

Rhythms and Time Signatures

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<p>Whole Note: Lasts 4 beats</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Whole Rest: 4 beats of silence</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Half Note: Lasts 2 beats</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Half Rest: 2 beats of silence</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Quarter Note: Lasts 1 beat</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Quarter Rest: 1 beat of silence</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>
<p>8th Note: Lasts 1/2 beat Two 8th notes per quarter note</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Single 8ths</p> <p>1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +</p>	<p>8th Rest: 1/2 beat of silence</p> <p>1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +</p>
<p>16th Note: Lasts 1/4 beat Four 16th notes per quarter note Two 16 notes per 8th note</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Single 16ths</p> <p>1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a</p>	<p>16th Rest: 1/4 beat of silence</p> <p>1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a</p>

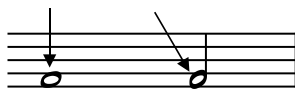
Note Parts

Stems can point up or down



Note Head

Longer notes have **open** note heads



Shorter notes have **closed** note heads



8th notes are connected by a single **beam**



16th notes are connected by **double beams**



Single 8th notes look like quarter notes with a **flag** attached



Single 16th notes have **double flags**



- The two numbers at the start of the music are called the **time signature**.
- Name the time signature by calling out the top number, then the bottom number.
- The **time signature below** is pronounced “**four four time.**”
- The **top number** tells you **how many beats** are in each measure.
- The **bottom number** tells you **what kind of note counts as the beat**.
- 4/4 time** has **four beats per measure**.
- The **number 4** stands for **quarter note**. The quarter note counts as the beat.
- Later, you'll see the numbers **2 or 8** at the bottom of the time signature.



2/4 Time: Two beats per measure
Quarter note is the beat.
Two quarter notes per measure.



3/4 Time: Three beats per measure
Quarter note is the beat.
Three quarter notes per measure.



4/4 Time: Four beats per measure
Quarter note is the beat.
Four quarter notes per measure.



The **C** stands for **Common Time**.
Common Time is the **same as 4/4**.



Standard vs Slash Notation

Sometimes you'll see standard note heads, and sometimes you'll see slash note heads.

- Standard note heads** show the **specific note or notes** you are supposed to play.
- Slash note heads** show that you are supposed to **strum whatever chord appears above the music staff**. This saves the clutter of writing every single note in the chord when the guitar player just needs to know the chord form.

Standard Notation
Play these single notes.



Standard Notation
Play these specific notes.



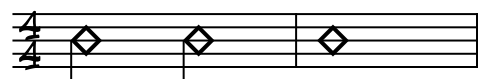
Slash Notation
Play C chords with this rhythm.



Slashes are for quarter notes or faster.



Open diamonds are for half notes or slower.



- Subdivide to figure out rhythms.
- Write each beat.
- Subdivide the beat for rhythms faster than quarter notes.
- Put beats and subdivisions for rests in parentheses to show silence.

4/4: Write 4 beats

3/4: Write 4 beats

8th Notes

1 + 2 + etc. ("1 and 2 and")

16th Notes

1 e + a ("1 ee and uh") Notice how the "ands" of the 8th and 16th notes line up.

The main beats have been added in the lower staff to help with counting the rhythms in the upper staff.

Write and count **each beat** for notes that last more than one beat. **Every beat of every measure** must be accounted for.

8th notes and 16th notes can be **beamed together**. These are combination 8th/16th note rhythms.

Number each beat for rests, and **add parentheses** to show silence. Again, every beat of every measure must be accounted for.

Half rests: Write 2 beats

Quarter rests: Write 2 beats

8th rests: Write a number or an "and"

16th rests: Write a number or "e + a."

A **whole rest** shows four beats of rest, **OR** it can mean to rest through an entire measure regardless of the number of beats in that measure. For example, a whole rest in 3/4 time indicates an empty 3/4 measure, or 3 beats of silence.

Whole rest: 4 silent beats

Whole rest: 3 silent beats

Whole rest: 2 silent beats

Practice Tips

- Play these examples as single notes (any note), single chords (any chord), or clap the rhythms.
- Play to a metronome and tap your foot to feel the beat more strongly.
- Count the rhythms out loud as you play or clap.
- If you have difficulty with any example, slow it down!
- Some examples are in standard notation. Some use slash notation.
- The bottom staff shows the main beats.

