

Learn to Read Rhythms

...from beginning to advanced!

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*Dedicated to the memory of Frank & Millie Petrillo,
for their endless encouragement, support, and love.*

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Section 1: The Fundamentals

The “R’s” Of Reading

These are the factors that enable reading skills:

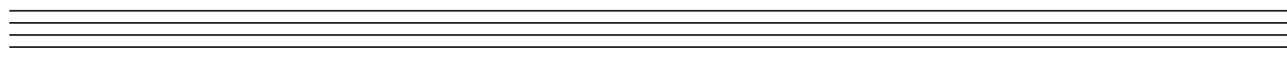
- 1. Recognition** = Recognize each of the “Rhythmic Pictures”.
- 2. Recollection** = Remembering each of the “Rhythmic Sounds”.
- 3. Reaction** = Responding correctly to the “Rhythmic Sound Pictures”.
- 4. Repetition** = Rehearse and repeat rhythms correctly.
- 5. Retention** = Retain and commit rhythms to memory.
- 6. Reinforcement** = Review to stay sharp.



The “Mechanics” Of Music

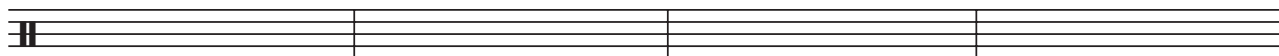
The Music Staff

The music staff is used to place all of the notes in position to read.



What Is A Measure?

It is a measurement in music that is equally divided by using bar lines.



Subdividing A Measure

The measure is then divided into subdivisions called beats.

Within a measure, there can be various amounts of beats.

The below example shows four equal beats in the measure:





Section 1: The Fundamentals

What Is A Time Signature?

A time signature is shown as a 2-part fraction that tells you how many beats are in a measure, and the basic subdivision.

4 = How many beats per measure

-

4 = What is the subdivision that receives one count.

In this case, it is the quarter note.

In the below example, the time signature is placed at the beginning of the measure.



4/4 is also known as "Common Time". It can also be marked with a "C".

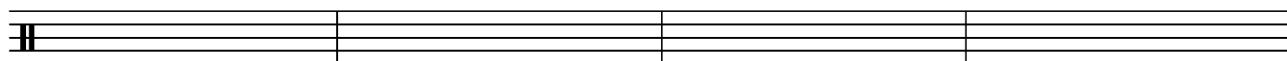




Staff Endings

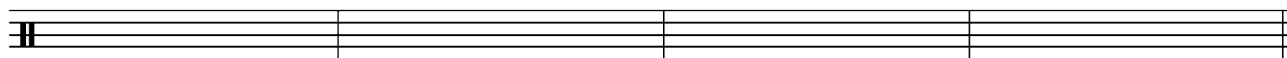
Section Bars

Section bars are double lines that signify the end of a music section.



Double Bars

A double bar is bold and placed at the end of a line of music to signify the end of a song.



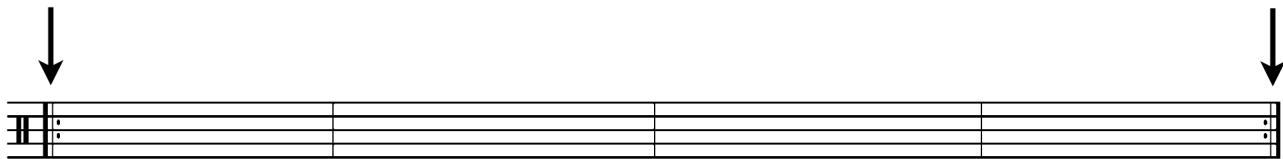


Section 1: The Fundamentals

Section Repeat Signs

Repeat Bars

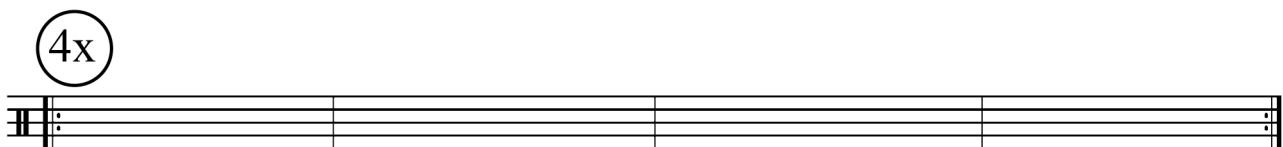
Double bars with two dots next to them, in the 2nd and 3rd spaces of the staff are called repeat signs. The section between these signs is to be repeated.



Repeating Sections Multiple Times

If a section is to be played more than twice, the number of times it is to be played is followed by the letter "X".

In this example the four bar phrase is to be played four times.

