

The ARTICULATE Jazz Musician

Mastering the Language of Jazz

Caleb Chapman & Jeff Coffin



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UNIT 4 The Jazz Articulation Rule—DA and AH syllables

GOALS

Students discover and work to memorize the Jazz Articulation Rule so they have a clear understanding of this important aspect of jazz articulation. Students can review and practice with the most common jazz syllables, DA and AH, and understand the difference between these two syllables.

STUDY

The Rule

When it comes to jazz articulation, it all boils down to one simple rule:

Always slur from the offbeat eighth note to the downbeat eighth note.

That's it—one rule. If you can remember this, you are already well on your way to becoming an articulate jazz musician!

The First Two Jazz Syllables

As mentioned in Unit 1, you will be using syllables to master the jazz language. The first is the syllable for an articulated note: DA. Notice how when you say "DA" the sound begins with the tongue and the "D" sound. The next syllable to learn is for slurred notes: the AH syllable. It's easy!

In the following exercise there are no articulation markings. So, how do you know what to articulate? Start by applying the jazz articulation rule to the eighth notes by articulating the offbeat eighth notes and slur to the downbeat eighth notes.

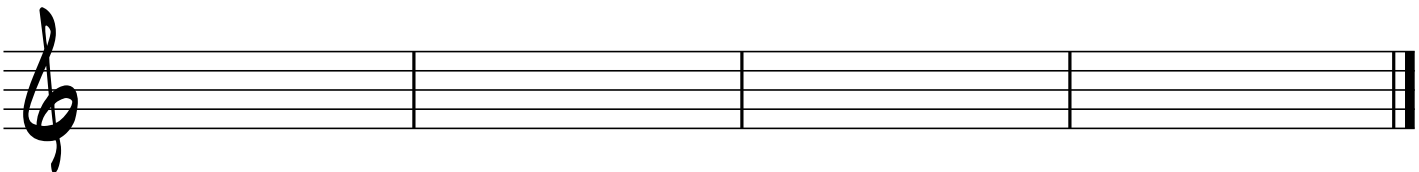
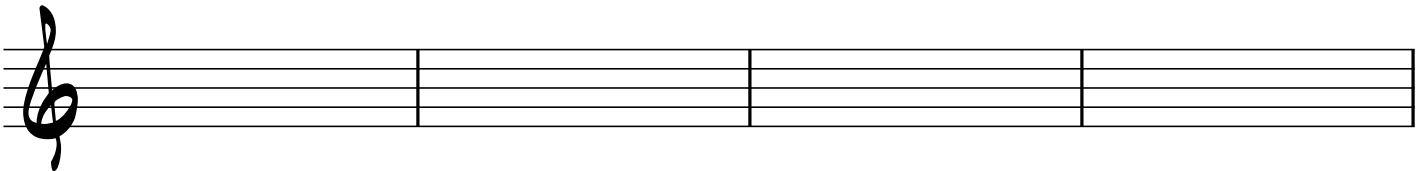
What is a phrase? A phrase is a grouping of consecutive melodic notes. Another explanation is any group of notes with silence on either end. An analogy to language text would be a sentence. Each phrase in this exercise starts with an articulated (DA) note. Also, in this exercise, any notes longer than an eighth note should all be articulated by using the DA syllable.

Key Concept

The Jazz Articulation Rule applies ONLY to eighth notes. With rare exception, longer notes will all be articulated. Note: there are a few other exceptions to the rule we'll discuss later.

EXPLORE

Compose (yes, write the notes!) eight measures of rhythm—use only eighth notes, half notes, and whole notes. Do not use any rests. And be able to say the jazz syllables for the rhythm you notate. Keep it simple by using only three or four pitches. You can write on the same line or space or vary the notes, your choice.



In the space provided below the notes, write in the proper jazz syllables for the exercise in this unit. When you have it correct, say the syllables for the entire exercise in a medium tempo with a metronome or someone keeping the beat.

PLAY

Play the Unit 4 Exercise, "Strollin'."

CD Use: For the Unit Exercises (Units 4–17) on the CD, each unit includes two tracks for each unit. A DEMO track with tenor sax, piano, bass, and drums. This track is provided so all students can listen, learn, and imitate the articulation, phrasing, and style of the professional musicians. The PLAY-ALONG track is minus the melody saxophone so that student can play along with the professional rhythm section.

Strollin'



TRACK 2 Demo
TRACK 3 Play-Along Track

SWING ♩ = 105

Musical score for 'Strollin'' in B-flat major, 4/4 time, swing feel. The score consists of ten staves of music, each with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature of 4/4. The tempo is marked as SWING ♩ = 105. The score includes lyrics: 'DA DA AH DA AH DA AH DA DA', 'DU DOT', and 'DU DOT'. Chord progressions are indicated above the notes, including Bb7, Eb7, and F7(#b).

