Contents

Chapter 1. More Complex Time Signatures

Simple time and **Compound time** describe how the beat is divided in a time signature.

Simple time

- The beat divides naturally into 2 equal parts.
- Common examples: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 3/8
- In these signatures, the top number tells you how many beats per bar, and the bottom number tells you the note value that gets one beat.

Compound time

- The beat divides naturally into 3 equal parts.
- Common examples: 6/8, 9/8, 12/8.
- Here, the top number is usually a multiple of 3, and the beat itself is a dotted note value, which splits evenly into three eighth notes.

Note: **the key test isn't just "is the top number divisible by 3" – it is whether the beat itself is a dotted note value that splits into 3.**

Rule of thumb:

- **2,3,4 on top -> simple**
- **6,9,12 on top -> compound**

Duple, Triple and Quadruple describe how many beats are in each bar. This is a separate dimension from simple/compound.

Duple time – 2 beats per bar

Triple time – 3 beats per bar

Quadruple time – 4 beats per bar

	Simple (beat splits into 2)	**Compound (beat splits into 3)**
Duple (2 beats/bar)	2/4	6/8
Triple (3 beats/bar)	3/4	9/8
Quadruple (4 beats/bar)	4/4	12/8

How to figure out beats-per-bar from the time signature:

- In simple time, the top number is the number of beats.
- In compound time, divide the top number by 3 to get the number of beats.

When converting rhythms to different time signatures without changing their effect, the top number doesn't change. Observe the bottom number to note if the unit value has doubled or halved and then change notes accordingly.

For example, both of these rhythms sound the same and both are in triple time.

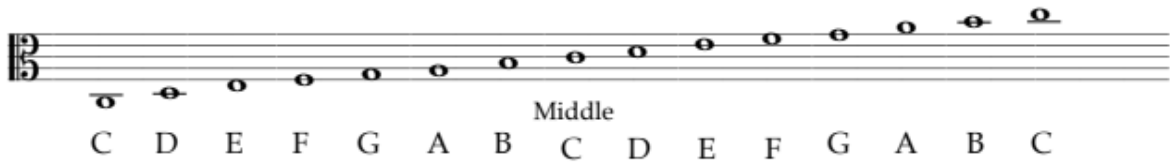
Chapter 2. Alto Clef 𝄡

The treble clef 𝄞 represents notes that are in the higher pitch register.

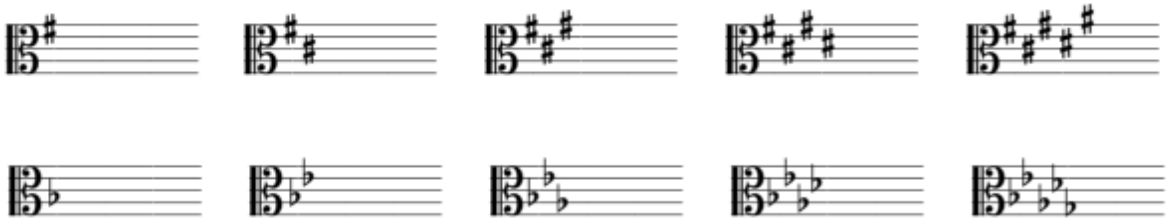
The bass clef 𝄢 represents notes that are in the lower pitch register.

The alto clef 𝄡 represents notes that occupy the middle of the register and avoids the necessity for too many ledger lines. It is chiefly associated with the viola. In the alto clef, middle C is positioned on the middle line of the staff. This is also where the curves of the alto clef meet.

Use middle C as a reference point and work out all other notes from this note.