1

1 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 4

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

2

1 + a 2 + a 3 1 2 + 3

1 2 3 1 2 3

3

1 e + 2 e + 1 2 (1) (2) 1 e + a 2

1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2

4

1 (+) 2 (+) 3 e + a 4 1 + 2 + 3 (4) 1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

5

1 + 2 + 3 (1) (2) (3) 1 2 3

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

6

1 e + a 2 + (3) (4) 1 + a 2 e + 3 4

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

7

1 2 + 3 + 1 2 3 + 1 (2) (3)

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

A **tie** is a curved line combining two or more of the same note or chord to create one longer note or chord.

Tie (same rhythm)

Tie (same rhythm)

Single notes tied

Multiple notes tied

Tied C chord

C

Ties can connect across bar lines.

C

You can tie a series of notes or chords as long as they are all the **same** note or chord.

C

Adding a **dot** after a note is the same as adding **half again the duration** of that note

Dotted half note:

Same as half note

tied to quarter note (same rhythm)

Dotted quarter note:

Same as quarter note tied to an 8th note (same rhythm)

(same rhythm)

Dotted 8th note:

Same as 8th note

tied to a 16th note

(same rhythm)

(same rhythm)

Practice Tips

- Play these examples as single notes (any note), single chords (any chord), or clap the rhythms.
- Play to a metronome and tap your foot to feel the beat more strongly.
- Count the rhythms out loud as you play or clap.
- If you have difficulty with any example, slow it down!
- Some examples are in standard notation. Some use slash notation.
- The bottom staff shows the main beats and some helpful subdivisions.

8

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 + 4

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

9

1 2 + 3 4 | 1 + 2 + 3 4

1 2 + 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

10

1 2 + 3 | 1 2 3

1 2 + 3 | 1 2 3

11

1 + 2 + | 1 2 | 1 2 | 1 (2)

1 + 2 + | 1 2 | 1 2 | 1 2

12

1 e + a 2 3 e + a 4 | 1 + 2 e + a 3 4

1 e + a 2 3 e + a 4 | 1 + 2 e + a 3 4

13

1 2 3 4 | 1 + 2 + 3 4

1 2 3 4 | 1 + 2 + 3 4

14

1 2 e + a 3 | 1 2 3

1 2 e + a 3 | 1 2 3

15

1 2 + | 1 + 2 | 1 e + a 2 e + a | 1 2

1 2 + | 1 + 2 | 1 e + a 2 e + a | 1 2

Syncopation

- A note that falls on a **main beat** (a number) falls on a **downbeat**.
- A note that falls on the **"and"** of a beat falls on an **upbeat**.
- **Downbeats are naturally stronger than upbeats.**

Downbeat Upbeat

Syncopation is the accenting of a weak beat, like an upbeat. Syncopation occurs when the note of a downbeat is shifted to the upbeat right before it.

Not syncopated

Syncopated

- Play these examples as single notes (any note), single chords (any chord), or clap the rhythms.
- Play to a metronome and tap your foot to feel the beat more strongly.
- Count the rhythms out loud as you play or clap.

16

17

18

19

20

21

- A **triplet** divides a note into **three equal parts** and is notated with the number 3.
- With non-beamed notes like quarter notes, the tuplet number is accompanied by a bracket.
- Beamed notes like 8th and 16th notes don't usually need a bracket, but some publishers prefer to include them.

8th note triplet divides quarter note into 3 equal parts

Quarter note triplet divides half note into 3 equal parts

16th note triplet divides 8th note into 3 equal parts

Our counting system, which normally relies on even-numbered subdivisions, doesn't work with triplets. You can assign other syllables to triplets. There are a number of syllable systems. I just use the syllables "tri-pu-let."

8th note triplets are the most common, so we'll just focus on 8th note triplets in these playing examples.

22

23

24

25

Whole Note (Cut Time): Lasts 2 beats	Whole Rest (Cut Time): 2 beats of silence
<p>1 2</p> <p>Half Note (Cut Time): Lasts 1 beat</p>	<p>(1) (2)</p> <p>Half Rest (Cut Time): 1 beat of silence</p>
<p>1 2</p> <p>Quarter Note (Cut Time): Lasts 1/2 beat</p>	<p>(1) (2)</p> <p>Quarter Rest (Cut Time): 1/2 beat of silence</p>
<p>1 + 2 +</p> <p>8th Note (Cut Time): Lasts 1/4 beat Two 8th notes per quarter note</p>	<p>(1) (+) (2) (+)</p> <p>8th Rest (Cut Time): 1/4 beat of silence</p>
<p>1 e + a 2 e + a</p>	<p>(1) (e) (+) (a) (2) (e) (+) (a)</p>

- The **Cut Time** symbol appears as a Common Time symbol with a vertical slash.
- Cut Time looks like 4/4 or Common Time, except it is counted in 2 instead of 4. In other words, the notes move twice as fast.
- In Cut Time, the **half note is counted as the beat**.
- Aside from the half note now counted as the beat, the rhythms are still the same relative to each other: Two half notes per whole note, two quarter notes per half note, and two 8th notes per quarter note.

