Adams: Short Ride in a Fast Machine
The facts: American composer John Adams was inspired to write this, the most performed piece in history, after a scary ride in his brother's new sports car.

Warm-up: Pass a clap around the circle and have a race to see how fast you can pass it. Try clapping two times each, going clockwise and anti-clockwise, passing a stamp or a vocal sound.

Demonstrate: the following three ideas, used at the very beginning of Adams' piece –

1. Swirls:

   ![Swirls Diagram]

2. Flashes of 'bright' percussion sounds

3. Wheels - the gradual build-up of a chord (D, F, A), that gets more and more frequent (ie one note during every count of four – two consecutive notes – three notes – constant)

Ask your children which instruments will best play each idea and quickly split to make the three short sound effects. Challenge the class to put these together to create an exciting introduction with a definite stop

The Task
Ask your children to think of a sentence about travel. How are they travelling? What speed are they going at? And where are they going? Ask them to think of an answer to these questions and express it as a full sentence. Hear some of them.

Clap a steady pulse and demonstrate how these 'travel' answers can be spoken on top of you pulse and then, by clapping each SYLLABLE of the sentence, how you can create a repeating rhythm (AN OSTINATO) from the sentences.

Taking this one step further, demonstrate how you can play these rhythmic patterns on instruments (if using pitched instruments, stick to the white notes only and only a couple of pitches for each rhythm)

Split into small working groups and challenge each group to make a short rhythmic piece using this method. Each group must use at least one repeating 'travel' rhythm and have a clear WOODBLOCK pulse

Share and Join
Ask each group to perform to the class and encourage the class to feedback on each other's performances. Ask them to structure these group pieces into one big piece. If you stick to just the white notes and decide on the same pulse for each group, they should all fit together at once, although this will be loud!!

Finishing off
Join your swirling/ flashing/wheeling introduction onto this rhythmic build up