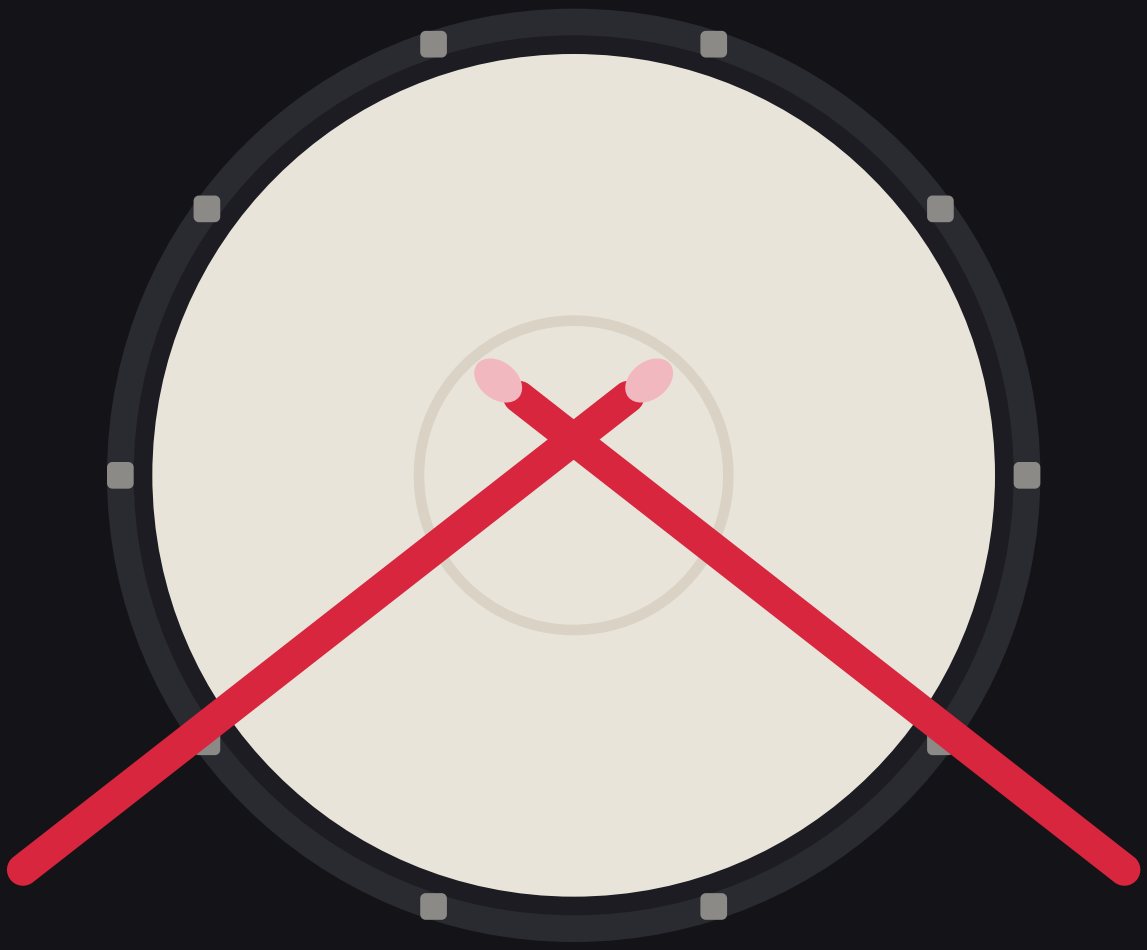
THE HOUSE THAT ROCKS

Drum Series



ROCK SOLID

BOOK 1

Beginner Drum Set Method

Reading · Grooves · Fills · Solos

Version 1.0

WELCOME TO THE DRUMS

Every drummer you have ever heard started right where you are: one stick, one beat, one count at a time. This book takes you from your very first note all the way to playing full beats, fills, and a song chart. Take it one page at a time. Go slow. Enjoy the sound you are making.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

1. **Count out loud.** Say the counts while you play. If you can say it, you can play it.
2. **Use a metronome.** Every exercise has a tempo range next to its number, like **60–90 BPM**. Start at the low number. Move up 5 BPM at a time.
3. **Know when to move on.** You are ready for the next exercise when you can play it **3 times in a row, with no stops, at the goal tempo.** Then check the box.
4. **Play along online.** Every exercise in this book has a play-along player in the online version, with a metronome, drums, bass, and keys. Slow it down or speed it up as you learn.
5. **Little and often.** 15 minutes a day, 5 days a week, beats one long practice on Sunday.
6. **Show your teacher.** Your teacher will sign off each section on the Progress Tracker at the back.

SYMBOLS YOU WILL SEE

R / L	Right hand / left hand
>	Accent: play this note louder
Repeat sign	Two dots and a double bar: go back and play it again
p mf f	Soft, medium, loud (see page 5)
BPM	Beats per minute: the speed on your metronome

> **LEFT-HANDED?**
> No problem. Most exercises in this book are written for a right-handed drum set. If you play a left-handed set, just swap every R for L and every L for R, and swap your feet too. Your teacher will help you set up.

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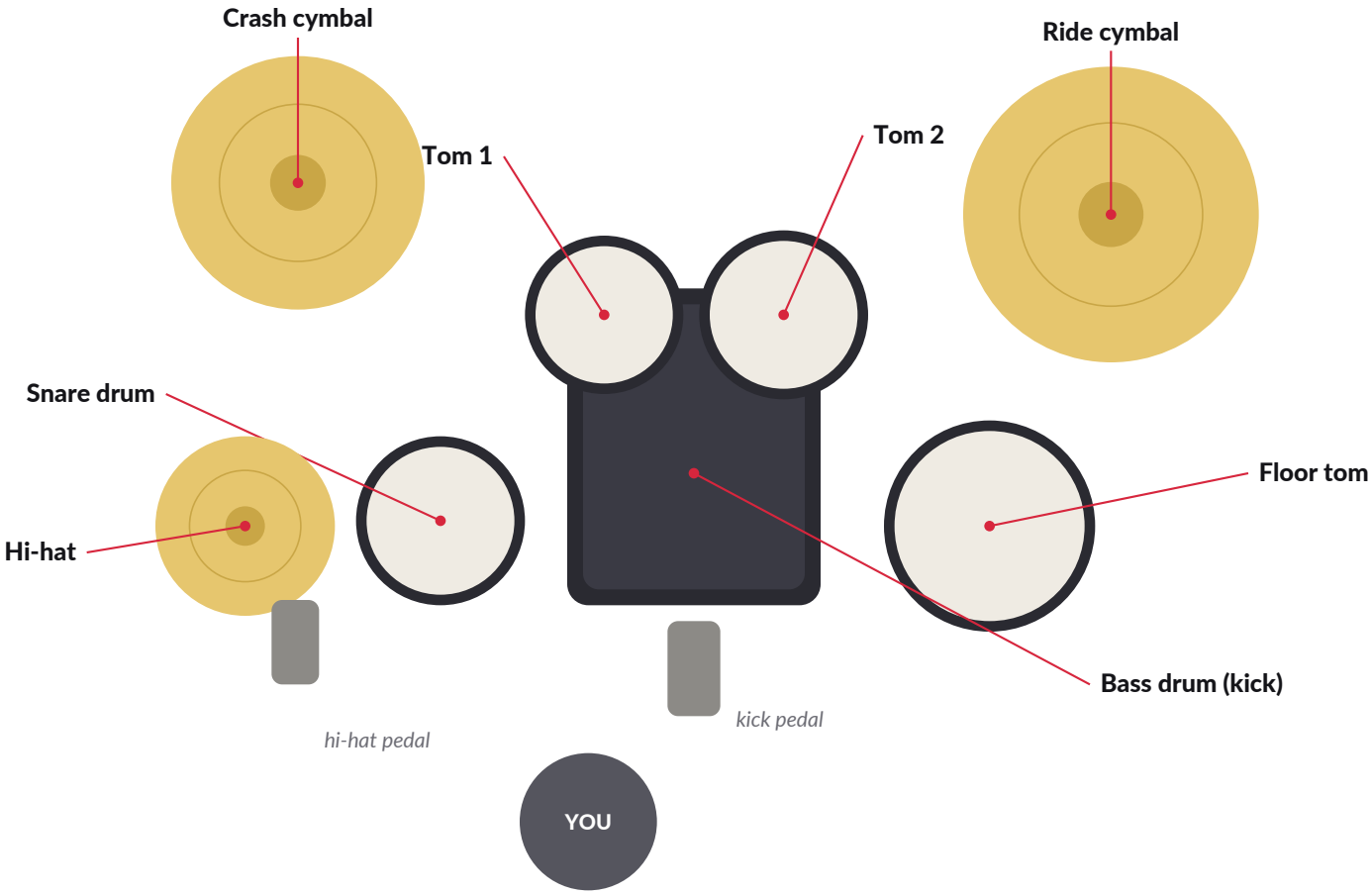
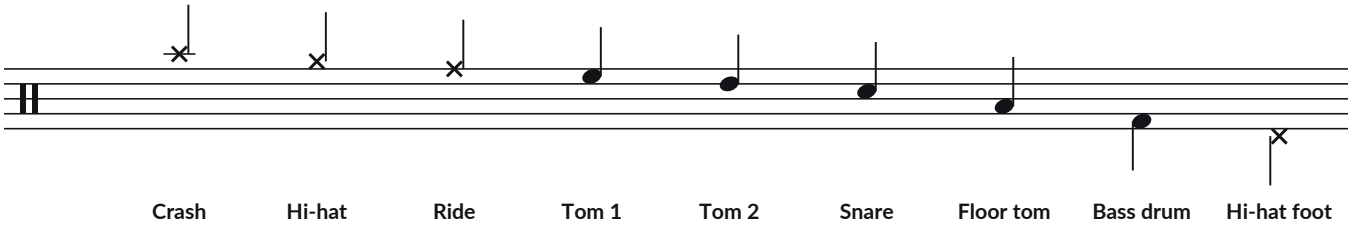
MEET THE DRUM SET

A drum set is a team of drums and cymbals that one person plays with both hands and both feet. Here is the set from above, the way you see it from the seat (called the **throne**).