Cut Time:
Write 2 beats

1 2

Cut Time Quarter Notes:
Counted "1 + 2 +"

1 2

1 + 2 +

Cut Time 8th Notes:
Counted "1 e + a 2 e + a"

1 e + a 2 e + a

The corresponding rests are also counted in two instead of four in Cut Time.

(1) (2)

(1) (2)

(1) (+) (2) (+)

(1) (e) (+) (a) (2) (e) (+) (a)

- **2/2** is the same as Cut Time. The top number 2 shows two beats per measure. The bottom number 2 stands for a half note and shows that the half note is counted as the beat.
- Cut Time is more common than 2/2 in non-classical music, so the counting exercises on the next page are all in Cut Time. 2/2 is introduced here so you know what it is if you see it in the future.

1 2 1 2 1 + 2 + 1 e + a 2 e + a

- Play these examples as single notes (any note), single chords (any chord), or clap the rhythms.
- Play to a metronome and tap your foot to feel the beat more strongly.
- Count the rhythms out loud as you play or clap.
- If you have difficulty with any example, slow it down!
- Some examples are in standard notation. Some use slash notation.
- The bottom staff shows the main beats.

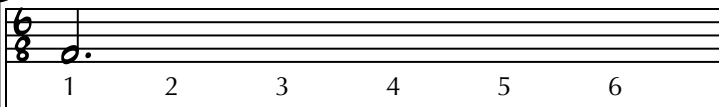
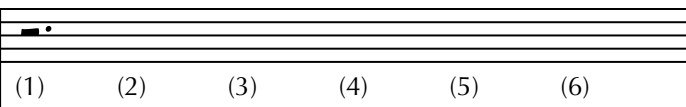



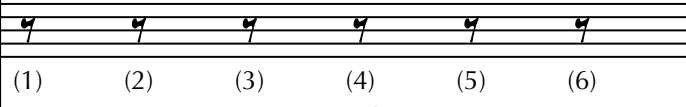





26

27

Whole rest in Cut Time:
2 beats

28

29

Dotted Half Note in 6/8: Lasts 6 beats	Dotted Half Rest in 6/8: 6 beats of silence
	
1 2 3 4 5 6	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)
Dotted Quarter Note in 6/8: Lasts 3 beats	Dotted Quarter Rest in 6/8: 3 beats of silence
	
1 2 3 4 5 6	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)
8th Note in 6/8: Lasts 1 beat	8th Rest in 6/8: 1 beat of silence
	
1 2 3 4 5 6	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)
Quarter Note in 6/8: Lasts 2 beats	Quarter Rest in 6/8: 2 beats of silence
	
1 2 3 4 5 6	(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)
Quarter Note in 6/8: Lasts 2 beats	
	
1 2 3 4 5 6	
16th Note in 6/8: Lasts 1/2 beat	16th Rest in 6/8: 1/2 beat of silence
	
1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 +	(1) (+) (2) (+) (3) (+) (4) (+) (5) (+) (6) (+)


The **top number** in 6/8 shows **6 beats per measure**.
 The **bottom number** shows that the **8th note is counted as the beat** (six 8th notes per measure).



1 2 3 4 5 6

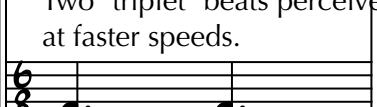
- 6/8 is a compound time signature.
- At slower speeds, you will perceive 6 distinct beats, with the 8th note counted as the beat.
- At faster speeds, 6/8 feels more like 2 bigger beats with the dotted quarter feeling like the beat divided into 3 equal parts, similar to triplets.
- Either way, **8th notes are grouped in sets of 3** in 6/8.

Six beats perceived at slower speeds.



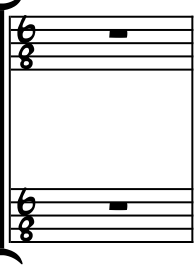
1 2 3 4 5 6

Two "triplet" beats perceived at faster speeds.




1 2 3 4 5 6


An entire measure of rest in 6/8 is written as a whole rest.



A half measure of rest in 6/8 is usually written as a dotted half rest but can also be written with a quarter rest plus 8th rest.



