

Identifying your Beats Challenge

1. This challenge consists of two parts: a music component and a script component. Your goal for this challenge is to identify the beats in the overture of *West Side Story* and in a short scene from *The Jungle Book*.
2. Read the 'WHAT IS A BEAT?' page (below)
3. Listen to the overture from *West Side Story*. As you listen, identify any shifts or changes in rhythm, style, or feeling present in the music. These are your beats. Record these beats on the worksheet (below) making note of the place in the music where they take place, what the changes are, and how they made you feel.
4. Read the Kaa/Mowgli scene from *The Jungle Book*. In the same way you did while listening to the music, mark any changes or shifts that take place in the dialogue. You can mark the end of one beat and beginning however you like (I like to use a "/" symbol.)
5. Record a video! Record yourself telling us about the beats you discovered while listening to the music. Be specific with the time of the beat change in the music so that we can play the appropriate section of music while you discuss it. Tell us what changed in the music and what kind of mood or emotion it evokes.
6. Upload your video by Thursday, Feb. 11.
7. Hang on to the work you did identifying beats in the *Jungle Book* text; we'll be using them for next week's challenge!

WHAT IS A BEAT?

Plays are broken down into acts, acts are broken into scenes, and scenes are broken into beats, making them the smallest section of a play. Beats are a way of breaking down a scene into more specific sections, and they can help you break down complex scenes into easily digestible moments, where you can focus on a section at a time, rather than trying to tackle the sometimes-overwhelming whole.

Basically, a beat is a change. This can mean a change of topic, an introduction of new information, a change in who is leading the scene, a change in who has power in the scene or who is in the scene (entrances and exits).

Beats can be as long or as short as they need to be, as long as they define changes in the dynamics of a scene. They are also subjective, meaning that they might be different for every person. As the performer, you should acknowledge these changes of circumstance in your performance. If you pay attention to the beats your performance will have natural variation, and it will be serving the story and its structure.

BEATS IN THE *WEST SIDE STORY* OVERTURE

Make note of any changes in rhythm, style, or feeling present in the music. Remember, identifying beats is subjective; you may or may not use all the lines provided on this page. Likewise, feel free to use the back of this page if you need more space!

TIME IN MUSIC	WHAT CHANGES?	WHAT DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL?

BEATS IN A SCENE FROM *THE JUNGLE BOOK*

Mowgli has just run from Baloo and Bagheera, who have told him he must return to the village. Mowgli wanders alone and depressed. Wearing, he sits to rest. Kaa enters.

MOWGLI: Kaa! It's you!

KAA: Yes, Man Cub. So nice to see you again.

MOWGLI: Oh, go away. Leave me alone.

KAA: Let me look at you. (*Mowgli turns and hides his eyes*) You don't want me to look at you? (*turns Mowgli's head*) Then you look at me.

MOWGLI: No, sir. I know what you're trying to do, Kaa.

KAA: You do? Uh, I mean, you don't trust me?

MOWGLI: No.

KAA: Then there's nothing I can do to help.

MOWGLI: You want to help me?

KAA: Certainly. I can see to it that you never have to leave this jungle.

MOWGLI: How can you do that?

KAA: Hmm? Oh, I have my own subtle little ways. But first you must trust me.

MOWGLI: I don't trust anyone anymore.

KAA (*beginning to hypnotize Mowgli*): But don't you understand? I don't want to hurt you. I just want to give you a big hug! Sssss! Ah...mmmm...

SHERE KHAN (*from offstage*): Kaa, is that you? (*the moment is broken*)

KAA: Quick! Hide! It's Shere Khan!