1 DA DA AH DA 2 AH DA AH DA DA 3 DA DA AH DA AH DA 4 AH DA AH DA DA

5 DA DA AH DA 6 AH DA AH DA DA 7 DA DA AH DA AH DA 8 AH DA AH DA DA

9 10 11 12

13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20

21 22 23 24 DU DOT

25 26 27 28

29 30 31 32

33 34 35 36 37

38 39 40 41 42

43 44 45 46 47 DU DOT

UNIT 5 Jazz Articulation Rule Exception #1—DU and DOT syllables

GOALS

Students discover and recognize the DU and DOT jazz syllables. They should also work to describe and understand why these two syllables are an exception to the Jazz Articulation Rule.

STUDY

Two New Syllables

While there is only one rule you need to remember for jazz articulation, there are a few exceptions. To understand the first exception, let's learn two new syllables, DOT and DU.

In jazz, DOT (pronounced "DAHT") is used for an accented note that has an articulated start and end. For wind players, this means the note both starts and ends with the tongue. For rhythm section players, it means playing the note detached but with full value—not staccato or too short.

DOT is used in two instances:

- 1) For all quarter notes (unless notated otherwise)
- 2) For any eighth note followed by a rest

Although accented, DOT is not a short note—it should receive full rhythmic value.

DU (pronounced "DOO") is used for an eighth note that is articulated but has a softer volume than the notes around it. Any eighth note immediately preceding a DOT will be DU.

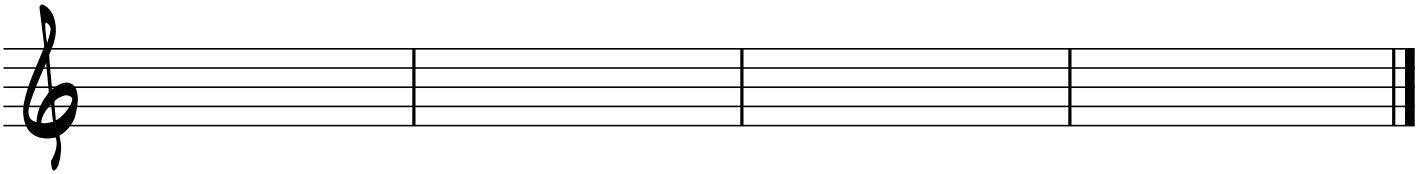
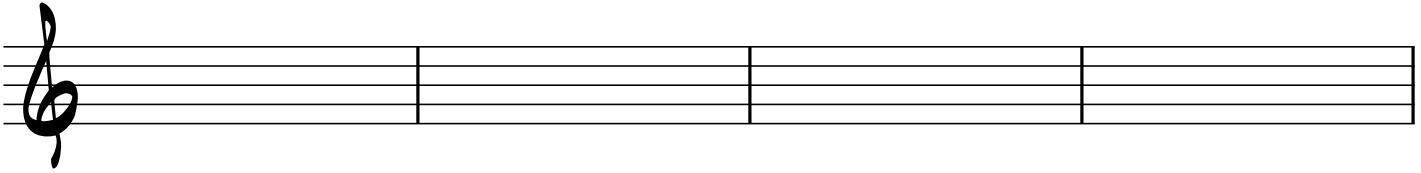
These two new syllables are the first exception to the Jazz Articulation Rule as they will always be articulated, whether or not they occur on the downbeat or offbeat. Take a look at the Unit 5 Example. This example clearly illustrates the DU and DOT syllables in action with eighth notes.

It's easy, just **sing** this example:

The image shows two lines of musical notation in 4/4 time, illustrating the use of DU and DOT syllables for eighth notes. The first line contains four measures: Measure 1 (quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter rest) with syllables DOT, DU DOT, DU DOT; Measure 2 (quarter rest, quarter note, quarter note, eighth note, eighth note) with syllables DOT, DOT, DU DOT; Measure 3 (quarter rest, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note) with syllables DU DOT, DU DOT; Measure 4 (quarter rest, quarter note, quarter note, quarter rest) with syllables DOT, DOT. The second line contains four measures: Measure 1 (quarter rest, eighth note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter note) with syllables DOT, DOT, DU DOT; Measure 2 (quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter rest) with syllables DU DOT, DU DOT; Measure 3 (quarter rest, eighth note, quarter note, quarter note, quarter note) with syllables DU DOT, DOT, DOT; Measure 4 (quarter note, eighth note, eighth note, quarter rest, quarter note) with syllables DU DOT, DOT.

EXPLORE

1) Compose eight measures of rhythm utilizing only eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests. Be able to say the jazz syllables for the rhythm you notate. You can use only one line or space or vary it, your choice.



2) In the space provided below the notes in the Unit 5 Exercise, write in the proper jazz syllables for this unit. When you have it correct, say the syllables for the entire exercise in time (tempo) with a metronome or someone keeping the beat.

PLAY

Play the Unit 5 Exercise, "One More Once."