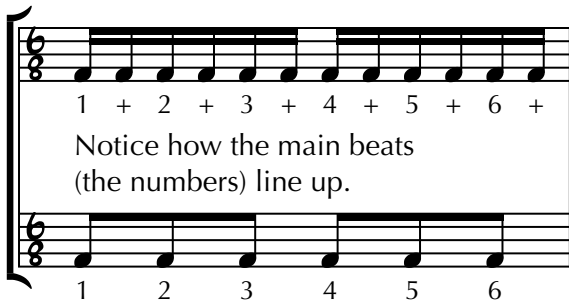
1 2 3 (4) (5) (6) 1 2 3 (4) (5) (6)



1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6

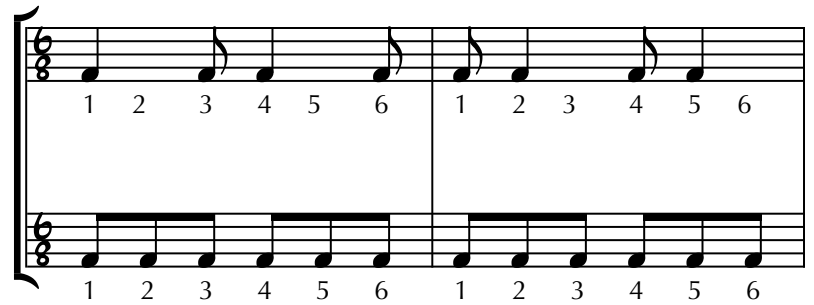
In 6/8, count **16th notes as 1+2+3+4+5+6+**

In 6/8, a quarter note lasts 2 beats



1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 +
Notice how the main beats
(the numbers) line up.

1 2 3 4 5 6



1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1 2 3 4 5 6

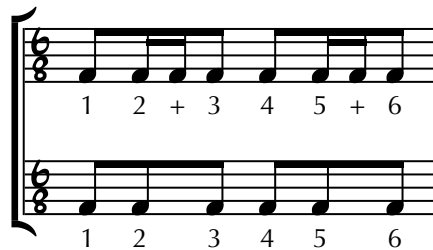
1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1 2 3 4 5 6

In 6/8, 8th notes and 16th notes are beamed together, with the beams broken halfway through the measure. Here are some 8th and 16th combinations.



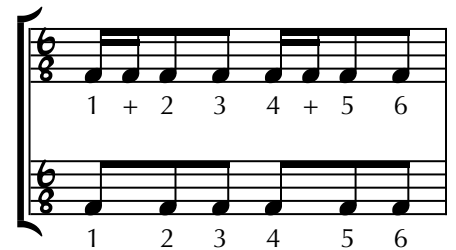
1 2 3 + 4 5 6 +

1 2 3 4 5 6



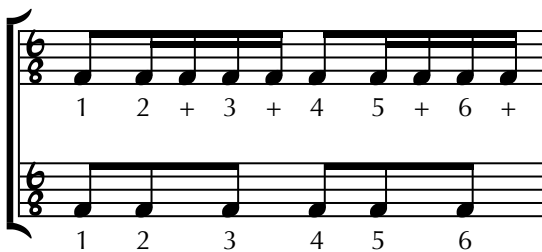
1 2 + 3 4 5 + 6

1 2 3 4 5 6



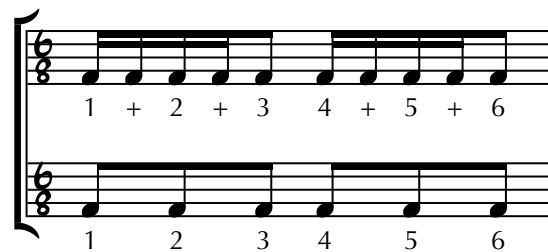
1 + 2 3 4 + 5 6

1 2 3 4 5 6



1 2 + 3 + 4 5 + 6 +

1 2 3 4 5 6



1 + 2 + 3 4 + 5 + 6

1 2 3 4 5 6

3/8 • 6/8 • 9/8 • 12/8

- 3/8, 9/8, and 12/8 are counted the same as 6/8.
- This short document only focuses on 6/8, which is the most common of these types of time signatures.
- In all of these time signatures, the 8th note is counted as the beat.
- 8th notes are counted in sets of 3.
- Depending on the tempo, each time signature can be felt as separate 8th notes or dotted quarter notes divided in 3 with a "triplet" feel.



1 2 3

1 2 3



1 2 3 4 5 6

1 2 3 4 5 6



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

- Play these examples as single notes (any note), single chords (any chord), or clap the rhythms.
- Play to a metronome and tap your foot to feel the beat more strongly.
- Count the rhythms out loud as you play or clap.
- If you have difficulty with any example, slow it down!
- Some examples are in standard notation. Some use slash notation.
- The bottom staff shows the main beats.

30

31

32

33