HOW EACH ONE LOOKS ON THE PAGE



WHO PLAYS WHAT (RIGHT-HANDED SET)

Right hand: hi-hat or ride cymbal. **Left hand:** snare drum. **Right foot:** bass drum pedal. **Left foot:** hi-hat pedal. Both hands visit the toms and crash during fills. Cymbals are written with an **x**; drums are written with a round note. Hands have stems going up; feet have stems going down.

GETTING SET UP

Good habits on day one make everything easier later. Check each of these before you play.

1. Sit tall on the throne

Set the seat so your thighs are level or slope a little downhill toward your knees. Sit near the front edge, back straight, shoulders loose. Your feet rest flat on the pedals.

2. Place the snare

The snare sits between your knees, a few inches above them. It should be close enough that your arms hang relaxed, not stretched out.

3. Find the balance point

Hold a stick loosely and let it tip. The spot about one-third up from the end is where it balances best. That is where you hold it.

4. Pinch, then wrap

Pinch the stick at the balance point with your thumb and the middle of your first finger. Let the other fingers wrap around it gently. Squeeze just enough to keep it from falling.

5. Palms down

Turn your hands so the backs face the ceiling. From above, your two sticks should make a slice-of-pizza shape, tips close together over the middle of the drum.

6. Throw and let it bounce

Drop the stick into the drum and let it bounce back up, like dribbling a basketball. Do not press it into the head. The bounce is your friend.

HOW HIGH = HOW LOUD

Low · 1–3 in.
makes a soft sound

Middle · 4–6 in.
makes a medium sound

Full · 8–12 in.
makes a loud sound

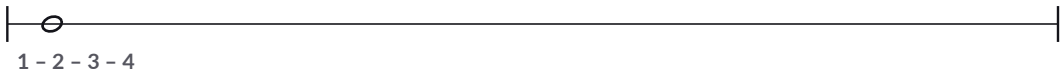
PROTECT YOUR EARS

Drums are loud, even in a small room. Wear earplugs or drummer headphones every time you play on a real drum set. You want to be hearing music for the rest of your life.

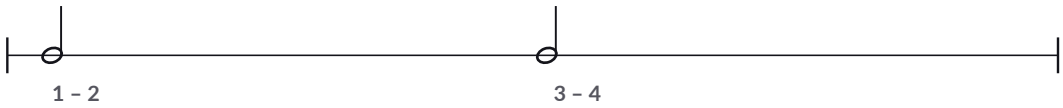
READING RHYTHM

Music is split into **bars** (also called measures). The **4/4** at the start means every bar has **4 beats**, and a quarter note gets one beat. Count along with each line below.

Whole note
4 beats



Half note
2 beats



Quarter note
1 beat

Eighth note
½ beat

Sixteenth note
¼ beat

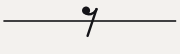
RESTS: BEATS OF SILENCE

A rest means **do not play, but keep counting.** Every note has a rest that lasts the same amount of time.

Whole rest
4 beats

Half rest
2 beats

Quarter rest
1 beat



Eighth rest
½ beat

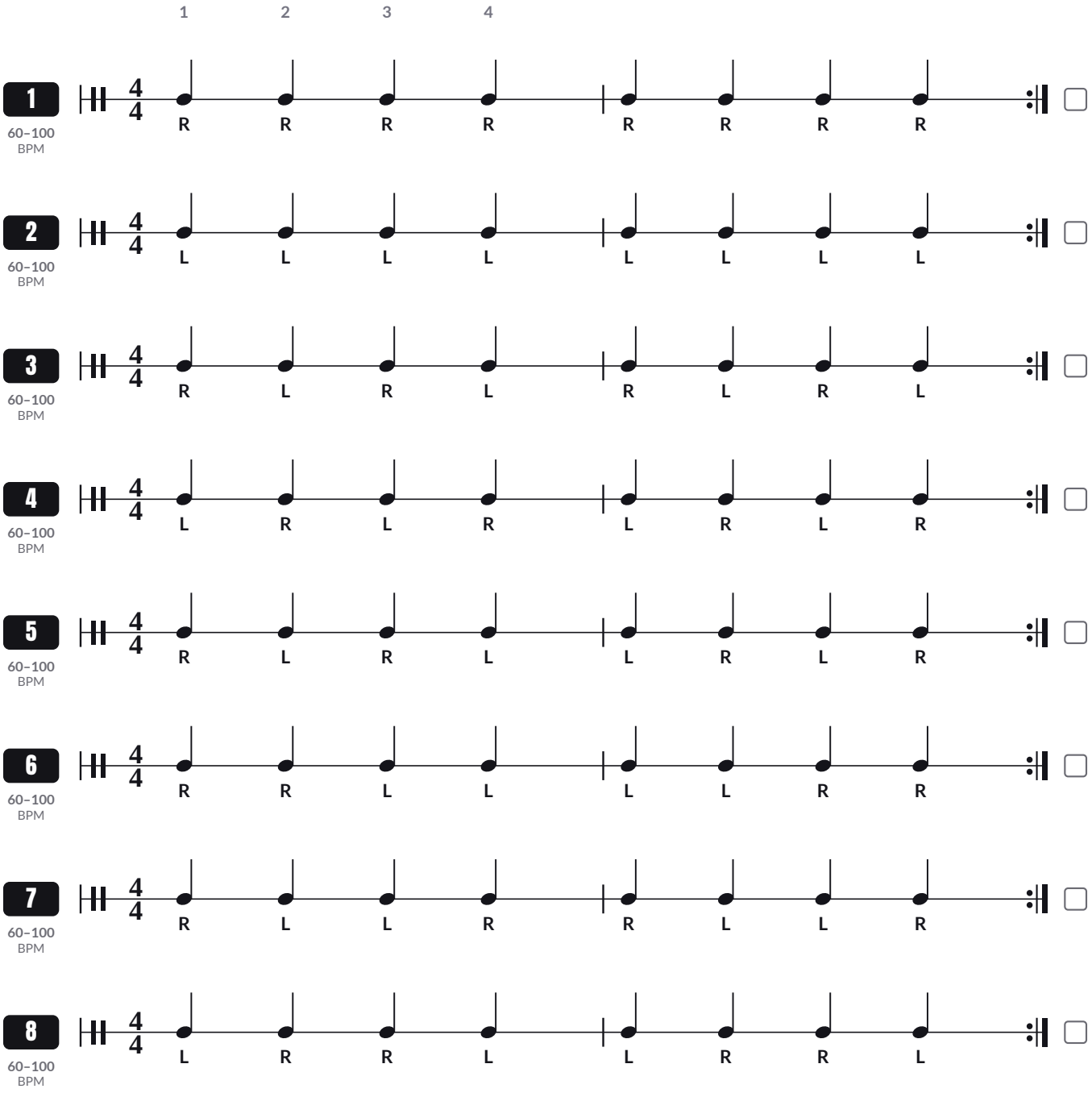
Sixteenth rest
¼ beat

LOUD AND SOFT (DYNAMICS)

pp	*p*	*mf*	*f*	*ff*
very soft	soft	medium	loud	very loud

QUARTER NOTES

Play these on a practice pad or the snare drum. One note on every beat. Count **1, 2, 3, 4** out loud, and follow the sticking letters under each note.



LISTEN CLOSELY

Both hands should sound exactly the same. Close your eyes on number 3. Can you tell which hand is playing? If you can, slow down and make them match.

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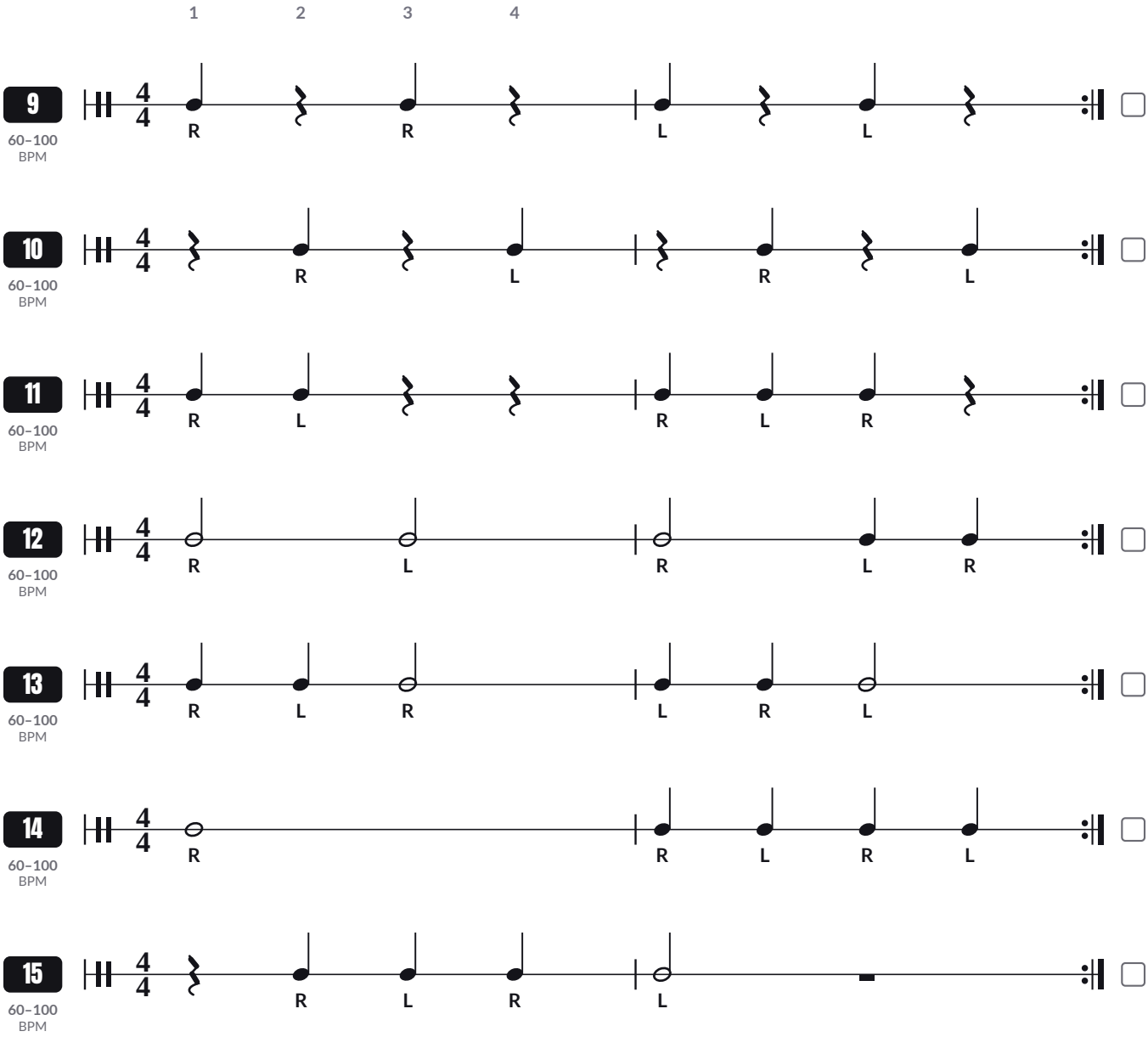
RESTS AND LONGER NOTES

