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# Lesson Plan: Power Chord Power-Up! Your First Rock Riff

## Materials Needed:

- Electric guitar (tuned and ready to play)
- Guitar amplifier and cable
- Guitar pick
- A comfortable chair
- A notebook or journal for writing down ideas ("Riff Journal")
- Access to a smartphone or computer to listen to song examples (optional)

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**Subject:** Music - Electric Guitar

**Student:** Charlie (Age 13, Beginner)

**Time Allotment:** 45 minutes

## 1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Charlie will be able to:

- Correctly identify the names and numbers of the six guitar strings.
- Demonstrate proper posture and basic picking technique to produce a clear tone.
- Play a two-finger power chord shape cleanly on the lowest two strings.
- Create and perform a simple, original 4-beat rhythmic riff using one power chord.

## 2. Alignment with Standards and Curriculum

This lesson aligns with foundational principles of music education, focusing on the National Core Arts Standards of **Creating** (generating original musical ideas) and **Performing** (realizing artistic ideas through performance). It builds essential psychomotor skills and aural awareness required for further study.

## 3. Instructional Strategies & Lesson Activities (45 minutes)

### Part 1: The Sound Check & Guitar Tour (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** Get comfortable and familiar with the instrument.
- **Activity:**
  1. **Plug In and Power On:** We'll start by properly plugging the guitar into the amplifier. We'll explore the volume and gain/distortion knobs. The goal is to find a cool, crunchy rock tone that's inspiring to play. This immediately connects the instrument to the sounds Charlie loves.
  2. **Meet Your Axe:** Quick tour of the guitar's essential parts: body, neck, headstock, and pickups. We'll focus on what they \*do\*. "These pickups are like microphones for the strings. The volume knob makes it louder or quieter."
  3. **String Names:** Introduce the strings from thickest to thinnest (6 to 1). We'll use a fun mnemonic like "**E**ddie **A**te **D**ynamite, **G**ood **B**ye **E**ddie." Charlie will practice saying the names while plucking each string.

4. **Picking Practice:** Using just the low E string (the thickest one), we'll practice picking. The focus is on a relaxed wrist and using downstrokes. We will aim for a consistent, strong sound.

## Part 2: The Power Chord - The Heart of Rock (15 minutes)

- **Goal:** Learn the fundamental building block of rock guitar.
- **Activity:**
  1. **The Shape:** Introduce the two-finger power chord. It's a simple, movable shape that sounds powerful and is easy for beginners.
    - Place your **index finger** on the 1st fret of the low E string (the 6th string).
    - Place your **ring finger** on the 3rd fret of the A string (the 5th string).
  2. **The Strum:** We'll practice strumming \*only\* those two strings together. Muting the other strings with the side of our hand is a key skill we'll touch on. The goal is a clean, punchy sound with no extra noise.
  3. **Let's Slide:** The best part! We'll show Charlie how this shape can be moved all around the neck. We'll slide the entire shape up two frets (to the 3rd and 5th frets) to play a different power chord. We'll experiment with playing chords at different frets and listen to how the pitch changes.

## Part 3: The Riff Factory (15 minutes)

- **Goal:** Apply the new skill creatively and make original music.
- **Activity:**
  1. **Rhythm is Key:** We'll count a simple "1, 2, 3, 4" beat out loud.
  2. **Create Your Rhythm:** Using any one power chord shape we learned, the challenge for Charlie is to create his own 4-beat rhythm. I'll provide examples to spark ideas:
    - Strum once on beat 1 and let it ring: "**ONE** two three four"
    - Strum on every beat: "**ONE TWO THREE FOUR**"
    - A syncopated rhythm: "one **AND** two three **AND** four"
  3. **Record Your Idea:** Charlie will choose his favorite rhythm and we'll write it down in his "Riff Journal." This can be simple notation like "Strum on 1 & 3" or just a note he understands. This validates his creation.
  4. **Perform It!:** Charlie will practice and then perform his new riff along with the count. The goal is confidence and ownership.

## 4. Engagement and Motivation

This lesson is built around immediate, rewarding sounds. Using distortion and focusing on a "cool-sounding" power chord provides instant gratification. The creative "Riff Factory" segment empowers Charlie, shifting him from a student into a musician and composer from day one.

## 5. Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For Extra Support:** If the two-finger chord is challenging, we will simplify by focusing on playing single-note riffs on just one string. We can work on finger strength by just holding the chord shape without strumming.
- **For an Advanced Challenge:** If Charlie masters the power chord quickly, we can introduce the three-finger version (adding the pinky on the D string for a fuller sound). We could also try moving the power chord shape between two different positions to create a two-chord riff.

## 6. Assessment Methods

- **Formative (during the lesson):**
  - I will observe Charlie's posture and hand position, offering gentle corrections.
  - I will listen for the clarity of his picking and strumming, asking questions like, "Can you

try to make sure only those two strings are ringing?"

- I will ask him to demonstrate the power chord shape at a specific fret to check for understanding.
- **Summative (at the end of the lesson):**
  - **"Show Me Your Riff":** Charlie will perform his original 4-beat riff. The assessment is not on complexity, but on his ability to play it cleanly and in time with a count, demonstrating he has met the core objectives.

## 7. Organization and Clarity

The lesson follows a clear "I do, We do, You do" model: I demonstrate the technique, we practice it together, and then Charlie uses it creatively on his own. Transitions are natural, moving from basic mechanics to creative application.

## 8. Creativity and Innovation

Instead of rote memorization of scales or classic songs, this lesson prioritizes creativity from the very beginning. The "Riff Factory" is designed to spark curiosity and show Charlie that he can create his own music immediately, fostering a sense of ownership and artistic identity.

## 9. Materials and Resource Management

The lesson uses standard, essential equipment for any beginner electric guitarist. The "Riff Journal" is a simple, no-cost tool that encourages documentation and reflection, turning a simple notebook into a key piece of musical gear.

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## Wrap-Up & Practice Suggestion (5 minutes)

We'll end by reviewing the three things we accomplished: naming the strings, playing the power chord, and creating an original riff. For practice this week, the goal is to be an explorer:

"Your mission is to practice moving the power chord shape to five different places on the neck and get a clean sound from each one. And listen to one of your favorite songs—see if you can hear where the guitarist is using power chords!"

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