

BASIC MUSIC THEORY

10 Music Theory Symbols.

Learning music theory will help you understand music better.

Music Theory is important because it tells you the name of all the symbols we use to write music.

Music is like learning another language.

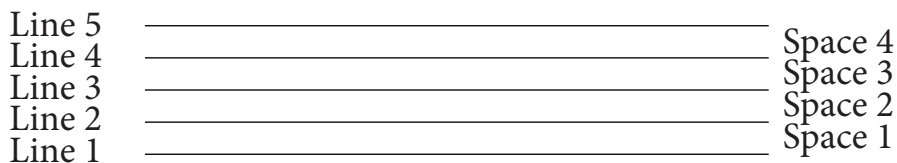
In this lesson you will learn 10 basic symbols.

No. 1 - The Staff

The Staff is where we write all the notes and symbols in music. Is the basic lines you see every time you see a sheet music.

The Staff has five lines and four spaces.

The first line is the bottom one.



When we read music, we read from bottom to top and from left to right.

Normal letters you read from top to bottom, but music is from bottom to top. That is why the first line is the bottom.

We read music from bottom to top

No. 2 - The Treble Clef

In order to know the name of the notes, we need to have a key, or a symbol that let us know which line has each name.

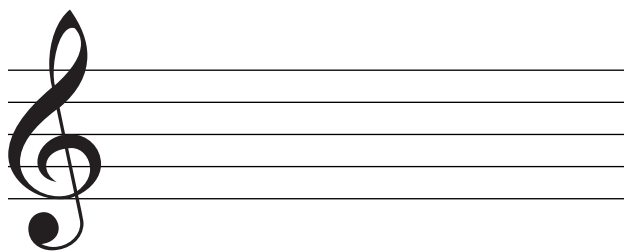
Because there are so many notes and only five lines, the notes changes in the line, depending in which clef we are using.

There are many clefs, for low and high notes.



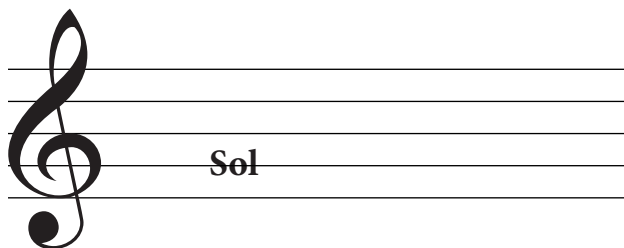
The Treble Clef

We usually place the Treble Clef right at the beginning to the left of the Staff, like so:



Just by doing this, now we can tell if a line is C, or F, or any note.

Notice how the Treble Clef has a curvy line around the second line of the Staff. This tells us that the second line is “Sol” or G.



No. 3 - Time Signature

To read music we need the time. Every note must be played in a certain time, or “Tempo”.

The Tempo is very important in music.

To measure the tempo or timing in music, we need some kind of numbers to divide the time in little parts.

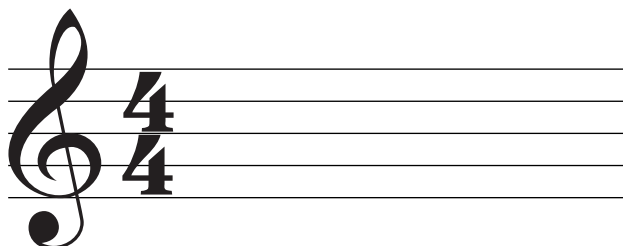
The most common is the four by four. Dividing time in four parts.

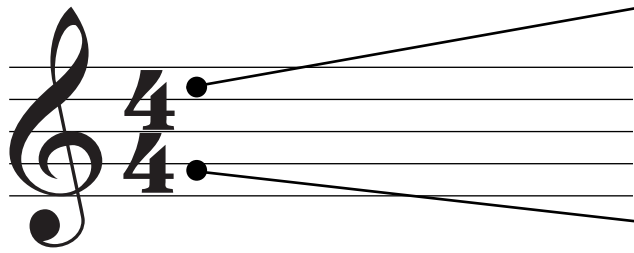
We place the numbers right after the Treble clef.

One number on top of the other.

4
4

Time Signature





The TOP number tells you how many notes you need in each measure.

The BOTTOM number tells you what kind of notes you need in each measure.

You always need a combination of the two numbers. One to tell you if you need 3 notes, or 5 or 2 notes per measure, and the other to tell you what kind of notes, if they are Half Notes, or Quarter Notes or Eighth Notes.