Now some beats are silent and some notes last longer. **Keep counting through every rest.** For half and whole notes, play once and let the drum ring while you count.

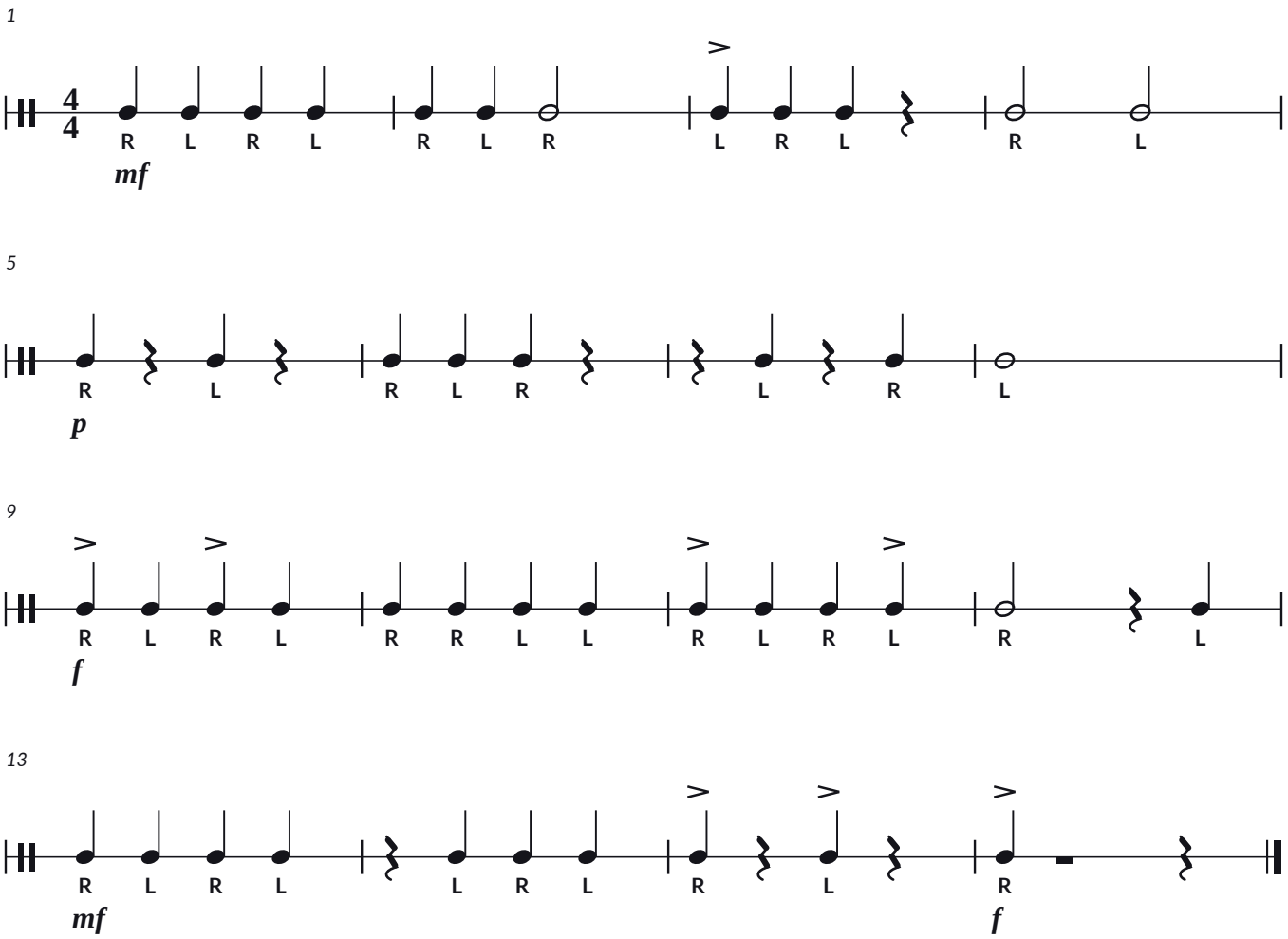


TRY THIS

Play number 9 and clap your hands on every rest instead. Then play it again and just say the count on the rests. The silence is part of the music.

SOLO 1: FIRST STEPS

Your first full piece. It uses everything so far: quarter notes, half notes, rests, accents, and loud and soft playing. Watch the letters under the line for loud (**f**), medium (**mf**) and soft (**p**). Tempo: **70–100 BPM**.

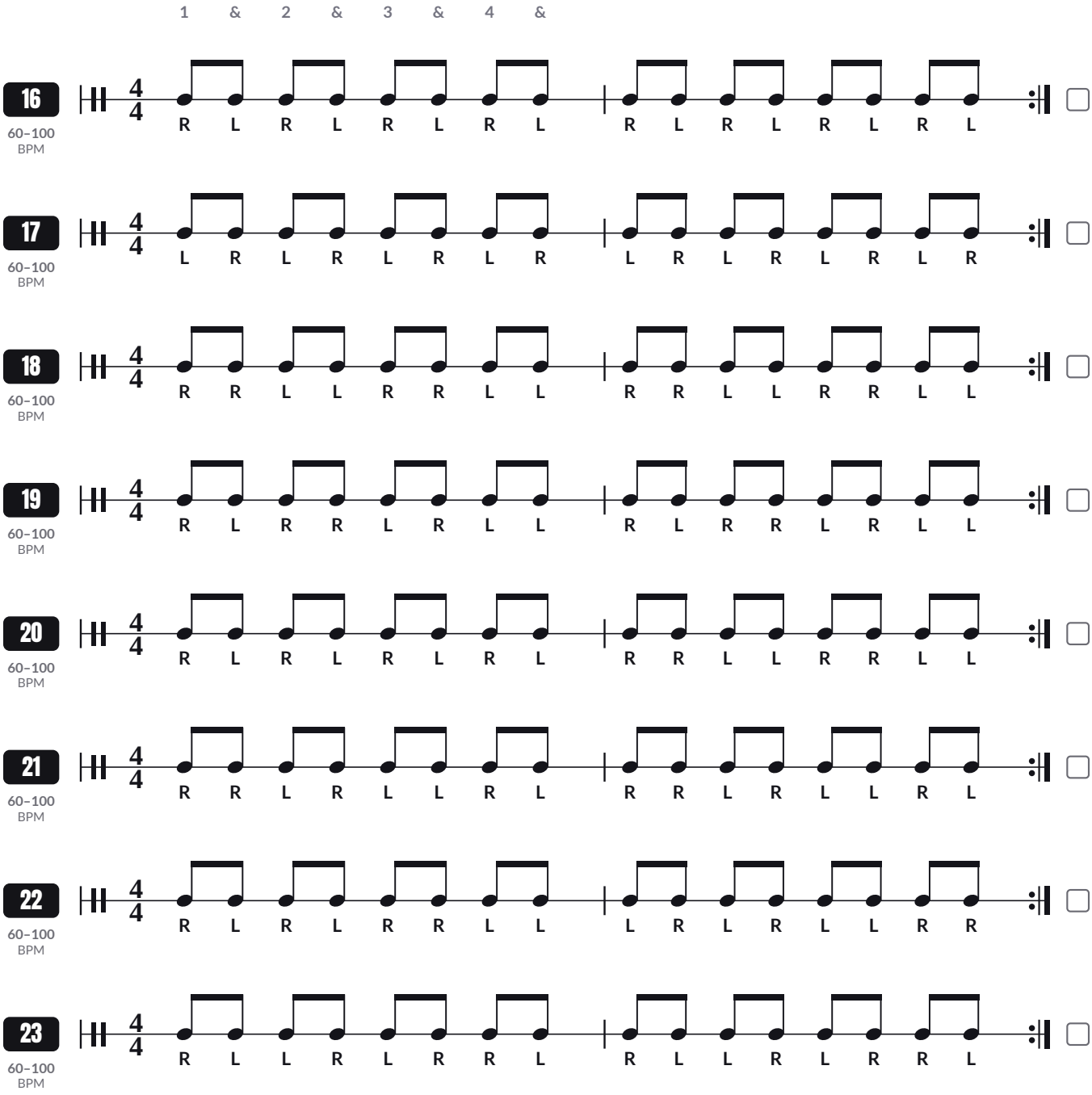


PERFORMANCE TIP

Before you start, count one full bar out loud: "1, 2, 3, 4." Then begin on the next 1. That is called a **count-in**, and every band uses one.

