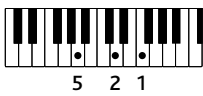# year 9 *reggae* composition worksheet (keyboard)

name _____

step 1: compose a chord accompaniment

You've learnt a little bit about reggae, and played a class piece, so now it's your turn to make up your own reggae song. Working in groups of 2, try and complete an 8-bar chord sequence. You can use any chords you like, but you should listen to see whether they sound good placed next to each other. Here are some common chords that you might use:
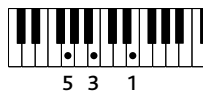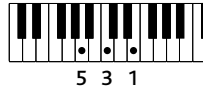
Bob Marley

Dm

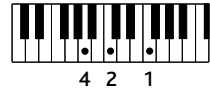5 2 1

notes: A D F

Em

5 3 1

G B E

Am

5 3 1

A C E

F

4 2 1

A C F
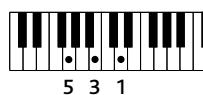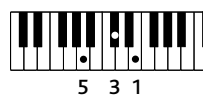
C

5 2 1

notes: G C E

G

5 3 1

G B D

A

5 3 1

A C# E

D

5 3 1

D F# A

it's best to finish on the same chord, but not essential.

reggae chord sequence

Bar 1   *Bar 2*   *Bar 3*   *Bar 4*   *Bar 5*   *Bar 6*   *Bar 7*   *Bar 8*

step 2: composing a reggae bass line and melody

You have now composed an eight-bar chord sequence, and possibly experimented with some bass lines. Now you need to add a bass line and a melody (and possibly lyrics) to your songs. Write down the **bass note** from each chord in your chord sequence here. Remember that the bass note corresponds to the name of the chord, so if the chord is A minor, the bass note is A.

Chord   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Bass Note _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

If you play this along with your chords, you now have a very simple bass line. However, you might find it doesn't sound that great, so to make it more interesting, try adding other notes from the chord, such as the **third**, **fifth** or **sixth**.

You also need to add **rhythm** to the bass line, and to make it sound like reggae.
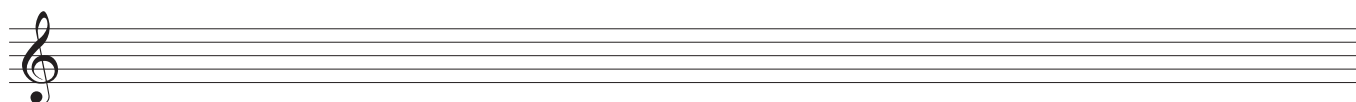To help you, here are some sample rhythms you could try using:

Rhythm 1

1 2 & 3 & (4)

Rhythm 3

(1) & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Rhythm 2

1 (2) 3 & (4)

Rhythm 4

(1) (2) & 3 & 4

reggae bass line

step 3: adding a melody and lyrics

An important factor when composing a melody, to go with chords and a bass line, is to use notes from the right **scale**. If your starting chord is D minor, for example, use notes from the scale of D minor, and not D major. Here are some scales to get you started:

Scale of E minor ('natural')

E F♯ G A B C D E

Scale of G (major)

G A B C D E F♯ G

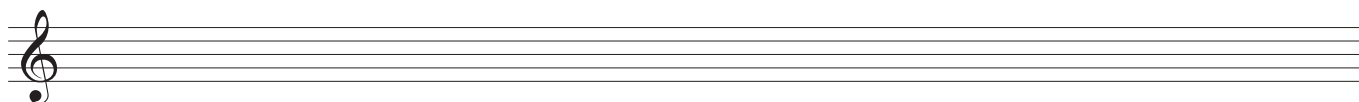**Scale of D minor ('natural')**

D E F G A B♭ C D

Scale of F (major)

F G A B♭ C D E F

If you have composed, or are using **lyrics**, write those down underneath the melody, where they would be sung. To finish off, write the chord names above the stave, and you now have your own reggae song! If there are four in your group, you could also add some **percussion** parts, such as **shakers**, **hand drums** or **kit**.

reggae melody

lyrics _____