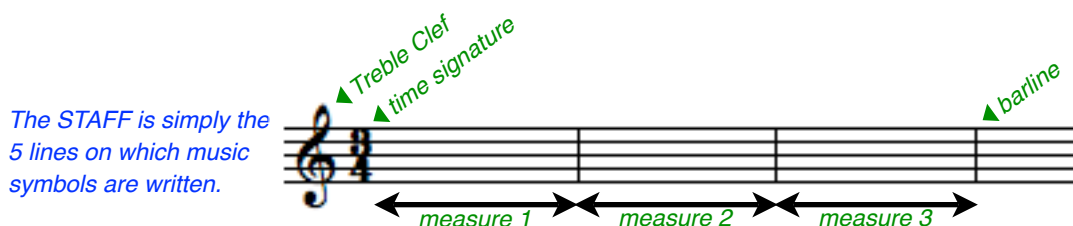


NOTE VALUES AND TIME SIGNATURES

When you listen to music, you can usually count the beat quite easily. A waltz for example, is counted in three and dancers learn to step to that count. You can count the beat 1-2-3 (oom-pa-pa) repeatedly throughout the music with the count of 1 (down beat) being the strongest of the beats.

Every time you count to 3, you've counted one measure (also called a bar). On the staff, each bar ends with a barline so you know where to start the next count of 1 again.



















Time Signature

3 This is found to the right of the clef at the very beginning of the music. It doesn't appear again unless the meter changes. The top number indicates how many beats in a bar; the bottom number shows which note value is counted as one beat, in this case, the quarter note.

Please Note: To keep things simple we'll always assume the quarter note gets the beat because changing the number on the bottom of the time signature makes things complicated.

Note Values

	..... Whole Note	4 beats	Whole Rest (<i>hangs below the line</i>) 
	..... Dotted Half Note	3 beats	Dotted Half Rest 
	..... Half Note	2 beats	Half Rest (<i>sits above the line</i>) 
	..... Dotted Quarter Note:	1-1/2 beats	Dotted Quarter Rest 
	..... Quarter Note:	1 beat	Quarter Rest 
	..... Dotted Eighth Note:	3/4 beat	Dotted Eighth Rest 
	..... Eighth Note:	1/2 beat	Eighth Rest 
	..... Sixteenth Note:	1/4 beat	Sixteenth Rest 

** a dot on any symbol increases its value by half*

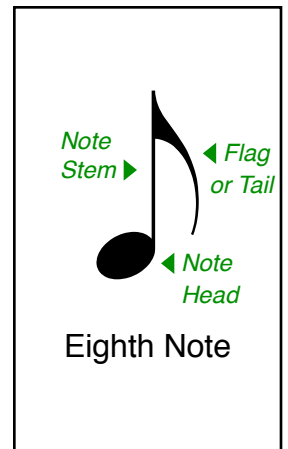
Correct Note Values



Since each bar in this example is 3 beats (1-2-3), the notes placed within it must add up to 3 beats (so a little math is involved).

Things to notice in the example above:

1. Some note stems point up, some down. When a note is on the middle line (B) or above, the stem points down, otherwise it is up. Exceptions occur when the note is beamed with another as in the last bar.
2. Notes that have tails (eighth and sixteenth notes) are typically beamed together, grouped according to the beat.
3. Adding the note values in each bar results in the sum of 3.
4. Notes are spaced within the bar according to their value. Imagine the bar is divided into three equal parts representing the three beats in the bar (allowing for a margin at both ends of the bar). See the example below.



Good Note Placement

Good note placement makes the music easier to read, as both the symbol and its physical space on the page tell you its value.



Imagine trying to read badly spaced text.

Imagine trying to read that was badly spaced

Good placement is especially important if you have to read a score (a music page with multiple parts) with more than one staff (multiple of staff); if notes don't line up vertically on the page it would be impossible to read.