

BOUNCING THE BEAT

The wooden slit drum
talks in double beats.

Rat-a-tat

Rat-a-tat

We're counting the beats.

Fetu shouts,

"Tulolo!"

Heads bow.

We bend forwards,
fingers press the floor.

Fetu shouts,

"Nofo!"

We sit up straight,
hands on knees,
fingers splayed like starfish.

Fetu shouts,

"Sauni!"

We're ready.

Rat-a-tat

Rat-a-tat

Knees bounce the beat,
flat hands
clap,
cupped hands
clap.



We're paddling canoes.
Heads tilt
up,
down.

Shoulders roll
forwards,
back.

Rat-a-tat

Rat-a-tat

Knees bounce the beat.

We're weeding gardens,
flying like manumea.

Rat-a-tat

Rat-a-tat

Knees bounce the beat.

We're mixing 'ava,
wringing out the fau,
flick,
slap,
clap,
tap,
bend and turn.

We're dancing the sāsā,
cross-legged on the floor.

Rat-a-tat

Rat-a-tat

Bouncing the beat.

'ava: a drink made from the root
of the 'ava plant

fau: fibre from the bark of the
fau tree that is used as rope

manumea: a large pigeon, the
national bird of Sāmoa

sāsā: a group dance from Sāmoa

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illustration by Phillip Paea

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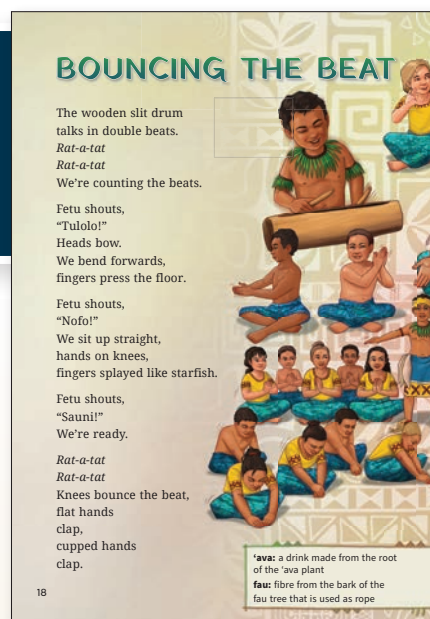
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