

# Introduction

Greetings, and welcome to the *KidStix*™ experience! I have used these percussive lessons in my classes for 36 years and have greatly enjoyed the students' high levels of engagement and rhythmic mastery, as well as the opportunity to introduce them to a large variety of musical pieces. You'll find a lot of information in the pages that follow. **I strongly encourage you to read all of it.** The success of your *KidStix* lessons may be dependent on these small, yet important details!

Kids *love* percussion instruments and these lessons take things to a whole new level, as every child in the class plays along with high-quality musical recordings at his or her own StickStation™. StickStations include drumsticks, BeatBoards, Crash Cans, and a tambourine. (Information about creating your StickStations as well as tips for success can be found on page 6.)

Over the years, I've refined these lessons to include three different types of play-a-long experiences: Rhythm Readiness Exercises, Folksong and Patriotic Play-Alongs, and the StickWorks™ selections, which are percussion arrangements that accompany a variety of musical repertoire.

The main focus of the book—and the part my children most enjoy—is the StickWorks selections. These pieces are arrangements set to recorded music including orchestral, vocal, electronic, and band works, in addition to a number of pop tunes. Many are very simple, while others are more complex.

**Be sure to practice each piece thoroughly before presenting it in your classroom.** This will help ensure that the experience is successful and fun for you and your students. I am sure my neighbors have wondered why I spend so much time on my back porch happily banging on boards, cans, and tambourines while loud music is blaring. Without this practice, I would not be ready for my students. Practicing these pieces is essential!

I hope that you and your students enjoy all of the *KidStix* lessons. You will have fun learning the routines yourself, but the joy factor that happens when you share them with children will keep a smile on your face all day!

*Stick* with it and enjoy!  
Artie Almeida



# Rhythm Readiness Exercises



## CD tracks 1-8

The eight Rhythm Readiness Exercises focus on note values and rhythm patterns in a spiraling sequence. These exercises present the students with one- or two-measure rhythm patterns to echo. I've included exercises in two different meters, with the following note values: whole, dotted half, half, quarter, eighths, triplets, and sixteenths, as well as whole, half, and quarter rests.

The CD tracks for each of these exercises present the patterns for the students to echo. The echoed response is included on the track, but it is played at a much lower volume. The track numbers for each of the exercises are conveniently listed on the scores.

I like to begin each *KidStix* lesson I teach with a Rhythm Readiness Exercise. You may choose to project the scores (which utilize colored echo sections for your students) or you may teach these pieces by rote.

# Rhythm Readiness Exercise I

4  
4

2

(Echo) (Echo)

# Folksong and Patriotic Play-Alongs

## CD tracks 9-19

The Folksong and Patriotic Play-Alongs take the students to the next level as they are no longer echoing patterns, but playing along with the rhythms of the melody lines. There are accompaniment tracks for all of the pieces; the CD track numbers are listed on the scores.

Many students know these songs and enjoy singing them while playing along on the BeatBoards. The lyrics are included on each score. However, if your students are not familiar with these traditional pieces, it may be helpful for you to prep the songs before playing them on the BeatBoards. In some cases, you may want to teach the songs multiple times in the weeks leading up to the *KidStix™* lesson. While the notation is often more difficult than your students are prepared to read, they are successful because they know the songs. Their singing pulls them through the rhythmic performance of the pieces.

The scores for each of these pieces are on the following pages for your convenience. Remember, it is best to project these scores for your students. The digital files on the CD include beautiful full-color visuals for each of these pieces.



# Frère Jacques

Traditional

Introduction: 2 measures

4/4

Frè - re Jac - ques, Frè - re Jac - ques,  
Are you sleep - ing? Are you sleep - ing?

dor - mez - vous, dor - mez - vous?  
Broth - er John. Broth - er John.

Son - nez les ma - ti - nes! Son - nez les ma - ti - nes!  
Morn - ing bells are ring - ing, morn - ing bells are ring - ing.

Ding, ding, dong. Ding, ding, dong.  
Ding, ding, dong. Ding, ding, dong.