Using these two numbers you can write any kind of music.

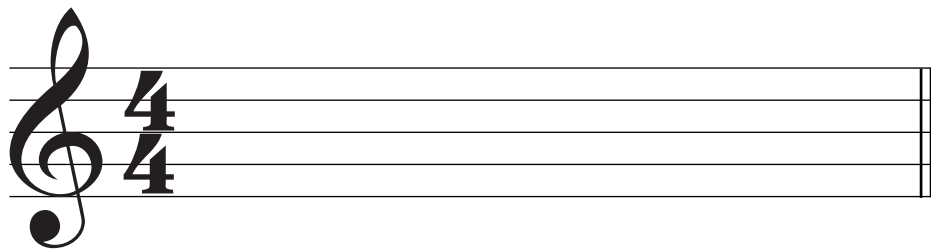
No. 4 - Double Bar Line

At the end of the music, we always use a Double Bar Line, to know when the song is over.

A Double Bar Line has two vertical lines. One thick and one thin. The Double Bar Line always goes at the end of the musical piece.



Double Bar Line



Notice how little by little, and adding more music symbols, we can start to see how we can actually read and write music.

No. 5 - The Whole Note

Now we have the notes. The notes are the symbols that actually make you produce some sounds.

There are many notes. Some lasting long time, and some notes are very short, lasting really little.

The note that last four counts is the Whole Note.



The Whole Note



Now this example is a real piece of music.

This note is “Sol” or G, because it’s in the second line.

The Treble Clef is telling us that because of the curvy line around the second line.

The Time Signature is telling us that we need four notes lasting one count each note, so we can put one note that last four counts and we have the same time.

No. 6 - The Whole Rest

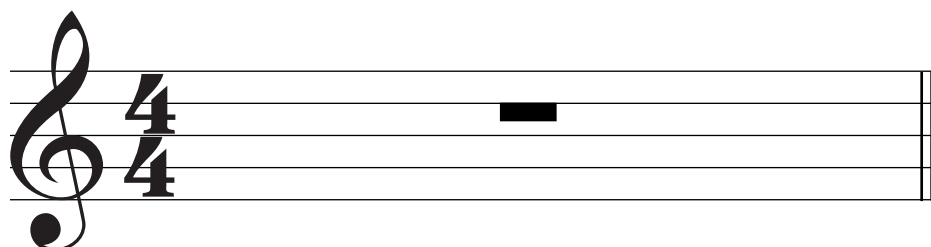
Sometimes we don’t need a sound, we need a silence, or a rest in music. Music is made with sounds and silences.

Each note has a rest lasting the same as the note.

The Whole Rest is a little thick line.



The Whole Rest



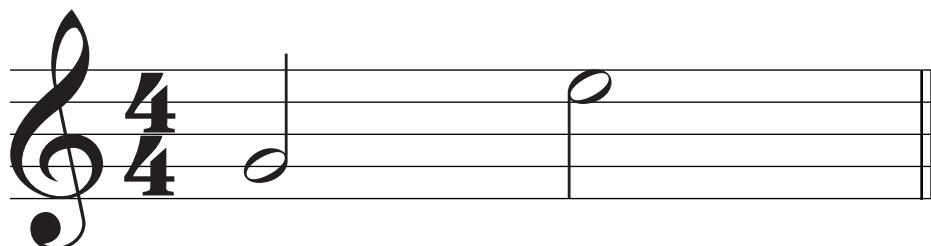
We usually place the Whole Rest in the center of the measure. Under the 4th line of the Staff.

No. 7 - The Half Note

The Half Note last two counts.
It's a little oval with a stem. The stem can be up or down.
You need two Half Notes to have the same time as one Whole Note.
You can put the notes anywhere in the Staff.



The Half Note



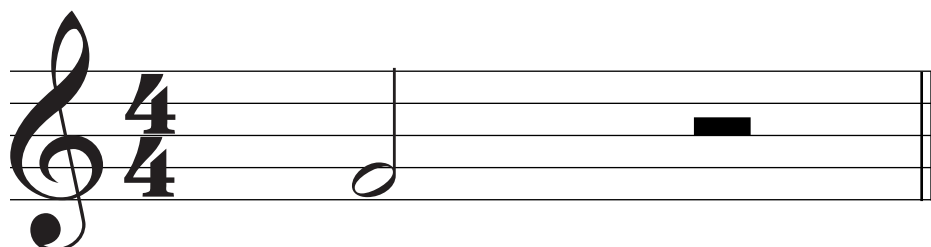
In this example we have two Half Notes.
The first one is a “Sol” and it has the stem going up.
The second one is a “Mi” and the stem is going down, becausee is higher.
Notice that now you need two notes to complete one whole measure.
You need four counts, according to the Time Signature, because each Half Note last for two counts, you just need two Half Notes.

