

# Music & Academics



## Tips

### INTRODUCTION

Research findings support the use of music as a mnemonic device to assist in the learning and recall of information. Specifically, music helps to organize information into smaller chunks, making it easier to encode and retain. Musical presentation also provides an optimal learning environment for those students who are highly attentive to music, but are often distractible with other modalities. Furthermore, educational research confirms that our ability to learn and later use new concepts is best when we are motivated and the material presented is meaningful to us.

Below are classroom-tested tips to help your students tune in!

### READING & SPELLING

- Have students clap or tap out syllables on a drum when practicing new vocabulary. For example, “Wa-ter-me-lon”, “Base-ball”, “Sun-day”, etc.
- Create rhymes or chants for students to recite that correspond with spelling rules such as “I before E except after C” or “When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking.”
- Provide lyrics to a song as a reading assignment. As a reward for reading the lyrics correctly, the students are able to sing the song out loud. For example, “On Top of Spaghetti” or “Yankee Doodle”.
- Present a song via recording or live singing. Have students then utilize comprehension skills to discuss what the song is about and draw inferences as to what may happen in the next verse. Unfamiliar vocabulary can be discussed.

### WRITING

- For pre-writing activities, engage students in free drawing while listening to a fast or slow piece of music, trying to match the drawing to the musical style and pace.
- For students who are writing but are difficult to motivate, provide them the lyrics to their favorite song to copy; allowing them to sing or listen to the song as a reward when completed.
- The book “Sing Write Along” by Teacher Created Materials, Inc. ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)) has a simple tune or rhyme to say while writing each letter of the alphabet to help with recall of letter formations.



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## HISTORY/ SCIENCE/ SOCIAL STUDIES

- Play songs from various eras when teaching American History. For example, “Oldies”, “Disco”, etc.
- Play songs that represent a historical event and have students discuss the relevance of the lyrics. For example, “Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald” or “Battle Hymn of the Republic”.
- Play songs from various countries when studying cultures or geography. Make an instrument from the designated country or culture. For instance, a Native American Indian rainstick, African drum, etc.

## MATH

- To address patterns, have students stand in circle and listen while the teacher claps a rhythm pattern. Each student must then copy the rhythm one after another until it goes around the entire circle.
- Chant addition or multiplication facts to a rhythm.
- Use a tune to remember various counting patterns. For instance, count by 3’s to the tune of “Jingle Bells”, 4’s to the tune of “Old McDonald”, 6’s to the tune of “I’m a Little Teapot”, etc.
- Teach the concept of fractions by studying how various music rhythms are divided (whole note, half note, quarter note, eighth note, etc.)

## TEACHING RESOURCES

Much of traditional children’s music contains fast paced and complex lyrics that can be overwhelming for students who are working on fundamental skills. Using inventive songs, vibrant visual supports, and movement, The Tuned in to Learning® program was designed with the needs of special learners in mind, including appropriate pacing, simplified language, and additional response time for students to practice each target skill. Volumes 2 and 5 (detailed below) from this 9-volume music-assisted learning curriculum are specifically geared towards core pre-academic and academic skills.

**Tuned In to Learning™**

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