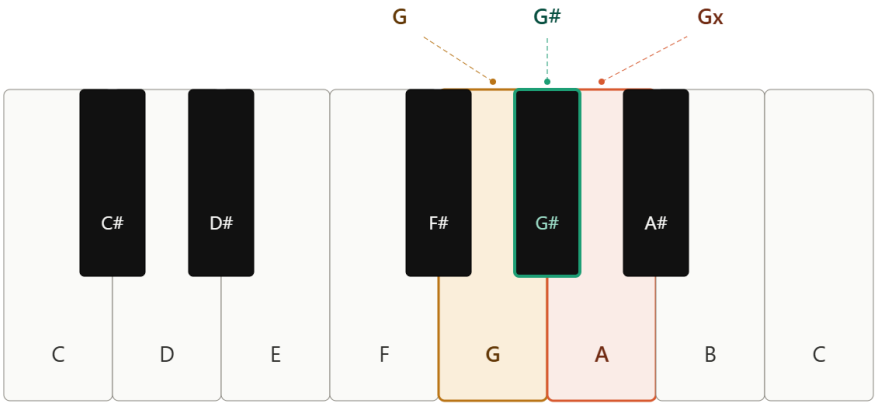
The positioning of key signatures on the staff moves correspondingly.



Practice drawing some Alto Clef

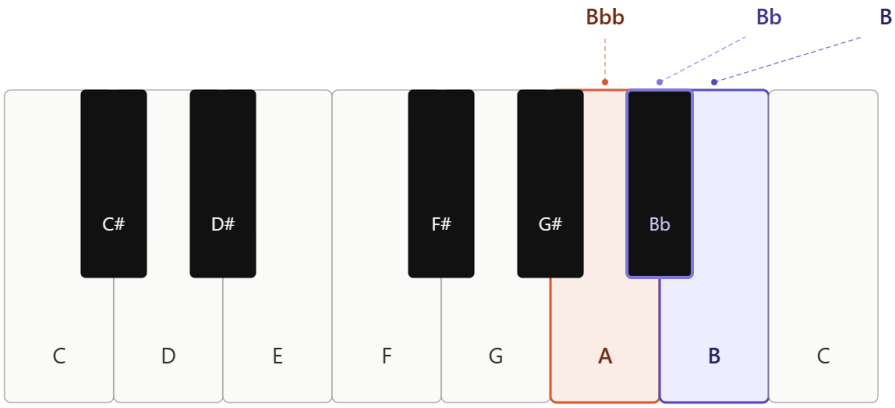
Chapter 3. Double Sharps and Double Flats

Double sharp 𝄪 literally means to raise the note semitone higher and then raise it semitone higher again. So raise the note one whole tone higher. In musical terms, G𝄪 is different from A.



G double sharp (Gx) sounds the same key as A

Double flat 𝄫 literally means to reduce the note a semitone lower and then reduce it a semitone lower again. So reduce the note one whole tone lower. In music term, B 𝄫 is different from A



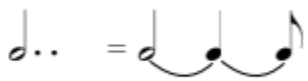
B double flat (Bbb) sounds the same key as A

Chapter 4: Double Whole Notes, Double Dots and Duplets

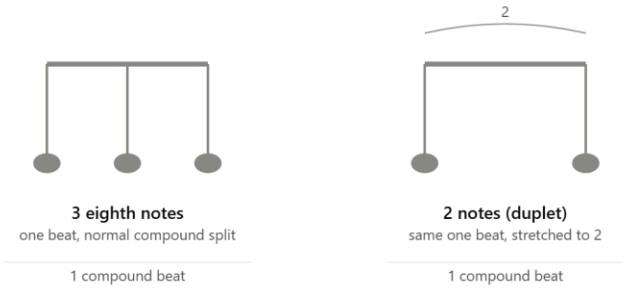
Double whole notes 𝅜 lasts as long as two whole notes (8 beats).
You can use the whole note rest symbol to indicate a whole bar silence.

A double dots after a note adds half the length already added by the first dot:

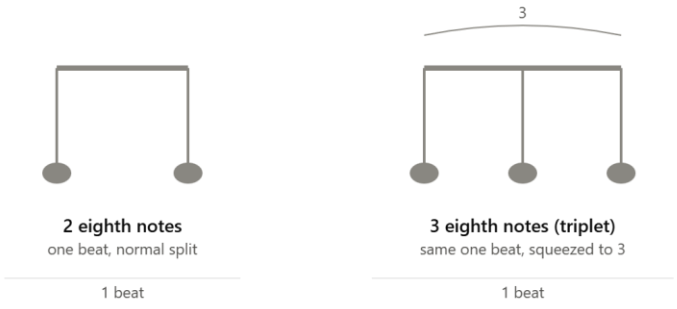
For example: Half note with 2 dots lasts for 2+1+0.5 = 3.5 beats.