EIGHTH NOTES

Two notes on every beat. The number is the **downbeat**, and the "&" (say "and") in between is the **upbeat**. Count **1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &**.

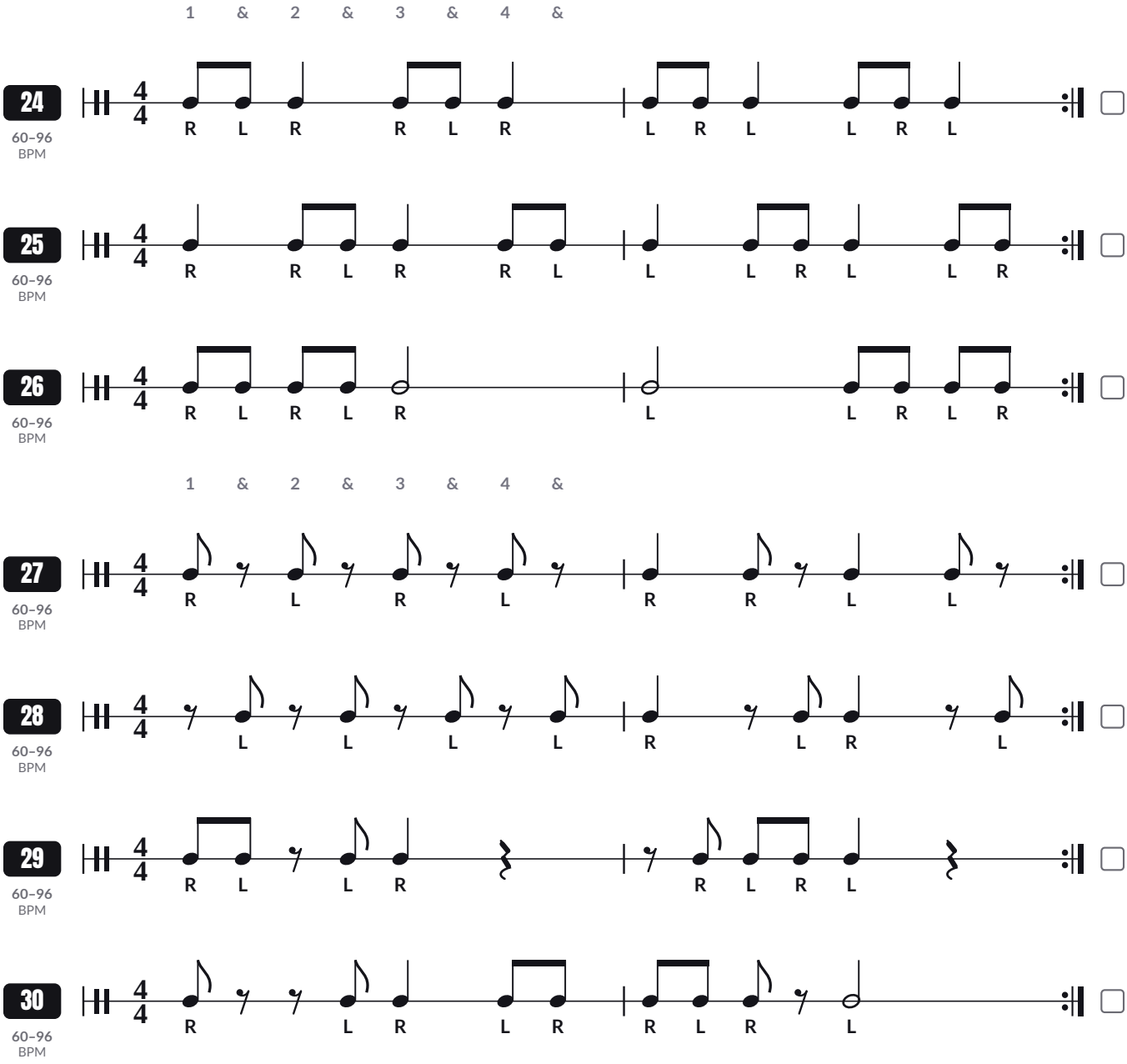


NAME THAT PATTERN

Number 18 is a **double stroke** (two hits per hand). Number 19 is a **paradiddle**: "pa-ra-di-ddle." These are two of the building blocks drummers use every day.

MIX IT UP

Quarter notes and eighth notes together, plus the eighth rest. Keep saying every count, even the silent ones. The counting is what keeps your notes in the right place.

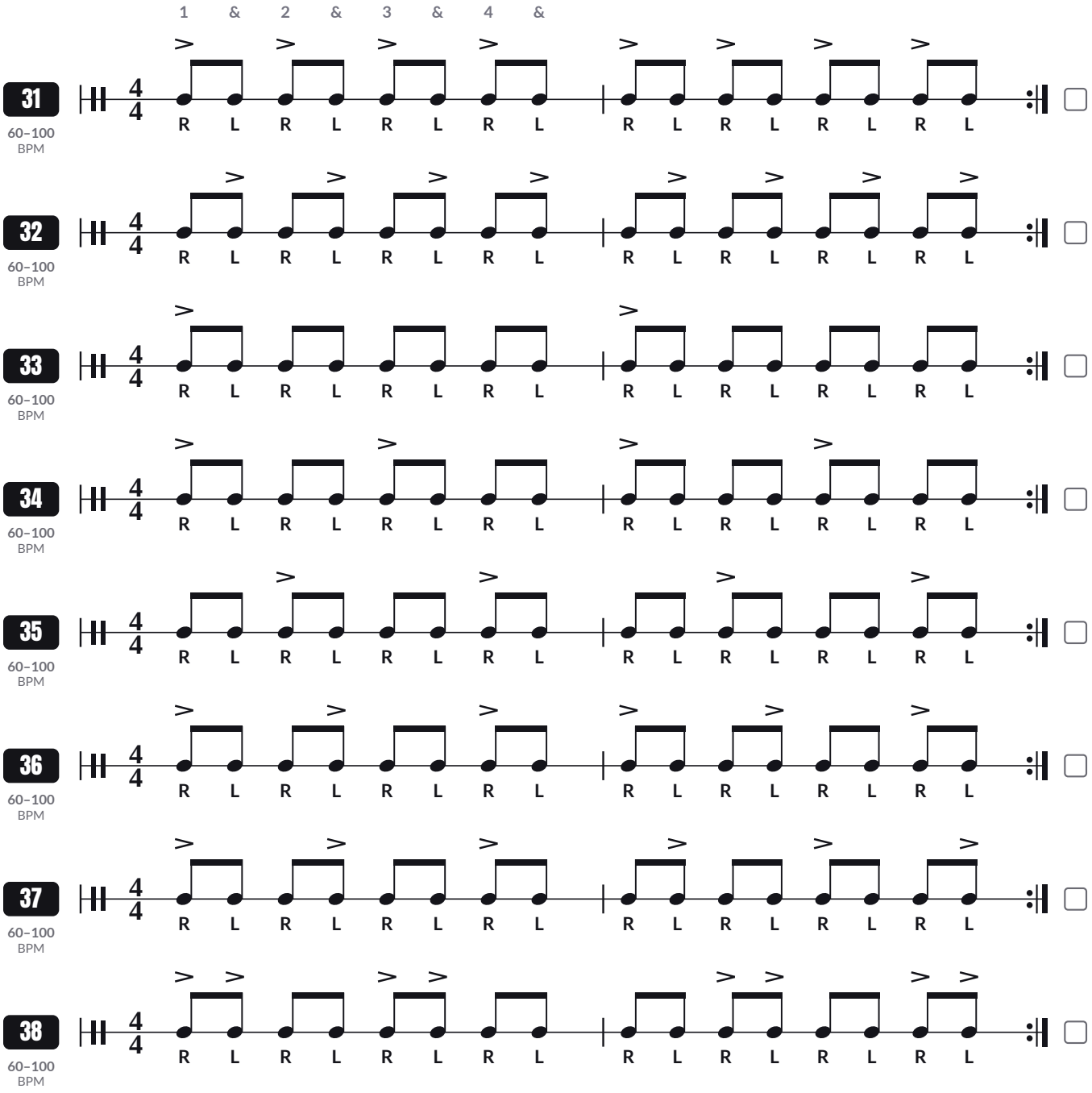


TRICKY SPOT

Number 28 starts on an upbeat. Say "1" quietly in your head, then play on "&". Tap your foot on the numbers and play in between the taps.

ACCENTS

An **accent** (>) means play that note louder. Use a full stroke (high) for accents and a low stroke for everything else. The big difference between loud and soft is what makes it sound musical.

