

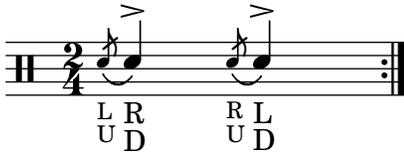
Flams

A **flam** is a single grace note, quickly followed by a primary note. It creates a “blat” sound that helps sustain the drum. This thicker, fuller sound is beautiful and a wonderful way to attain good technique.

Even though the grace note stick hits first, the name of the flam is given to the primary note stick hand. Before striking the drum (or pad), there should be a large difference in stick height. Once you are in position, go down; do not come up first, as is the wont of many drummers. Going down toward the drum at the same velocity, the grace note stick will still be quieter (and hit first) since it's closer to the drum.



For alternating flams, the grace note stick plays an up stroke and the primary note stick plays a down stroke. Hands move in a mirror image. Play slowly, hold and assess.



You will encounter many books, charts, and other pieces of music that do not include a courtesy sticking of the grace note. It can be clearer to read without the clutter, but it can also mask how many times in a row each hand hits. The grace note stick will always be the opposite hand of the primary note.

For our purposes, you want to avoid the following types of flams:

Flat flams – A double stop. On a snare drum, this will give you a popping sound and strange sensation in your hands. When this occurs, it's usually because the grace note stick is too high.

Open flams – If the primary note is played too late after the grace note, it'll sound like a rhythm (16th, 32nd, 64th note).

Rock flams – Somewhere between a proper flam and an open flam, rock flams sound great on the drum set, going from the snare down the toms. Both hands are usually high; I personally play rock flams with the left hand slightly higher. It has a loose sound and feel, somewhere in between triplets and a 3:4 rhythm, but they are not separated 32nd notes.