

# RHYTHM AND COUNTING

When notes are on the beat, counting them is fairly straight forward. Whole notes are worth 4 beats so count them as 1-2-3-4. Half notes are 2 beats, so you can fit two of them in the space of one whole note, so count them 1-2, 3-4. Quarter notes are worth 1 beat so two of them equals a half note or 4 equal a whole note; count them 1, 2, 3, 4.

The diagram illustrates the relationship between musical notes and their duration in beats. It is organized into five rows, with vertical dashed red lines separating the four beats of a measure.

- Row 1:** Numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, each centered above a vertical dashed red line.
- Row 2:** A single whole note (semibreve) spanning the entire width of the four beats.
- Row 3:** Two half notes (minims), each spanning two beats.
- Row 4:** Four quarter notes (crotchets), each spanning one beat.
- Row 5:** A sequence of eighth notes (quavers) with syllables: 1, e, +, a, 2, e, +, a, 3, e, +, a, 4, e, +, a. The syllables are aligned with the eighth-note stems.

## A Simple Example

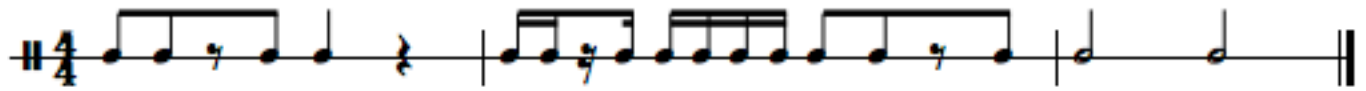
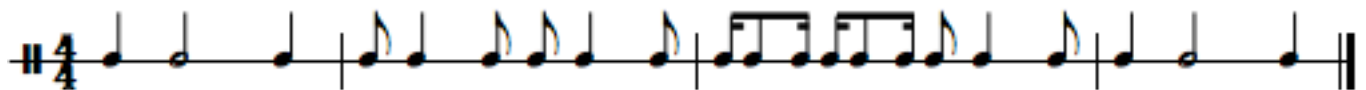
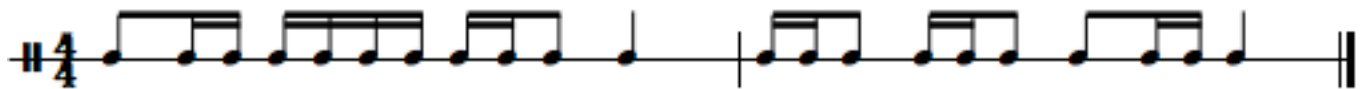
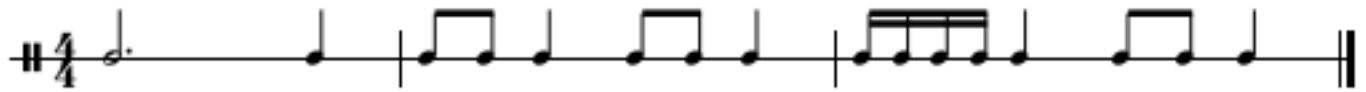
Count aloud and clap this rhythm. Make sure that you count to 4 each time at an even rate. To help keep the count you can use a metronome set at 80 beats per minute.

The example shows a musical staff in 4/4 time. A green note icon with the text "♩ = 80" indicates the tempo. The staff contains a sequence of notes and rests corresponding to the rhythm 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a.

Below the staff, the counting sequence is written: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a. The plus signs and syllables are aligned with the notes and rests on the staff.

## Let's Mix Up the Rhythms

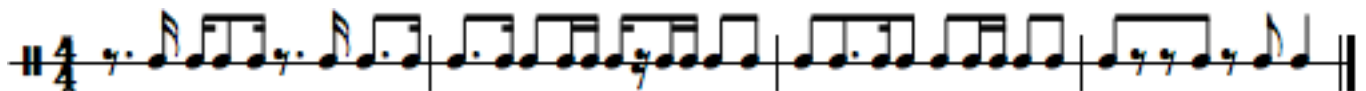
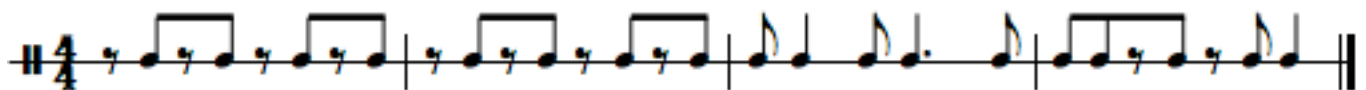
Practice these examples, counting aloud and clapping to an even beat. ♩ = 80 bpm. Write in the beats under each line to help you count.



## Syncopation

This refers to rhythm that is off the beat or irregular, not part of the natural rhythmic flow.

The first example is a simple rhythm where many of the notes fall just after each beat; the second is a more complicated example of syncopation.



## More Rhythm Practice

Practice these examples, counting aloud and clapping to an even beat. ♩ = 80 bpm.

Write in the beats under each line to help you count. You can download a metronome off the internet to help you keep the beat. If 80 bpm (beats per minute) is too fast, set a tempo that is comfortable and gradually work up your speed.