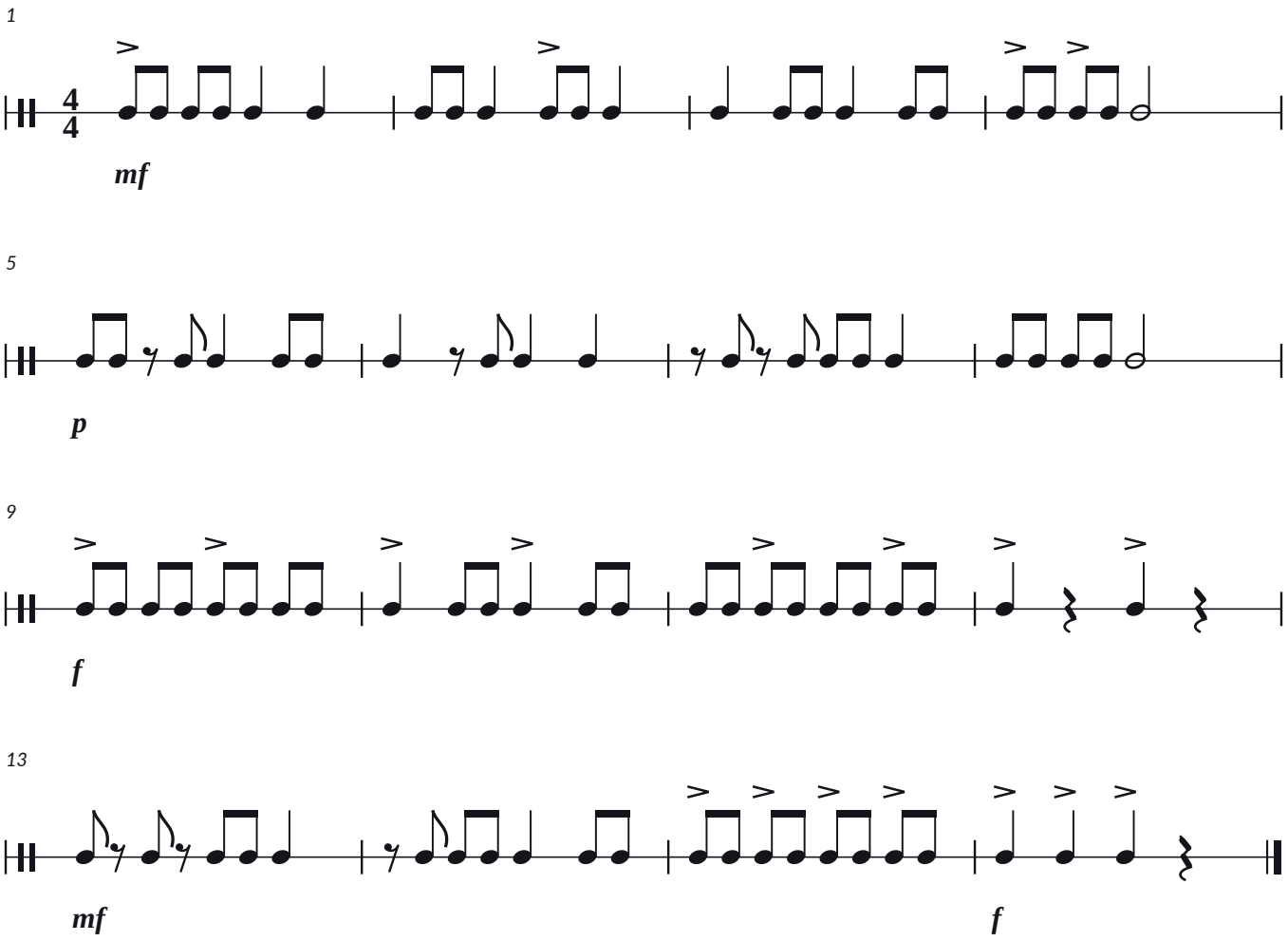


UP HIGH, DOWN LOW

Right after you hit an accent, keep the stick low for the next soft note. Wild sticks that fly back up make every note loud. Stay relaxed and let gravity help.

SOLO 2: GROUNDWORK

A solo using eighth notes, eighth rests, and accents. Use **right hand on the numbers, left hand on the "&"** and the sticking will take care of itself. Tempo: **70–110 BPM**.



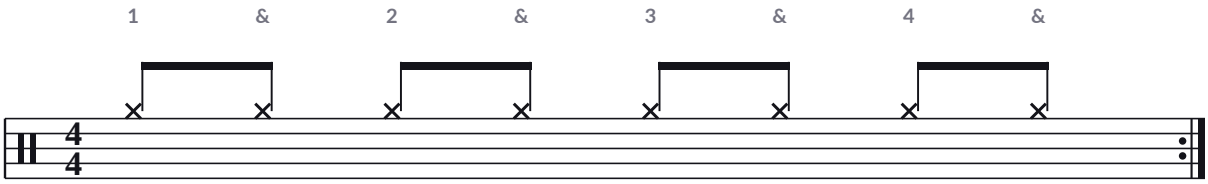
MAKE IT YOURS

Once you know it, play the whole solo on the snare, then try moving each line to a different drum: line 2 on the floor tom, line 3 on tom 1. Same rhythm, new colors.

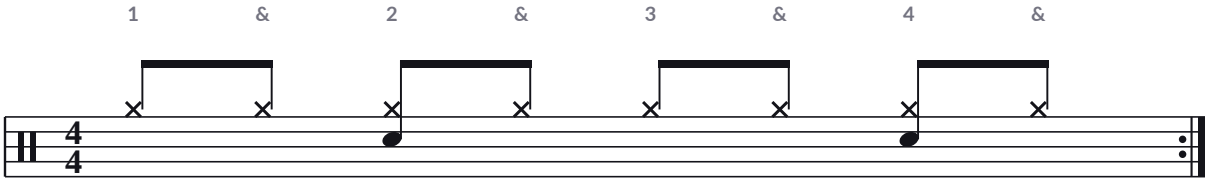
YOUR FIRST BEAT

A **groove** (or beat) is a pattern that repeats and makes people want to move. Build this one step by step. Do not move to the next step until the one before feels easy.

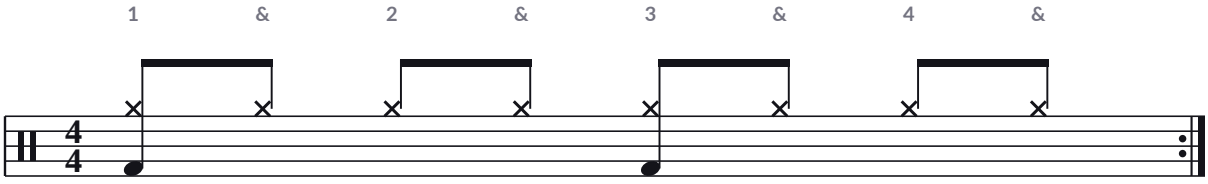
STEP 1 Right hand plays eighth notes on the closed hi-hat.



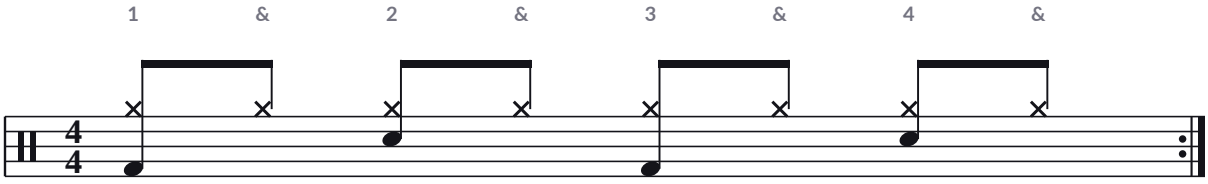
STEP 2 Add the left hand on the snare on beats 2 and 4. This is the **backbeat**: the clap in most songs.



STEP 3 Go back to just the hi-hat, and add the right foot on the bass drum on beats 1 and 3.



STEP 4 Put it all together. You are playing a real rock beat.



39
60–100 BPM

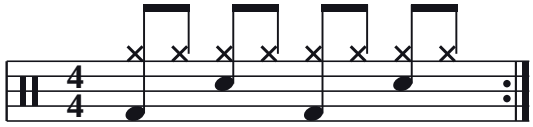
☐

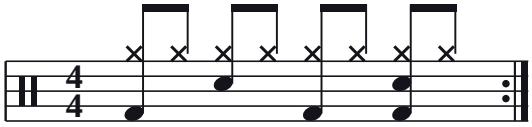
THE SECRET

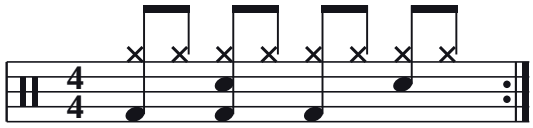
Most beginner beats fall apart because the hands speed up when the foot joins in. Keep the hi-hat steady like a clock. Everything else fits around it.

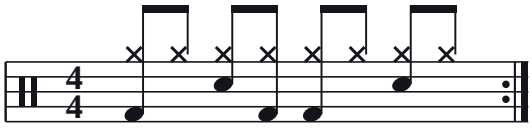
GROOVES: LEVEL 1

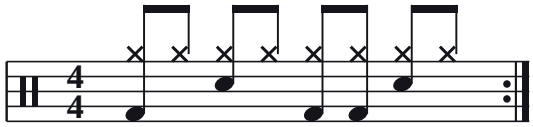
Same hi-hat and snare as your first beat. Only the **bass drum** moves. Say the counts and notice where each kick lands: on a number, or on an "&".

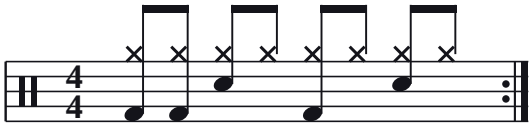
40
60–100 BPM


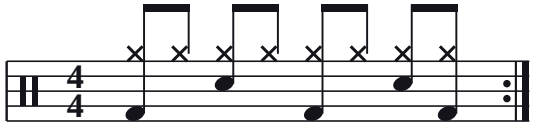
41
60–100 BPM


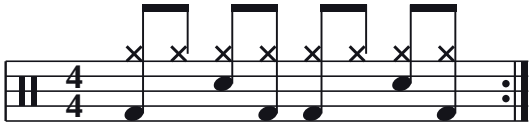
42
60–100 BPM


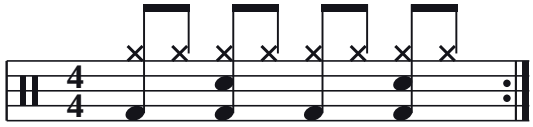
43
60–100 BPM


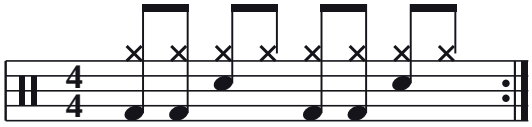
44
60–100 BPM


45
60–100 BPM


46
60–100 BPM


47
60–100 BPM


48
60–100 BPM


49
60–100 BPM


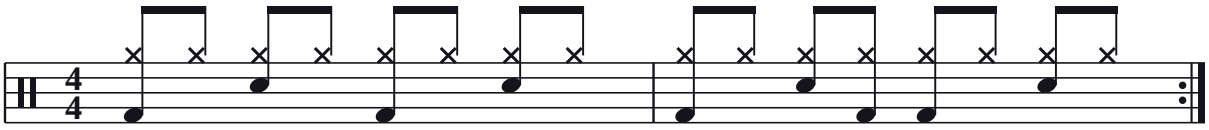
CHALLENGE

Pick any two grooves on this page. Play the first one 4 times, then switch to the second one without stopping. Then switch back.

