

Learn How to Read Music Series

Lesson on Rhythm



The beat and the rhythm are related, but diverge in the following ways:

Beat

-something you feel
(like the way you feel
your heartbeat)



V.

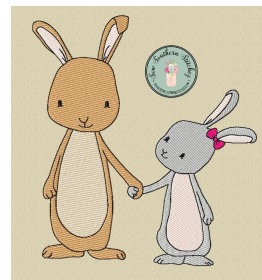
Rhythm

-something you see/hear
(like seeing notes on a staff)



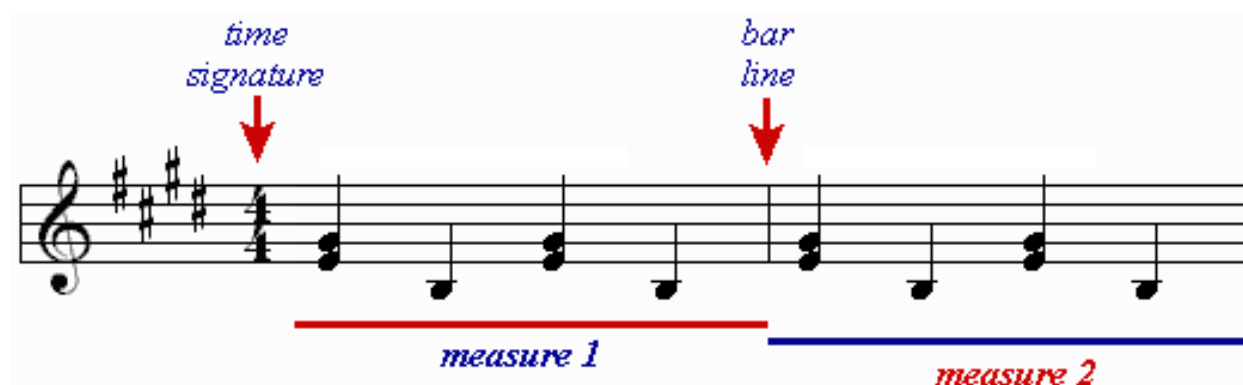
-is consistent
-can be fast or slow

-changes
-can be fast or slow, but
follows the beat (like a
younger sibling follows
an older sibling)

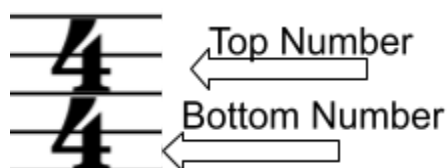


Rhythms can be heard with or without sound and are quantified by beats. A **rest** is a symbol that shows you the beat(s) of silence, while a **note** is a symbol that shows you beat(s) for a sound.

A **measure** divides up your music so that it is easier to read and count your beats and rhythm. 2 **bar lines** indicate one measure. The example below illustrates these terms:



We count the beats while reading music by using a time signature, which looks like this:



The **top number** in your time signature tells you how many beats are in a measure. The **bottom number** of your time signature tells you what kind of note gets the beat.

Here are a few possibilities for your bottom number:

2-half note gets the beat

4-quarter note gets the beat

8-eighth note gets the beat

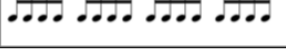


For instance,  means that 4 quarter notes add up to

one measure. Another example is , which means that the measure would add up to six eighth notes total.

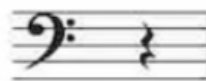
You first count the beat to find the rhythm. Below is a note and rest chart that shows the name, symbol (note or rest), and number of beats with examples in a 4/4 measure.

NOTE & REST CHART

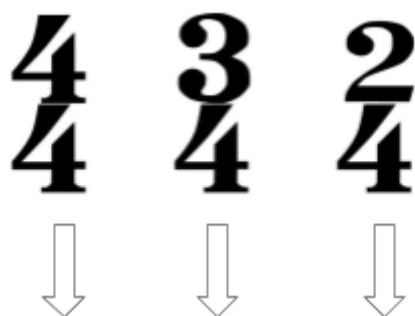
Name	Note	Rest	Beats	1 $\frac{4}{4}$ measure
Whole			4	
Half			2	
Quarter			1	
Eighth			$\frac{1}{2}$	
Sixteenth			$\frac{1}{4}$	

Exercises

-Write beside each example whether it's a note/rest and its number of beats.

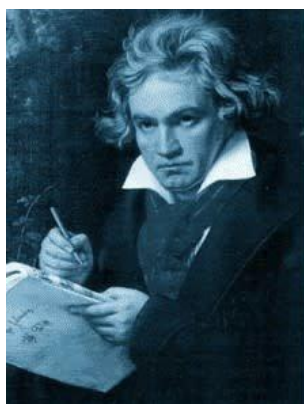


-Write below each time signature which pieces of information the top and bottom numbers have.



Top
Number

Bottom
Number



To play a wrong note is insignificant;
to play without passion is inexcusable.

Ludwig van Beethoven

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA