

# WCG Rap System

We covered this in the video session, where we discussed the three rap techniques of rap. All rap "flows" are based on these three emphases of Rap. Understanding this concept and applying it will make you know what you are doing and will make writing your rhymes and finding your style more natural. You may not even want to decide on a style but decide on mixing up all three. Before mixing all three, we strongly recommend mastering all three. It is vital for you and your career to master the basics before attempting this even though you might be very talented.

Before we dive into the WCG Rap System let us look at rhythm and how time and BPM (Beats per minute) work in music. Rhythm is one of the fundamental aspects of music theory. To create great rhymes and great "flow" you need to understand how rhythm works and how it is used in your tracks. Rhythm can get complicated very quickly, but if you learn a few simple concepts, it's not as hard to understand as you may think. Rhythm has more to do with the perception of time. What is Rhythm? Rhythm is the way that music is systematically divided into beats that repeat a specific number of times within a bar at a collectively understood speed or tempo.

Most people claim that rhythm is hard to define, but it isn't, It's what makes Music, Music and it is what makes you want to move to the beat.













To understand rhythm are four basic concepts to know:

Beats and notes  
Measures and time signatures  
Strong and Weak Beats  
Double and Triple Meter  
Beats and notes

There's a lot to go through when it comes to an understanding of how to read musical rhythms.

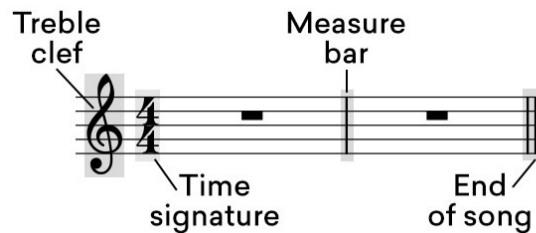
But at the core of feeling any rhythm, you have to understand that a musical note represents the duration of time that an instrument will be played. A musical note represents the duration of time that an instrument will be played. A whole note represents the most prolonged playing duration, but whole notes can be broken down into halves, quarters, eighths and sixteenths. A half note will occupy half the duration of a whole note. A quarter note will occupy a quarter of the length of a whole note and so forth.

Value in common time (4/4)

Notes		Rests
	<b>Whole</b> 4 Beat	
	<b>Half</b> 2 Beats	
	<b>Quarter</b> 1 Beat	
	<b>Eighth</b> 1/2 Beat	
	<b>Sixteenth</b> 1/4 Beat	
	<b>Thirty-second</b> 1/8 Beat	

### Time signatures and bars

There is an underlying pulse in all music that can be contained within a specific measure of time. This measure of time is referred to as a musical bar or measure.



In western music, the time signature of a song dictates how its pulse is measured in each bar and tempo defines how fast the pulse is.

The pulse is represented by a fraction-like symbol that dictates the number of notes per bar and how each note is counted in terms of halves, quarters or sixteenths.

We will be considering the most common time signature in music– 4/4.

### What does this all mean?

The signature 4/4 simply means four notes, or as we would refer to it, musician terms four impulses in one bar and once the bar is measured in quarter notes (which are your impulses).

What does the time signature mean?

■ Four pulses to one bar



■ Bars are measured in quarters

$\frac{6}{8}$  Six pulses to one bar  
Bars are measured in eighths

$\frac{3}{4}$  Three pulses to one bar  
Bars are measured in fourths

There are more time signatures, but we are not focusing on that right now.

Within a bar, there are strong beats that drive the pulse and weak beats that counteract the pulse. This push-pull is what makes rhythm easier to hear.

Looking at this standard 4/4 measure, the strong beats usually fall on the first and third quarter notes, and the weak beats fall on the second and fourth quarter notes.

Strong and weak beats in 4/4



We will be covering beats further in the program. What we are trying to focus on in the session is how you can use and understand the WCG Rap System more.

There is also something we refer to as "Compound Time", and it is essential for Rap as well. More importantly, is syncopation.

Syncopation in rhythm is when notes are played off the main strong beat pulse of the time signature.

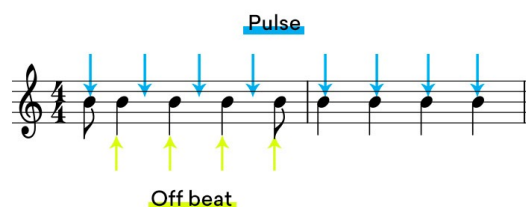
These syncopated rhythms occur either when a rhythm is played to emphasise a measure's weak beats or off beats.

Syncopation on the weak beat usually creates a rhythmic structure that emphasises the backbeat. You hear this in a lot of music like Jazz and Disco where the two and four of a 4/4 bar are emphasised instead of the one and two.

Offbeat syncopated rhythms emphasise the notes between strong and weak beats.

Offbeat syncopated rhythms emphasise the notes between strong and weak beats.

Off beat syncopation



To Rap an offbeat syncopated rhythm it will always help to count the off beats as you count through a bar of music.

So now that we covered the basics of rhythm lets dive into the three emphases of Rap. We advise you to write at least 16 bars of Rap using the information in the video and this PDF before getting started.

We strongly suggest using the free metronome supplied for this session and practice and a lower BPM slowly speeding up before using the backtrack provided for this lesson.

#### Rap emphasis #1 - Every emphasis is on every beat

This Rap form was introduced in the early days of Rap and is still subtly used in today's Rap rhymes.

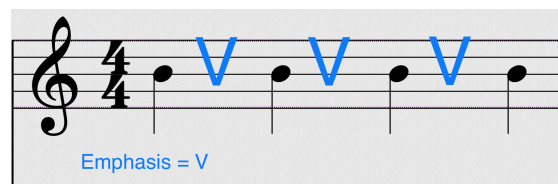
Rap has evolved over the years, and that is why it is not as present as it was before due to the rhyme styles and rhyme types.

The emphasis of your rhyme or pulse would be on every beat, as mentioned above.

#### Rap emphasis #2 - Every emphasis is between every beat

This is what we refer to as "riding the beat."

Instead of emphasising on the beat, try emphasising your rhyme between the beats (see diagram).



#### Rap emphasis #3 - Every emphasis is on the third or fourth beat

Although it is not as common as you may think, this method is most often use when rappers are trying to hit a punchline, or they would do this before introducing the Hook of the song.

It is not necessarily important to emphasise the third or fourth beat. You can highlight only the fourth, only the third, second or first.

Try to find what suits you best and what suits your 16 bars and then use it confidently.

## Song Structure

All you need to construct this form of rhyme scheme is a copy of the lyrics you want to study and some sort of word processor such as google docs, Microsoft word, or any default notepad program. This method we use to quickly find rhyming words and where they are placed within the lyrics.

### Step One, Counting Syllables:

The example above is made up of dashes, numbers, and letters. Each of these has a separate meaning. This looks complicated but doesn't worry; the process is simple once you understand a few things.

First, we need to count the syllables in each line of Rock's four bars. We can see that line one has eight syllables, line two has seven syllables, line three has seven syllables, and line four has twelve syllables.

Finding the syllable count is essential to making sure your markers are placed correctly. Once you have found out how many syllables are in each line, make sure to write down the syllable count. Next, we will add in our markers.

### Step Two, Convert Syllables into Markers

There are two types of markers. The first marker types are dashes shown as "-", these represent one syllable in a bar and usually replace your filler words. All words that are not rhyming words or syllables will be turned into dashes on your chart.

The second type of markers is the rhyme words. These can be either represented by numbers or letters such as "a, b, c" or "1, 2, 3". You can even use them together to make "submarks" for more complicated rhyme schemes such as "a1, a2, a3".

The chart above uses dashes, letters, and numbers to represent different rhyme words from La Rock's four bars. The words "Thrown" and "Rode" are notated as the number 1, the "Stopped" and "Rock" words are represented by the number 2, and the short phrase "Not A" which is repeated three times is represented with letters "a" and "b".

And that's it!

You now know the basics of how to create and recognise a rhyme scheme! Many other rhyme words are used in creating rhyme schemes which we will get to in the future, but for now, you have a basic idea of what makes up a rhyme scheme and how to create your own! This is very useful for either breaking down someone else's lyrics or even helping to develop your songs!

## Hooks

Many people confuse the Hook with the chorus. But that's not always the case.

Sometimes the Hook is the chorus, but it doesn't have to be.

In music, a hook is simply the part of the song that catches the ear of the listener.

The part of the song that hooks you in.

It's a lyrical line or melodic phrase that makes the song memorable and stand out.

Think of Ariana Grande holding out her, "thank you, next" after the chorus and during the outro. The most popular hooks will be stuck in your head for days on end.

If you've ever had a song stuck in your head for what feels like an eternity, the part that you keep playing on repeat in your head is more than likely the Hook of the song.

It can be any of the following:

The first few lines of the chorus

A riff in the song

Or a distinct sound, like whistling or a cowbell.

In music, the Hook is similar to the Hook in fishing.

A good hook will catch your audience's ear and reel them in.

### How Do You Create a Hook?

The first thing you need to do to make a catchy hook for your song is to keep every part of the song in mind.

The actual Hook of the song might be the title of the song, a lyrical line that is repeated that summarises the song, a rhythmic passage, or an instrumental part called a riff.

A hook that might grab your listeners attention could be captivating vocals like the vocalisations used in scat music.

## 3 Great Hook Types

### Rhythm Hook

The first type of Hook is a rhythm hook.

The rhythm hook establishes the beat and rhythm combo that the song is built on. Stevie Wonder thrived with rhythm hooks, who started most of his hits with one.

Rhythm hooks worked well back in the '70s, and they still work well today.

To create a rhythm hook, start by keeping a beat. Tap your foot, clap your hands, or slap your knee.

The rhythmic Hook needs to be short, so improvise a quick 4 or 8 beat rhythm that will grab attention.

The chord progression will also need to be short, so create a good 1 or 2 chord progression that sounds good when it's repeated.

Then, create a bass line where the end of the line connects smoothly back to the beginning.

The line needs to have a catchy rhythm but doesn't need to be the same rhythm as the other instruments.

### Intro Hook

While the rhythm hook uses a combination of various instruments, an intro hook is usually a melodic idea that gets established in the intro.

After getting established in the intro, it gets repeated over and over, appearing, and then dropping out.

A few examples of good intro hooks are "Smoke On The Water" by Deep Purple, and Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance." Consider the repetition and melody of Lady Gaga's "oh oh oh's."

To make an intro hook, improvise a short melodic idea based on a strong, catchy rhythm. Focus mainly in the notes from the pentatonic scale.

Create three separate chord progressions that will successfully accompany the Hook.

The three progressions should be able to serve as verse, chorus, and bridge progressions.

Make sure the intro hook appears and disappears as your song progresses.

Intro hooks work well, but they tend to get tiresome if the listener hears it all the time.

### Background Instrumental Hook

The first thing you think of when you think of Bob Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone" is likely the organ that happens in each chorus.

Instrumental hooks tend to be very under-utilised, but also one of the essential devices in a songwriter's toolbox.

To create a background instrumental hooks, once your song is complete, make a short 2 to 4 beat lick on the guitar or keyboard that has a distinct rhythm.

It also needs to be able to be accompanied by most chords in your chosen key and used in the chorus, for the most part.

The background instrumental Hook also works very well in combination with other hooks.

Think about Carly Rae Jepsen's hit, "Call Me Maybe." In the chorus, you have the vocal melody, but the synth plays a sort of call-and-response to her lyrics. It is incredibly tight and memorable. Try to fit it in and around chorus lyrics, rather than on top of them. You don't want to pull focus away from the singer.

Let the instrumental Hook serve as an "answer" to a chorus lyric.

But hooks are diverse, and we can go on for hours on end speaking about hooks, but that is not what this session brings with it.

### Reel Them In

A proper hook will catch the attention of your listeners, and it will keep their attention for hours and hours.

We've all heard a song for the first time, and something about it keeps us coming back for more. We listen to it on repeat, almost enough times to make us start hating the song.

The part of the song that made you want to listen to it over and over again was the Hook. When you have a chance, take a look at the top 40 charts.

It is almost a guarantee that every song at the top has a very catchy hook.

If you are an aspiring musician and want to learn more about songwriting, your instrument, and receive insider-knowledge, you can contact us. You might be eligible to partake in our online songwriting workshop.

Remember that rapping won't mean a thing if you are not confident in what you do, and confidence comes only through extended hours of practice.

Unfortunately, there is no secret formula to confidence and success only hard work and repetition.