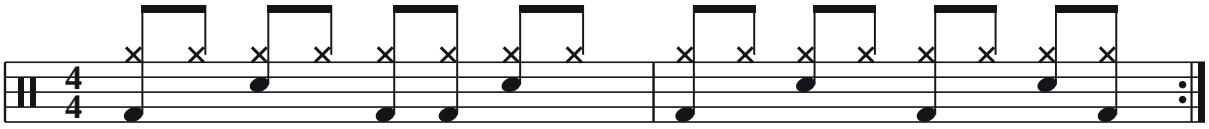
GROOVES: LEVEL 1 (CONT.)

Now some two-bar grooves, the **ride cymbal**, and the **hi-hat foot**. For number 52, keep your left foot pressing the hi-hat pedal closed on beats 2 and 4 while your right hand plays the ride.

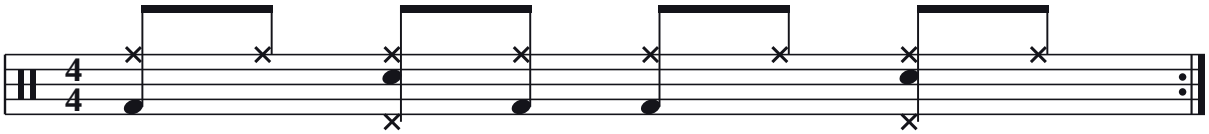
50
60–100 BPM



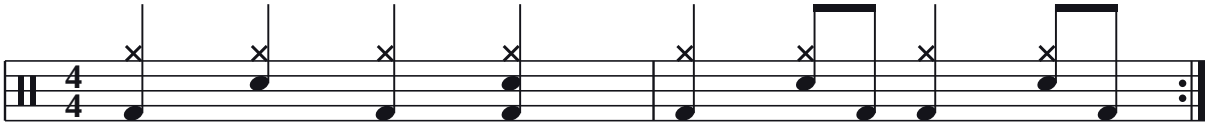
51
60–100 BPM



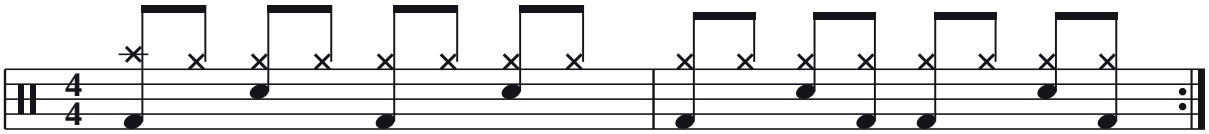
52
60–96 BPM



53
70–110 BPM



54
60–100 BPM



CRASH ON ONE

In number 54, the right hand hits the crash instead of the hi-hat on beat 1, then jumps back. Drummers crash on "1" to tell the band a new section is starting.

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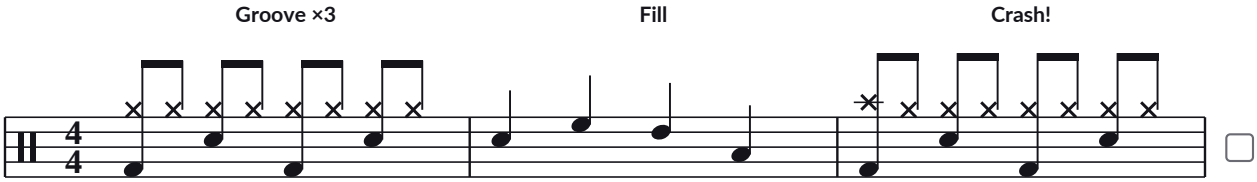
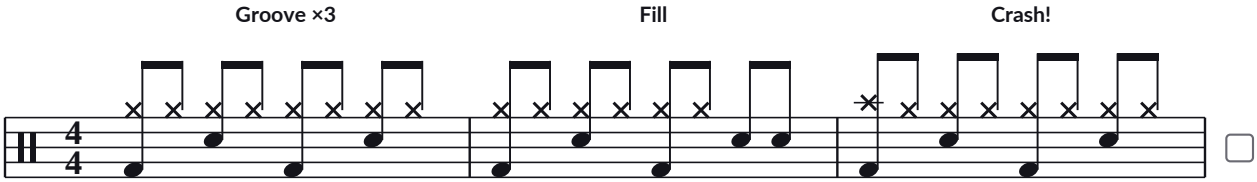
FILLS: LEVEL 1

A **fill** is a short break from the groove that leads into the next part of a song. Play the groove 3 times, play the fill, then land on the crash. Count out loud so the crash lands right on "1".

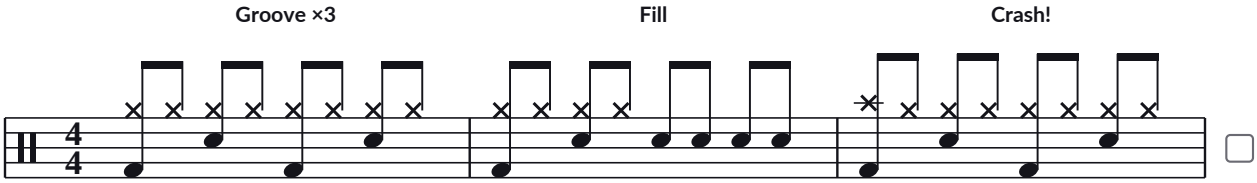
55
60–96 BPM



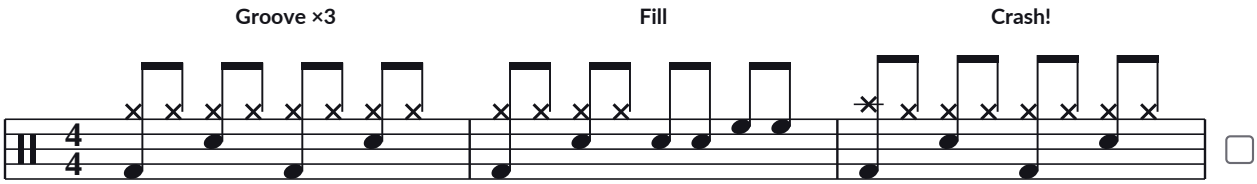
56
60–96 BPM



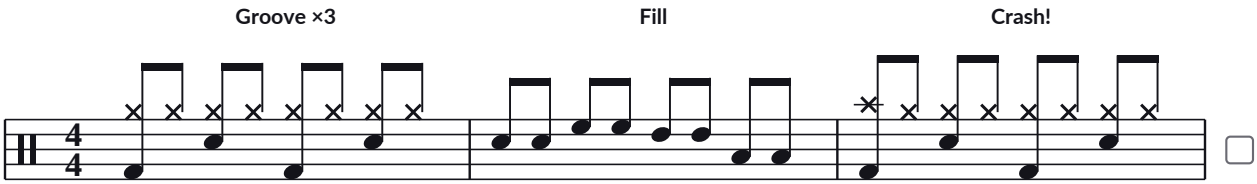
57
60–96 BPM



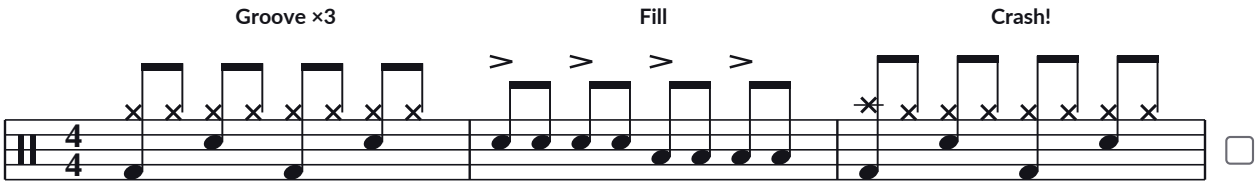
58
60–96 BPM



59
60–96 BPM

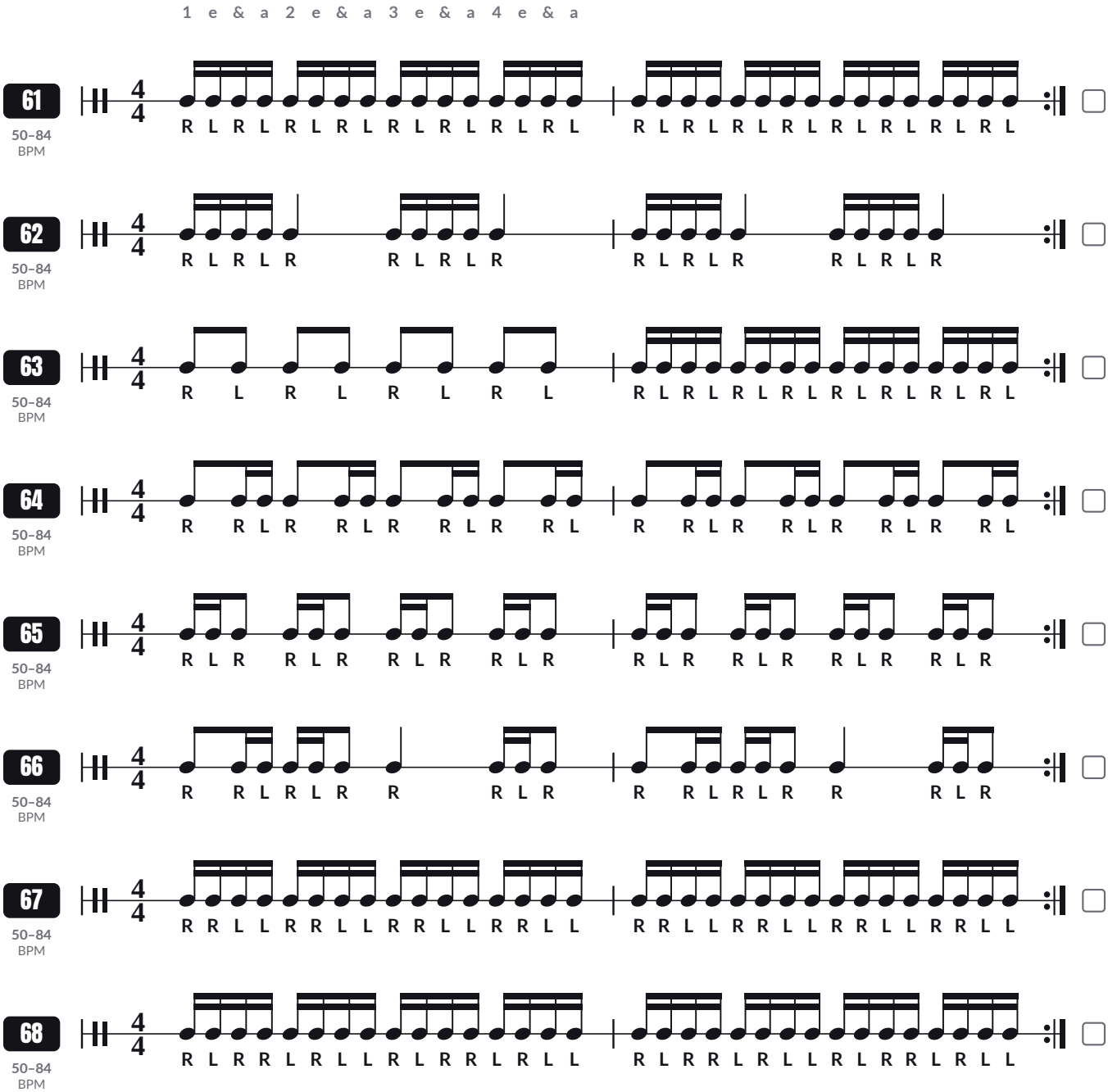


60
60–96 BPM



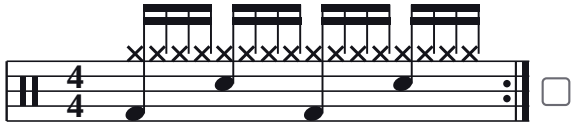
SIXTEENTH NOTES

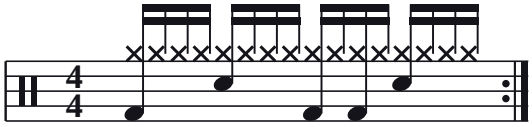
Four notes on every beat. Count **1 e & a, 2 e & a**. Back to the pad for these. The sticking is always the same: **R** on the number and "&", **L** on the "e" and "a".

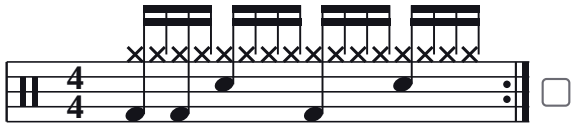


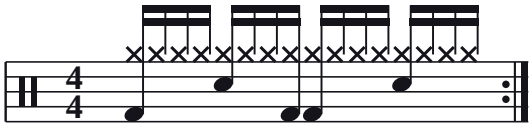
GROOVES: LEVEL 2

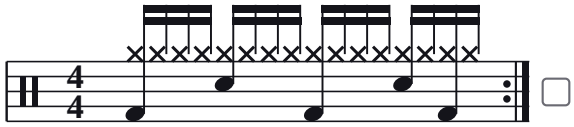
The right hand now plays sixteenth notes on the hi-hat. This takes patience. Start slow, keep your hand relaxed, and let the stick bounce. The snare stays on 2 and 4.

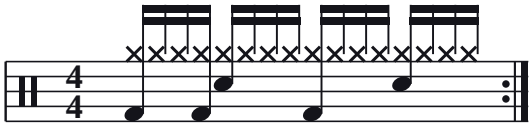
69
50–80 BPM


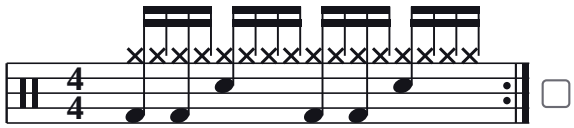
70
50–80 BPM


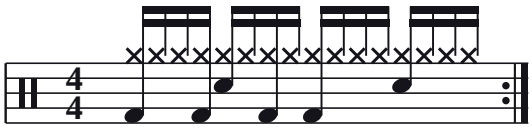
71
50–80 BPM


72
50–80 BPM


73
50–80 BPM


74
50–80 BPM


75
50–80 BPM


76
50–80 BPM


TOO FAST FOR ONE HAND?

Try the two-hand version: play the sixteenths on the hi-hat with **R L R L**, and on beats 2 and 4 your left hand moves over to hit the snare instead. Great for faster songs.

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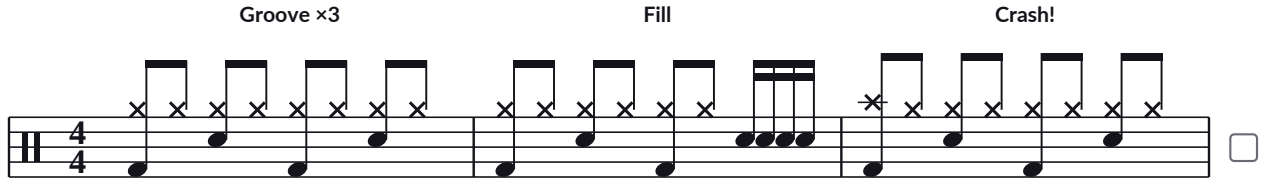
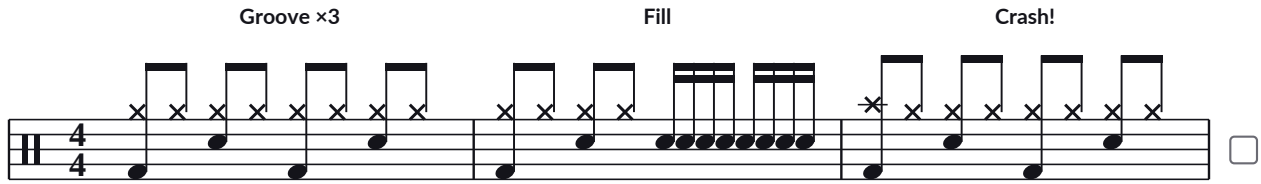
FILLS: LEVEL 2

Sixteenth-note fills. Same plan as before: groove 3 times, fill, crash. Use the natural sticking from page 17 (**R L R L** on every beat) and move around the drums.

