

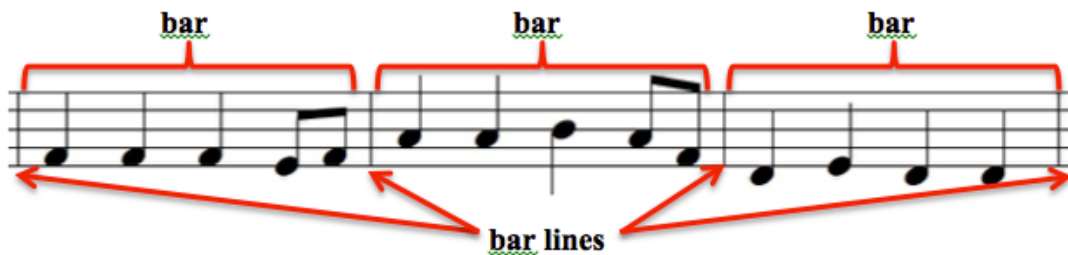
Time Signatures

- Time signatures allow us to organise music to regular units called *beats*. A time Signature consists of two numbers written one above the other, placed after clef. Below are some of the most popular type of time signatures that are used in music:



The *top* number tells us the *number* of beats in a bar.

A *bar* is the space on a staff that contains notes and rests. Bars are separated from one another by *bar lines*, which are vertical lines drawn through the staff to divide music into regular metrical units:



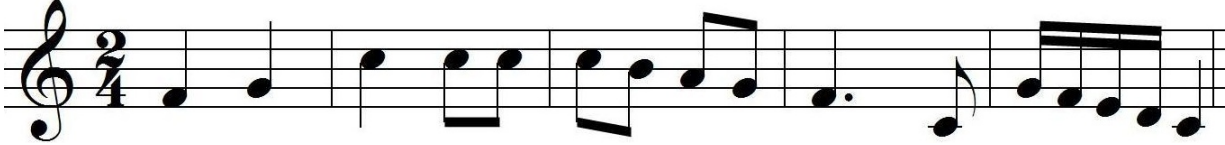
The *bottom* number tells us what *type* of beats are in a bar.

For ALL time signatures: if the bottom number is **4** it signifies *crotchets*.

For ALL time signatures: if the bottom number is **8** it signifies *quavers*.

In America, crotchets are called 'quarter notes' because they are worth $\frac{1}{4}$ the longest note used in music, a semibreve (a 'whole note'), and quavers are called 'eighth notes' because they are $\frac{1}{8}$ of a semibreve. It's easy to see the relationship between these American descriptions of notes and the bottom number in time signatures!

$\frac{2}{4}$ = 2 Two Crotchet Beats per Bar



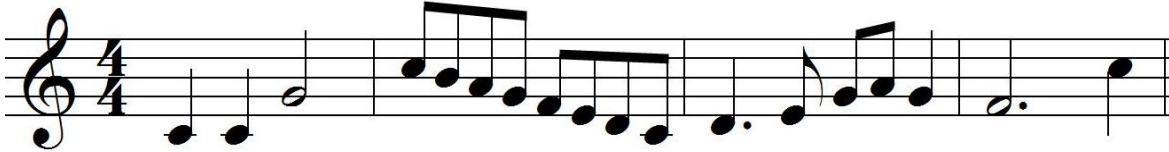
Musical notation for 2/4 time signature, showing a sequence of notes across a staff.

$\frac{3}{4}$ = 3 Three Crotchet Beats per Bar



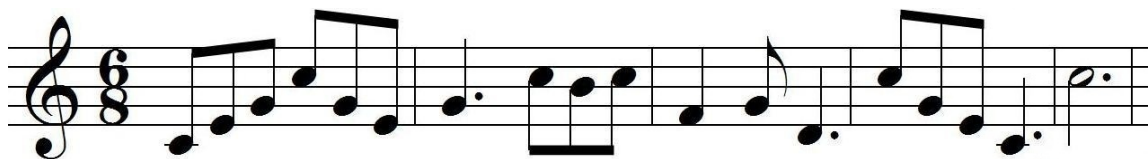
Musical notation for 3/4 time signature, showing a sequence of notes across a staff.

$\frac{4}{4}$ = 4 Four Crotchet Beats per Bar



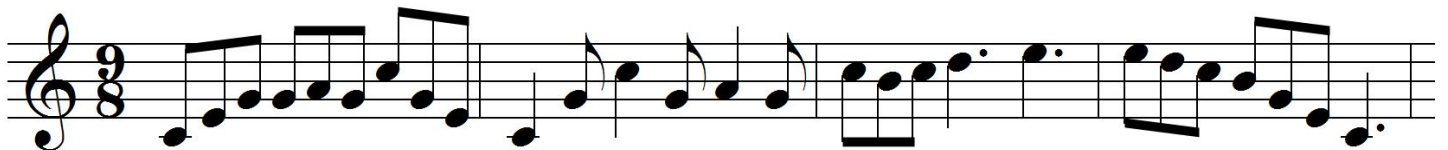
Musical notation for 4/4 time signature, showing a sequence of notes across a staff.

$\frac{6}{8}$ = 6 Two Dotted Crotchet Beats per Bar ($\text{♩.} = \text{♪♪♪♪}$)



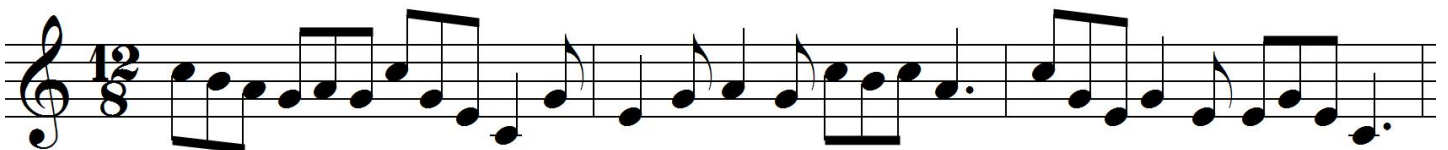
Musical notation for 6/8 time signature, showing a sequence of notes across a staff.

$\frac{9}{8}$ = 9 Three Dotted Crotchet Beats per Bar ($\text{♩.} = \text{♪♪♪♪♪♪$)



Musical notation for 9/8 time signature, showing a sequence of notes across a staff.

$\frac{12}{8}$ = 12 Four Dotted Crotchet Beats per Bar ($\text{♩.} = \text{♪♪♪♪♪♪♪♪$)



Musical notation for 12/8 time signature, showing a sequence of notes across a staff.