



Colorful, nontraditional notation can be a fun way to introduce a student to symbols that represent sound or musical expression.

The Rising/Falling Note Symbols:

Sing four notes ascending or four notes descending on solfeggi
(do re mi fa)

Play four notes ascending or four notes descending on an instrument.
Use whatever instruments might be available: i.e. a keyboard, recorder, guitar, piano, etc...

A student should also practice moving from soft to loud or loud to soft as indicated by the crescendo/decrescendo symbol.

Steady Notes Symbols:

A student who is non-verbal might simply tap or clap a steady rhythm
or play it on a percussion instrument



The above graphic can be used to teach basic rhythms.

Students can clap while a teacher, para, or another student count out the rhythmic values. The teacher might need to clap a rhythm while the student follows or imitates.

A percussion instrument can also be used to show the number of beats counted out.

Other Activities:

A composing game with cutouts

Cut a large piece of paper (8 1/2 x 11) into a number of smaller pieces (perhaps 3 x 1 1/2). Write a rhythmic pattern or musical expression on each piece of paper.

Place the cutouts on a tray or in a jar so students may choose one. They might even toss a penny onto a tray to make their selection.

Have the student perform the musical expression on their selected piece of paper.



There are many ways to create and interpret non-traditional music notations.

The notations shown on this page are comprised of my original needlepoint creations. These can be small patches or large 12 x 14 canvases.

One can also paint, draw, collage, or sew non-traditional notations. This pretty “sunrise” graphic is another illustration of a non-traditional needlepoint notation that students enjoy singing, clapping or playing.