

Most music that we sing has a steady heartbeat. This is known as its **pulse** or **beat**.

In the piece below, the pulse is shown above the first line of music using heart symbols. The larger hearts are stronger beats.

O when the saints go marching in, O when the saints go marching in,
in, I want to be in that number, O when the saints go marching in.

Try these exercises to help improve your sense of pulse and rhythm:

1. Tap the beat with your feet or walk on the spot as you sing *O when the saints go marching in*:
2. Try singing *O when the saints* again but this time clap your hands in time to the heartbeat, making the stronger beats slightly louder than the others.
3. Now try clapping the words of *O when the saints*. Notice how some sounds are shorter than the beats but some are longer. This is the rhythm and it usually corresponds to the syllables of the words.
4. Split into two groups. One group walk the beat of *O when the saints* and the other clap the rhythm. Swap over. Finally, everyone try walking the beat and clapping the rhythm at the same time.
5. Look at three hymns or songs that you have recently sung with your choir. First try clapping the beat then clap the rhythm of each one. Make the stronger beats slightly louder than the others.