

The ARTICULATE Jazz Musician

Mastering the Language of Jazz

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Authors	2
Preface	4
Introduction.....	5

UNIT	Title	
1	Articulating the Jazz Language	6
2	Say What? The Art of Active Listening	7
3	It Don't Mean a Thing—Basic Swing Conception	8
4	The Jazz Articulation Rule—DA and AH syllables ("Strollin'")	10
5	Jazz Articulation Rule Exception #1—DU and DOT syllables ("One More Once")	12
6	Articulating the Release ("The Big Giant")	16
7	Review DA, AH, DU, and DOT syllables ("Just Say NOLA")	18
8	Jazz Articulation Rule Exception #2—Accenting Tops of Contour ("Dexter's Hat")	20
9	Jazz Articulation Rule Exception #3—DU-WAH syllables ("Jump on the Bus")	22
10	Review DA, AH, DU, DOT, and WAH syllables ("Coco's Blues")	24
11	3 Is a Magic Number—Articulating Triplets ("Triple Agents")	26
12	Double Your Pleasure—Articulating in a Double-Time Feel ("Twice as Nice")	28
13	Jazz Articulation Rule Exception #4—Ghosted Notes, the NN syllable ("Fats Wailer")	32
14	Review Triplets, Double-Time Feel, and Ghosted Notes ("Slinky Sideways")	34
15	Funk and Rock ("A Little Something")	36
16	Other Articulation Effects and Embellishments ("What's Up, What's Down?")	38
17	Overall Review ("Wrappin' Up")	40

Appendix A: Glossary	42
Appendix B: Basic Jazz Articulation Syllable Quick Guide	43

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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

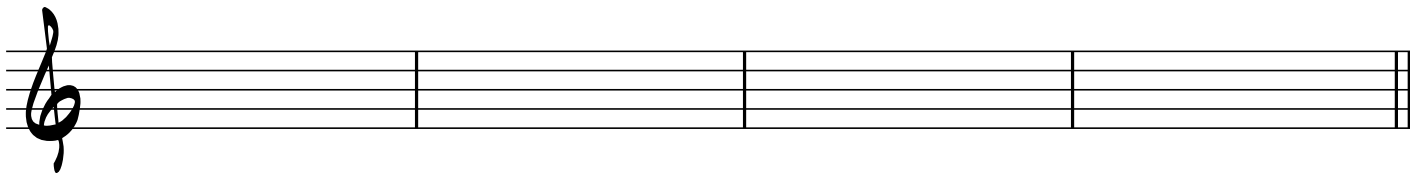
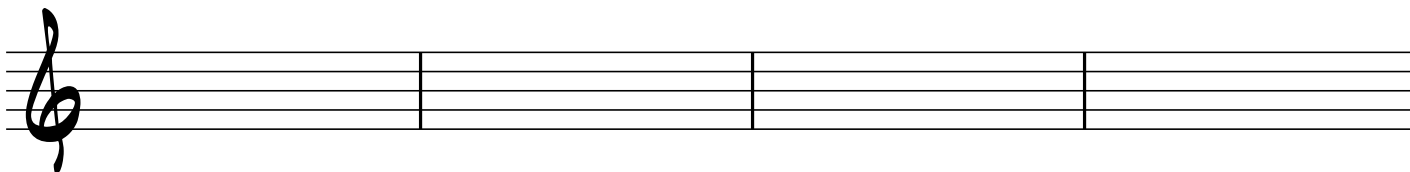
The Jazz Articulation Rule applies **ONLY** to eighth notes.

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

DA DA AH DA AH DA AH DA DA DA DA DA AH DA AH DA AH DA DA DA

DA DA AH DA AH DA AH DA DA DA DA DA AH DA AH DA AH DA DA DA

DA DA AH DA AH DA AH DA DA DA DA DA AH DA AH DA AH DA DA DA

DU DOT

DU DOT

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.

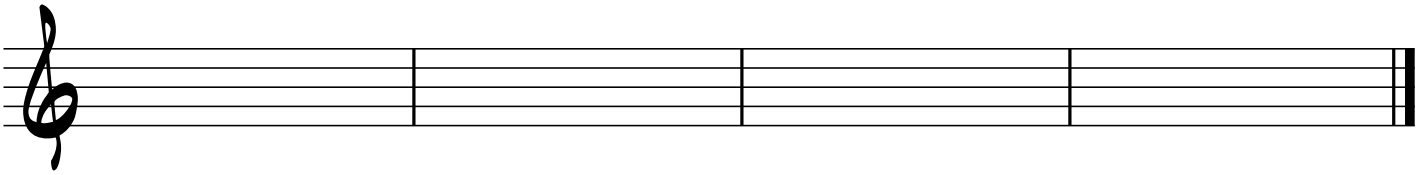
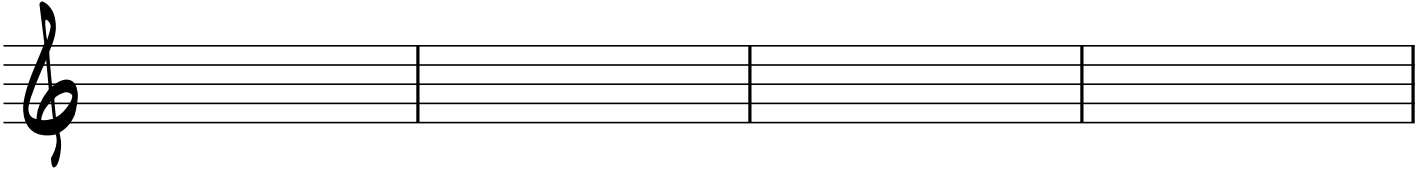
These two new syllables are the first exception to the Jazz Articulation Rule as they will always be articulated, whether or not they occur on the downbeat or offbeat. Take a look at the Unit 5 Example. This example clearly illustrates the DU and DOT syllables in action with eighth notes.

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

The example consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains four measures of eighth notes with the following syllables: Measure 1: DOT, DU DOT; Measure 2: DU DOT, DOT, DOT, DU DOT; Measure 3: DU DOT, DU DOT, DU DOT; Measure 4: DOT, DOT. The second staff contains four measures of eighth notes with the following syllables: Measure 1: DOT, DOT, DU DOT; Measure 2: DU DOT, DU DOT, DU DOT; Measure 3: DU DOT, DOT, DOT, DU DOT; Measure 4: 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."