Composing with Max the Monkey: Creating Musical Patterns

Learning objective: To understand how to compose a simple rhythmic sequence using time signatures and varied note durations.

Max the Monkey loves to turn maths into music! Use the word bank and your knowledge of rhythm to complete these composition challenges. Remember that in 4/4 time, each bar must add up to four beats.

Word bank: Crotchet · Minim · Quaver · Time Signature · Tempo · Bar · Rhythm · Semibreve

1. Max is composing in 4/4 time. If he uses two crotchets (1 beat each) in a bar, how many beats are left to fill the bar? What note could he use to fill the remaining two beats? (2 marks)

2. Explain the difference between a minim and a semibreve in terms of how many beats they each last in a 4/4 time signature. (2 marks)

3. If a piece of music has a fast tempo, how does that change the way a performer plays the notes compared to a slow tempo? (2 marks)

4. Create a rhythmic pattern for one bar in 4/4 time. You must use at least three different types of notes from the word bank to reach a total of four beats. (3 marks)

5. Why is a 'bar line' important when you are writing down a musical composition? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'rhythm map' for Max the Monkey. Show a musical staff with notes placed on it, and draw Max conducting his rhythm pattern using a small twig as a baton.

Extension challenge: Try to compose a four-bar rhythm sequence. Perform your sequence by clapping the beats. Can you add a dynamic marking (like loud or quiet) to each bar to make it more interesting?