No. 8 - The Half Rest

The Half Rest last two counts, just like the Half Note.
It looks the same as the Whole Rest, but we place it in a different position.
In this example we have a “Fa” and a Half Rest.



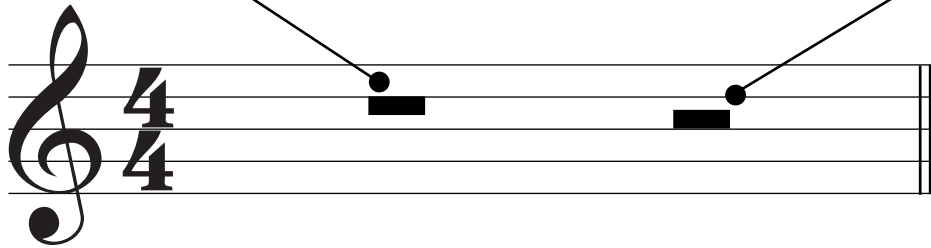
The Half Rest



Notice how the Half Rest is resting on top of the 3rd line, is different then the Whole Rest.

A Whole Rest is hanging from the 4th line, like a lamp lighting the WHOLE room.

A Half Rest is on top of the 3rd line, the middle line. Both rests are in a different position.



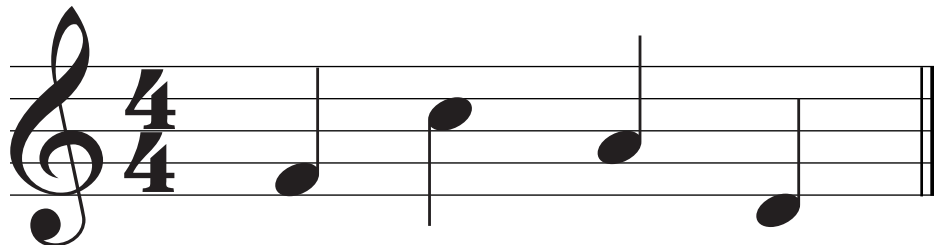
No. 9 - The Quarter Note

The Quarter Note last 1 count. It looks like a Half Note but filled in black. The Quarter Note can have the stem up or down also.

You need four of these notes to complete one full measure. Each note last one count.



The Quarter Note



Here you see four notes. Because the TOP number is telling you 4. And the bottom number is telling you that each note must be a 1/4 or a Quarter Note. So these are Quarter Notes, so you need 4 of these notes.

This is a perfect example of a full measure in 4/4 times.

The first note is “Fa” then we have a “Do” and a “La” and the last note is a “Re”.

We know that because of the Treble Clef.

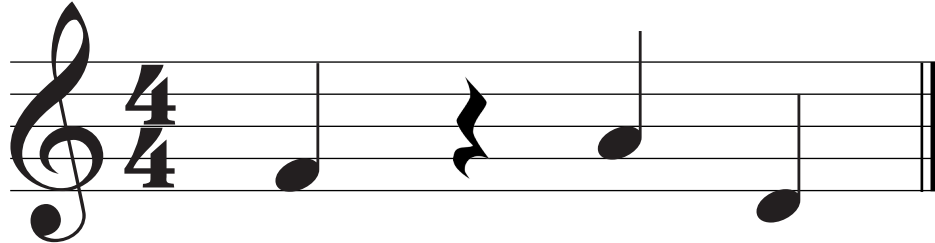
And this is how you start reading music.

No. 10 - The Quarter Rest

The Quarter Rest last 1 count, and it's a funny looking symbol, very popular in music. It looks like this:



The Quarter Rest



You can take one note away and put one rest in its place. Either way you need four symbols, each one lasting one count.

With these combination of Whole, Half and Quarter notes and the rests, you can create millions of possibilities and song, that's why music is so great and beautiful.

You need to learn these 10 Music Theory symbols and next time you see a sheet music, you will understand it a little better.

Keep learning more and practice every day!

In this lesson

- 1 - The Staff
- 2 - The Treble Clef
- 3 - Time Signature
- 4 - Double Bar Line
- 5 - The Whole Note
- 6 - The Whole Rest
- 7 - The Half Note
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