

# Don't Eat Green Bugs Lesson Plan

By Bradley Sowash

## First Lesson:

1. Start by telling a little story with no sheet music.  
Don't worry if students are bewildered at first. Let them figure out what's going on.

Say: *Momma Goat doesn't want her Kid to eat too much junk food. Now, if you're a goat, junk food comes in the form of green bugs. Like any youngster who loves snacks, her Kid doesn't pay much attention so Momma has to repeat it by saying...*

### A section, 2x (spoken rhythmically or sung)

*Don't eat green bugs, don't eat green bugs,  
Don't eat green bugs, don't eat green bugs,  
Don't eat green bugs, don't eat green bugs,  
Goats, goats, goats eat grass.*

### B section (spoken rhythmically or sung with comical mouth-stuffing gestures)

Say: *When Momma Goat meanders away, the Kid, realizing she's out sight, gorges on green bugs while saying...*

*Bugs, bugs, bugs, bugs,  
Eat, eat, eat, eat  
All, all, all, all,  
Day, day, day, day.*

### Repeat A section 1x

Say: *When an exasperated Momma Goat returns and sees this, she scolds the Kid by repeating herself...*

2. Next, repeat the spoken or sung lyrics while playing your instrument to help them make the connection between the mnemonic lyrics and the notes. Wait for them to pick up on it.
3. Add bass part. - Explain that there are different mnemonic lyrics for the lower bass parts.

### A section, 2x

*Goats eat all day.  
Bugs eat all day.  
Good bugs can't cope.  
Darn dumb goats. (repeat)*

### B section

*Bug, bugs, bugs, bugs,  
Eat, eat, eat, eat,  
All, all, all, all,  
Day, day, day, day.*

### Repeat A section 1x

4. Play the AABA form with both parts.



## Second lesson:

1. Review rote-learned melody and bass parts.
2. Ask students, "How many unique notes are this melody?" Answer: 5 (G, A B, D E).
3. Explain that these notes make up the pentatonic scale and can be used as "safe notes" for improvisation.
4. Demonstrate a few 2 measure solo starter lick "calls" to which student "respond" with related but not exact imitation.
5. Ask if there's a student who would like to lead the solo call for group response in the same way. Teacher can accompany this by playing the bass line.
6. Next, move the improv from student to student around the room (4 measures each) over A section.

Insert space for improv into the form:

- a) A, A, B, A' - Everyone plays melody or bass.
  - b) Loop A section (no B sec.). Individual improvs (4-8 measures) with others accompanying with just the bass part. Repeat as needed for number of soloists.
  - c) Repeat A, A, B, A' to finish.
7. Play the whole form: AABA, improvise on A, AABA.


## Third lesson:

1. Review rote-learned melody, bass parts.
2. Add b3 (Bb) to pentatonic "safe notes" to form a major (bright) blues scale and generate more licks together.
3. Run the rote-learned piece.

## Going further:

1. To challenge advanced students, teach more experienced students the melody to George Gershwin's *I Got Rhythm* by rote (starts D, E, G A). When that's secure, play both tunes simultaneously dividing the two melodies for the last A section recap. (This works because both tunes share the same common jazz chord progression, sometimes referred to as *rhythm changes*.)
2. Ask students for more ideas about where to take this tune e.g. "What if someone played a hand drum?" or "How about if we start with everyone chaotically improvising at once and then go into the tune?" Whatever they suggest, honor their creativity by testing it out in rehearsal.

You got this!



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# Don't Eat Green Bugs chords

(Medium Up Swing)

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**A**

4/4

G E<sub>m7</sub> | A<sub>m7</sub> D<sub>7</sub> | B<sub>m7</sub> E<sub>m7</sub> | A<sub>m7</sub> D<sub>7</sub> |

G G<sub>7</sub><sub>/B</sub> | C<sub>7</sub> C<sup>#</sup><sub>o7</sub> | G<sub>/D</sub> D<sub>7</sub> | G }

**B**

B<sub>m7</sub> | / | E<sub>m7</sub> | / |

A<sub>m7</sub> | / | D<sub>7</sub> | / |

**A**

G E<sub>m7</sub> | A<sub>m7</sub> D<sub>7</sub> | B<sub>m7</sub> E<sub>m7</sub> | A<sub>m7</sub> D<sub>7</sub> |

G G<sub>7</sub><sub>/B</sub> | C<sub>7</sub> C<sup>#</sup><sub>o7</sub> | G<sub>/D</sub> D<sub>7</sub> | G ||