

PROGRESSIVE STEPS TO
SYNCOPIATION
FOR THE MODERN DRUMMER

by
Ted Reed



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Foreword

In every band or ensemble, the drummer is called upon to give that group a solid rhythmic foundation. Therefore it is important that every drummer have excellent music reading skills. The goal of this book is to first introduce basic music reading skills and then to explore many of the most common syncopation rhythms found in today's music.

Here are some suggestions on how to practice the rhythms and exercises found in this book:

1. Count out loud. This is a “must” in order to become a good reader.
2. Practice at various tempos from slow to fast.
3. Work on incorporating the syncopated rhythms you learn in this book around the full drumset (toms, cymbals, hi-hat, etc.).
4. Devote some of your practice time to playing with a metronome.

Remember, there is no substitute for a good teacher.

Since its publication, many drummers have asked me how I was inspired to write *Progressive Steps to Syncopation for the Modern Drummer*.

I was teaching drums at the Hartnett Music School, located at 1585 Broadway in New York City. I gave 85 half-hour lessons each week and had approximately 55 students (some took two lessons a week). I taught Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. In each half-hour lesson, I would listen to the student's last lesson and then write, demonstrate, explain and play with them on their new lesson. Since I could not find any books on syncopation, each lesson had to be written out individually.

When I would get home at night, my hands and arms would ache as a result of having to do so much writing. It was then that I decided to write the lessons out on manuscript paper. I wrote every night from midnight to 4:00 a.m., until I had a total of 60 pages. I had 200 copies of each page printed, which enabled me to hand whatever page was needed to a student—no more writing out each lesson every time.

I was careful to protect my original work from plagiarism until I received an official copyright from the Bureau of Copyrights in Washington, D.C. I had it published in 1958, and the book has sold very well ever since. Thanks to many teachers and drummers it is now one of the most popular drum books ever written.

Ted Reed

Note-Reading Rhythms/Exercises

Lesson One

Playing quarter notes, quarter rests and half rests.



Lesson Five

Playing dotted eighth/sixteenth notes and quarter notes.

The image displays ten numbered musical staves, each containing a sequence of notes and rests. The notation is as follows:

- Staff 1:** Starts with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The first measure contains a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. This pattern repeats for four measures.
- Staff 2:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the second and third positions of the measure.
- Staff 3:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the third and fourth positions of the measure.
- Staff 4:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the fourth and first positions of the measure.
- Staff 5:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the first and second positions of the measure.
- Staff 6:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the second and third positions of the measure.
- Staff 7:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the third and fourth positions of the measure.
- Staff 8:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the fourth and first positions of the measure.
- Staff 9:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the first and second positions of the measure.
- Staff 10:** Similar to Staff 1, but the dotted eighth/sixteenth note pair is shifted to the second and third positions of the measure.

Lesson Nine

Playing sixteenth notes and quarter notes.

This page contains ten numbered musical staves, each with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The staves are arranged vertically and numbered 1 through 10 on the left side. Each staff contains a sequence of musical notes and rests, designed to practice playing sixteenth notes and quarter notes. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in beams. The rhythm patterns vary across the staves, providing a progressive challenge in note value and grouping. The first staff (1) starts with a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature, then switches to a treble clef. The subsequent staves (2-10) are all in treble clef. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some sixteenth notes appearing in groups.