Max’s Musical Maths: Decoding Notation

Learning objective: To identify and understand the duration of different musical notes and rests, including semibreves, minims, crotchets, and quavers.

Max the monkey is trying to compose a new jungle rhythm, but he has mixed up his note values! Look at the 'Note Value Chart' below. Use the information to solve the 'Rhythm Equations'. Each note has a specific value in beats. If a crotchet equals 1 beat, then: a minim = 2 beats, a semibreve = 4 beats, and a quaver = 1/2 a beat. Match the rhythm to the total beat count.

Word bank: Semibreve (4 beats) · Minim (2 beats) · Crotchet (1 beat) · Quaver (1/2 beat) · Rest (Silence)

1. Max has a rhythm: 1 Minim + 2 Crotchets. How many beats is this in total? (2 marks)

2. If a Semibreve is 4 beats, how many Crotchets do you need to equal the same value? (2 marks)

3. Max wants a rhythm that adds up to 3 beats. Draw a combination of notes (using Minims, Crotchets, or Quavers) that would equal 3 beats. (3 marks)

4. True or False: Two quavers joined together equal the same amount of time as one crotchet. Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

5. If you have a 4-beat bar and you place one Minim and one Crotchet in it, how many beats are left for the final note? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a musical stave (five lines) and place your own sequence of four different notes on it to create a short 4-beat rhythm for Max to play on his drums.

Extension challenge: Try to write a 'Maths-Music' sum for a partner, for example: 'Crotchet + Quaver + Quaver = ?'. Ask them to solve the total number of beats!