For the most part, you will approach each of the following pieces in a similar fashion, as follows.

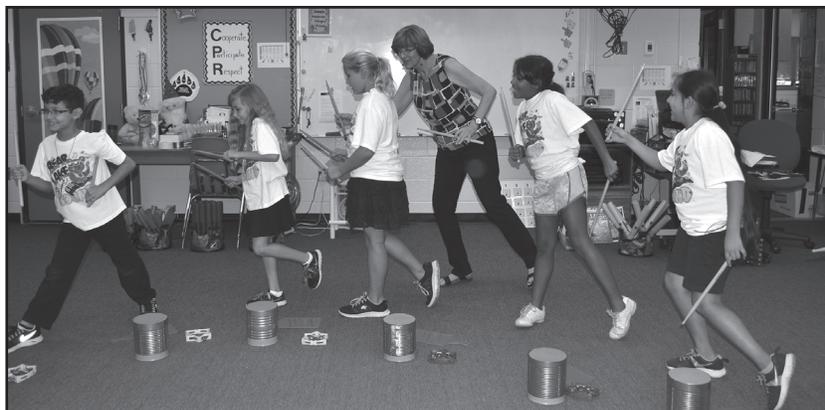
1. Display the StickStation™ Visual and make sure all of your students have their area set up correctly.
2. Draw attention to as many of the focus items as you wish. Consider revisiting the same piece several times with new areas of focus each time.
3. Share the composer info for the piece, if you wish.
4. Display the *KidStix* StickWorks score.
5. Review the form.
6. Speak the rhythms in each section, following the form.
7. Review each of the icons presented and the techniques for playing.
8. Play through each section, one at a time, without the recording.
9. Highlight any challenging areas. The following scores include my notes. Feel free to make your own as you teach these pieces.
10. Finally, play the recording and lead the class in the performance! I use a laser pointer so I can be out near the children, not tied to the whiteboard area.
11. Discuss, evaluate, rehearse, and repeat as needed.



As mentioned, the *KidStix* StickWorks scores on the following pages include my teaching notes. Feel free to add your own. You will also find the composer info, focus items, and track numbers on the following pages. The student visuals include only the CD track numbers for pieces included on the audio CD. Remember, there are a few pieces for which you will have to acquire your own recordings.

Timings are also included on the following pages (but not on the student scores). These are for your reference as you are learning these pieces. The timings are for the recordings of the pieces we have included on the CD or those that I have suggested. Other versions of these pieces will likely have different timings. It is very important that you play through these pieces at your StickStation before you present them to your students.

A good teaching technique is to use the music you are planning to teach as “hook music” or “exit music” the week prior to teaching the piece. I have used a number of these percussion pieces in performance settings, which is always a surprise for the audience, and a lot of fun for the children who are performing.



# StickWork™ #1

Can be played with "Can Can #4" from Gaité Parisienne by Offenbach

Students recognize and enjoy this famous piece of music, and get completely caught up in its energy and excitement! The patterns are very simple and repetitive, which makes it easy to teach in a short amount of time.

## Composer Corner

Jaques Offenbach (1819–1880) was a well-known French composer (although born in Germany) who wrote almost 100 operettas, many of which are still performed today. He was a prankster whose sense of humor showed in many of his compositions. He was also a talented cellist and a respected conductor.

### Introduction



0:12

A

0:24

B

Scrape the sides of the cans down and up in the B section. If this is too fast for your students to do comfortably, have them hold the can with one hand and scrape one side of the can with their dominant hand.

0:36

**C**

This is a tricky little section! Practice it!

If you have a class that is extremely adept at *KidStix* routines, you could have the children play all of the stick clicks in the C section against one of their neighbor's sticks. I have each child hold out their left stick at elbow height, horizontal with the floor. They use the stick in their right hand to strike the stick that the child on their right is holding out. They move back and forth between their BeatBoards and their neighbors' sticks. The child on the far right of the row will just strike his/her right-hand stick on the floor.

0:59

**A**

1:11

**Coda**

Students should strike both sides of their cans on the final note.