conversation (5 minutes)

- **Goal:** To create a short, original musical idea using different rhythms.
- **Activity:**
  1. Let's have a musical conversation. I will play a short "question" on the black keys using only quarter notes. For example: (Play C#, D#).
  2. Your job is to play an "answer" back to me. You can use any black keys you want, but your answer must use at least one half note. For example: (Play F#, G#---hold for 2 beats).
  3. We can go back and forth a few times. There are no wrong notes! The only rule is to explore the different note lengths. We will write our favorite "answer" down in your music notebook.

6. Piano Games: Note Value Towers (5 minutes)

- **Goal:** To physically represent the mathematical relationship between note values in a fun, hands-on way.
- **Activity:**
  1. Let's use your Lego bricks (or crackers/pom-poms).
     - A **Quarter Note** = 1 brick.
     - A **Half Note** = a tower of 2 bricks.
     - A **Whole Note** = a tower of 4 bricks.
  2. I will call out a note name ("Half Note!") or clap a rhythm ("Ta, Ta-a"). You then have to build the correct note tower(s) as fast as you can.
  3. **Challenge Round:** How many quarter note bricks do you need to equal one whole note tower? Let's build it and see! (This visually shows that four quarters = one whole).

For Next Week: Keep practicing being a "Rhythm Detective" in your pieces! Try counting out loud for one practice session every day. You're doing a fantastic job, Mrvacupanda!