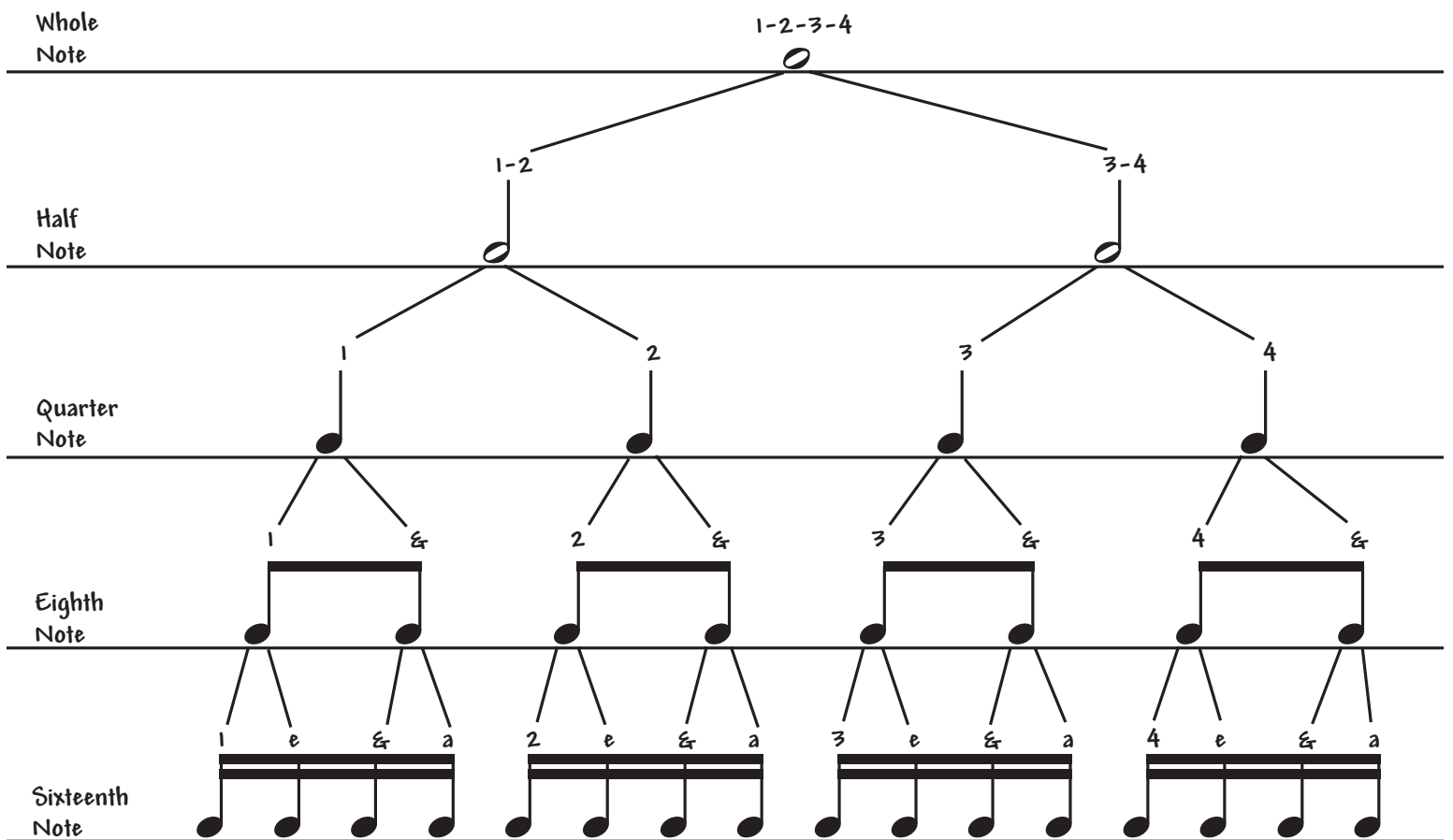


Section 1: The Fundamentals



The Essential Rhythm Tree Of Subdivisions

Based 4 beat counting, here is how basic rhythms are subdivided and notated:





Section 1: The Fundamentals

Placing Quarter Notes On The Staff With A Time Signature

In this example there are:

4 = 4 beats per measure

-

4 = The quarter note receives one count

A musical staff in 4/4 time signature showing four measures of music. Each measure contains four quarter notes. Below the staff, the counts for each measure are listed: 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4.

Changing The Amount Of Beats Per Measure

By changing the top number, we create new time signatures of varying lengths.

A musical staff in 2/4 time signature showing four measures of music. Each measure contains two quarter notes. Below the staff, the counts for each measure are listed: 1 2, 1 2, 1 2, 1 2.

A musical staff in 3/4 time signature showing four measures of music. Each measure contains three quarter notes. Below the staff, the counts for each measure are listed: 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3.

A musical staff in 5/4 time signature showing four measures of music. Each measure contains five quarter notes. Below the staff, the counts for each measure are listed: 1 2 3 4 5, 1 2 3 4 5, 1 2 3 4 5, 1 2 3 4 5.

Section 1: The Fundamentals



Placing The Rhythm Tree In The Measure

Now put the rhythm tree in the measures with a time signature of 4/4.

The image shows a single staff of music in 4/4 time. The notation is as follows:
Measure 1: A whole note with a fingering of 1-2-3-4 above it.
Measure 2: A half note with a fingering of 1-2 above it, followed by a half note with a fingering of 3-4 above it.
Measure 3: Four quarter notes with fingerings 1, 2, 3, and 4 above each note.
Measure 4: Four quarter notes with accents (ɺ) above each note.
Measure 5: A quarter note with a fingering of 1 above it, followed by an eighth note with a fingering of e above it, an eighth note with a fingering of ɺ above it, and a quarter note with a fingering of a above it.
Measure 6: A quarter note with a fingering of 2 above it, followed by an eighth note with a fingering of e above it, an eighth note with a fingering of ɺ above it, and a quarter note with a fingering of a above it.
Measure 7: A quarter note with a fingering of 3 above it, followed by an eighth note with a fingering of e above it, an eighth note with a fingering of ɺ above it, and a quarter note with a fingering of a above it.
Measure 8: A quarter note with a fingering of 4 above it, followed by an eighth note with a fingering of e above it, an eighth note with a fingering of ɺ above it, and a quarter note with a fingering of a above it.
Measure 9: A whole note with a fingering of 1-2-3-4 above it.

This concludes the basic mechanics of music notation.

Now let's move on to the reading examples.