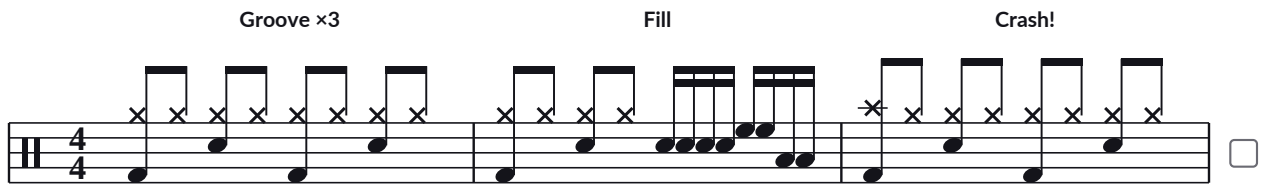
77 56–90 BPM



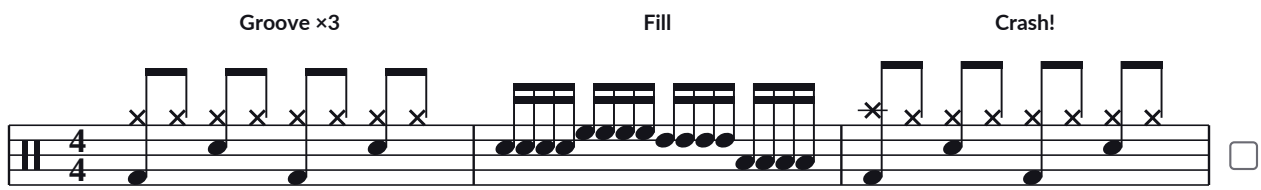
78 56–90 BPM



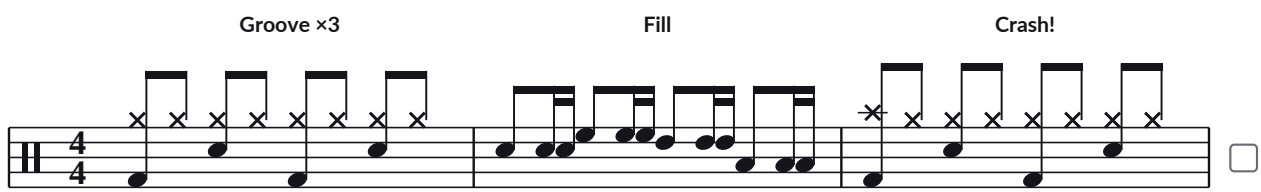
79 56–90 BPM



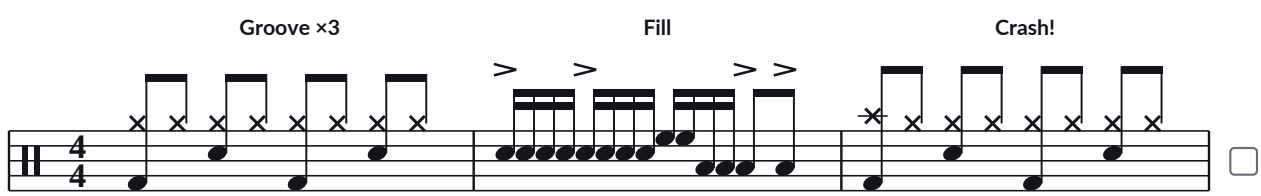
80 56–90 BPM



81 56–90 BPM



82 56–90 BPM



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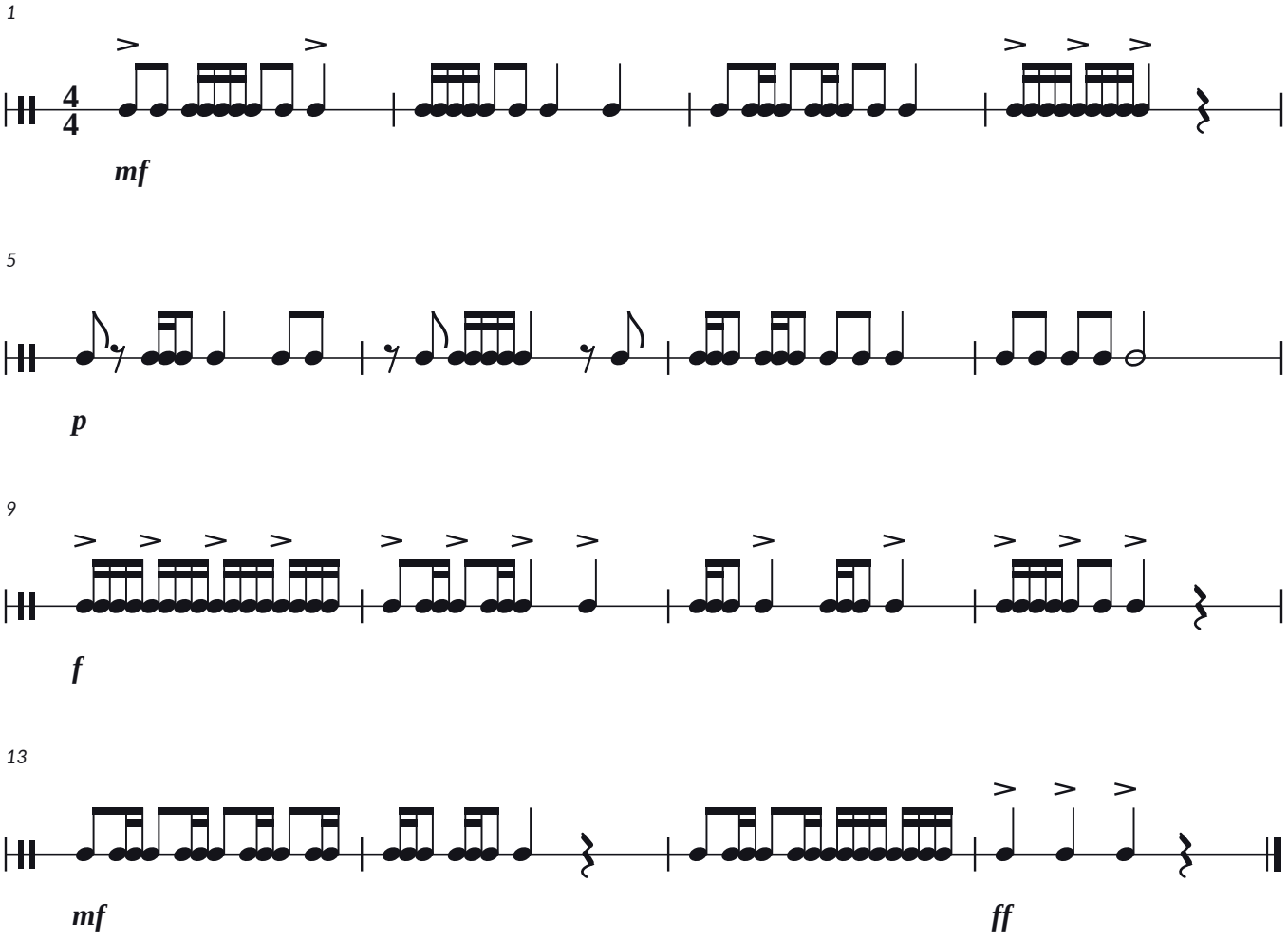
SOLO 3: ROCK THE HOUSE

A snare solo with sixteenth notes, accents, and big changes in volume. Use natural sticking all the way through. When you can play it cleanly, play it for someone. Tempo: **60–92 BPM**.

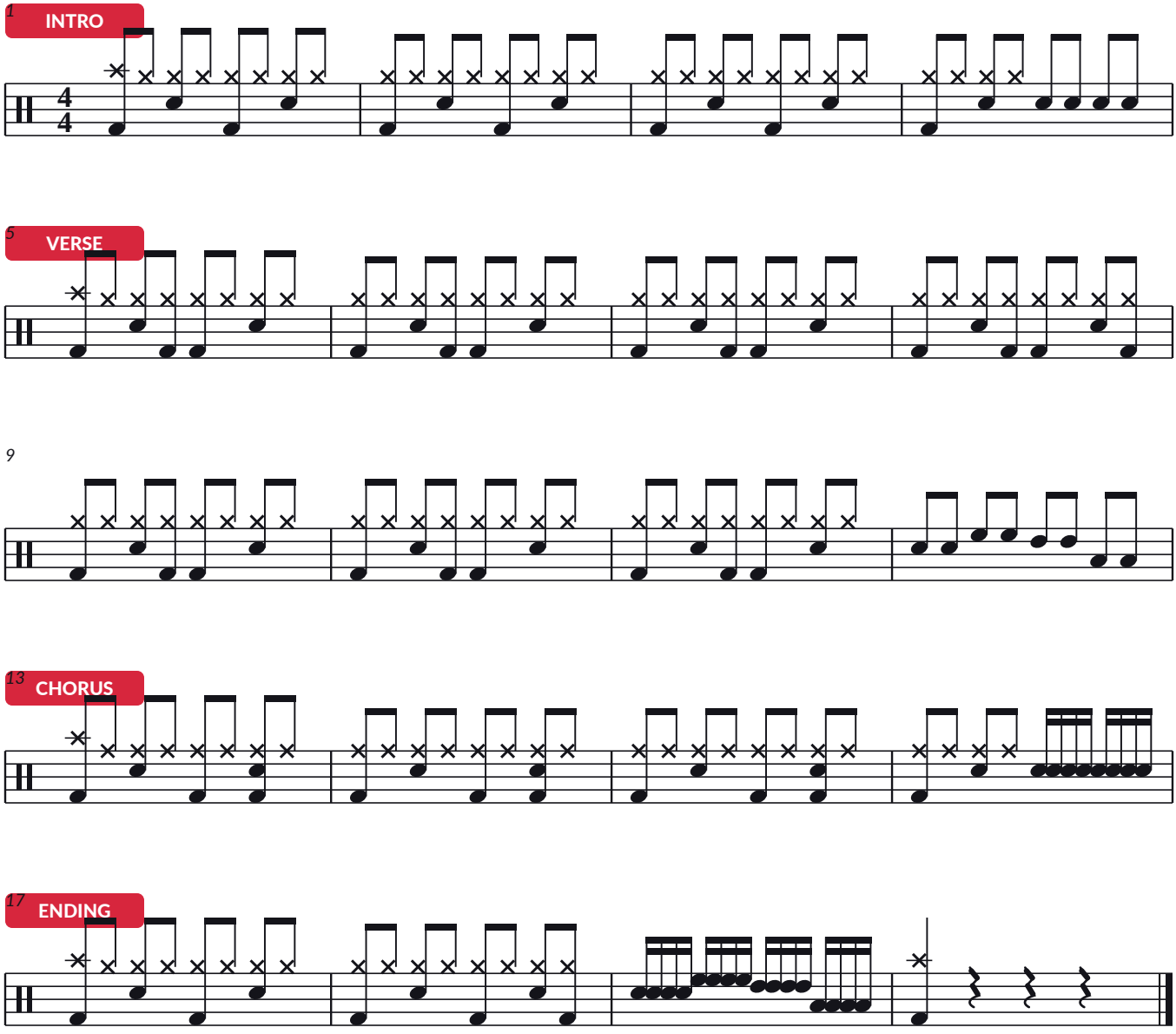


LOUD IS NOT FAST

When the music says **f** or **ff**, it is easy to rush. Play louder by lifting the sticks higher, not by hitting harder or speeding up.

SONG CHART: HOUSE PARTY

A **chart** is a map of a whole song. Read it top to bottom, left to right. Play along with your teacher, or put on a steady metronome. Tempo: **80–104 BPM**. Four clicks count you in.



PRACTICE LOG

Write down every practice. Seeing your minutes add up is one of the best feelings there is.

DATE	WHAT I PRACTICED (EXERCISE NUMBERS)	TEMPO	MINUTES	TEACHER

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PROGRESS TRACKER

When you finish a section, play it for your teacher. They will sign it off. Fill in a star when you can play the whole section at the goal tempo.

SECTION	PAGE	EXERCISES	STAR	TEACHER INITIALS	DATE
Quarter Notes	6	1–8	☆		
Rests and Longer Notes	7	9–15	☆		
Solo 1: First Steps	8	Solo	☆		
Eighth Notes	9	16–23	☆		
Mix It Up	10	24–30	☆		
Accents	11	31–38	☆		
Solo 2: Groundwork	12	Solo	☆		
Your First Beat	13	39	☆		
Grooves: Level 1	14	40–49	☆		
Grooves: Level 1 (cont.)	15	50–54	☆		
Fills: Level 1	16	55–60	☆		
Sixteenth Notes	17	61–68	☆		
Grooves: Level 2	18	69–76	☆		
Fills: Level 2	19	77–82	☆		
Solo 3: Rock the House	20	Solo	☆		
Song Chart: House Party	21	Song	☆		

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THE HOUSE THAT ROCKS

CERTIFICATE

of completion

This certifies that

_____

has completed

ROCK SOLID · BOOK 1

Beginner Drum Set Method

You showed up, counted every beat, and kept going. That is what makes a drummer. Book 2 is waiting for you.

Teacher

Date