Duplets: A duplet is a group of two notes played in the same normally taken by three notes of the same value.



Review: triplet is a group of three notes played in the time normally taken by two notes of the same value.



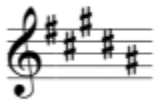
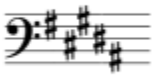
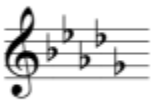
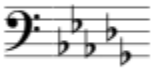
There are other types of tuplets: Quintuplets (t notes in the space of 4), Sextuplets (6 notes in the space of 4).

Chapter 5. Keys with five sharps or flats

Major, Harmonic Minor and Melodic Minor scales will now include the following keys:

Major	Relative Minor	Accidentals
C Major	A Minor	No sharps or flat
G Major	E Minor	F sharp
D Major	B Minor	F & C sharp
A Major	F# Minor	F, C, G sharp
E Major	C# Minor	F, C, G and D sharp
B Major	G# Minor	F, C, G, D and A sharp
F Major	D Minor	B flat
B flat Major	G Minor	B & E flat
E flat Major	C Minor	B, E & A flat
A flat Major	F Minor	B, E, A & D flat
D flat Major	B flat Minor	B, E, A, D and G flat

The key signatures are written as follows:

The degrees of the scale have given names:

1st Tonic

2nd Supertonic

3rd Mediant

4th Subdominant

5th Dominant

6th Submediant

7th Leading note

Chapter 6. Triads and chords on I, IV and V

In a major key, the I, IV and V chords are the primary triads – each built by stacking two thirds on a scale degree:

I (tonic triad)

Built on the 1st scale degree. Major triad.

In C major: C – E – G

IV (subdominant triad)

Built on the 4th scale degree. Major triad.

In C major: F – A – C

V (dominant triad)

Built on the 5th scale degree. Major triad.

In C major: G – B – D

All three are major triads in major key (root, major third, perfect fifth), and together they contain every note of the scale – which is why they're the harmonic backbone of so much tonal music. You can harmonize almost any major-scale melody using these three chords.

In a **minor key**, i and iv are minor triads, while V is often made major (raising the 7th degree) to create a stronger pull back to the tonic – this is called the harmonic minor adjustment.

Major Scale

Degree	Roman Numeral	Quality
1	I	Major
2	ii	Minor
3	iii	Minor
4	IV	Major
5	V	Major

Degree	Roman Numeral	Quality
6	vi	Minor
7	vii°	Diminished

Pattern: **Major – minor – minor – Major – Major – minor – diminished**

Natural Minor Scale

Degree	Roman Numeral	Quality
1	i	Minor
2	ii°	Diminished
3	III	Major
4	iv	Minor
5	v	Minor
6	VI	Major
7	VII	Major

Pattern: **minor – diminished – Major – minor – minor – Major – Major**

Chapter 7. Intervals

Here is the full picture of intervals – the "size" (2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.) tells you which scale degrees are involved, and the "quality" (major, minor, perfect, augmented, diminished) tells you the exact distance in semitones.

Why some are "perfect" and others are "major/minor"?

Unisons, 4ths, 5ths, and octaves are called perfect because their ratios are so acoustically pure/stable that they don't get a "minor" version in the same way – they can only be perfect, augmented, or diminished.

2nds, 3rds, 6ths and 7ths come in major or minor form (and can also be augmented/diminished).

All intervals from C, in semitones:

Interval	Semitones	Example from C	Quality
Unison	0	C–C	Perfect
Minor 2nd	1	C–D ♭	Minor
Major 2nd	2	C–D	Major
Minor 3rd	3	C–E ♭	Minor
Major 3rd	**4**	**C–E**	**Major**
Perfect 4th	**5**	**C–F**	**Perfect**
Tritone (Aug 4th/Dim 5th)	6	C–F♯ / C–G ♭	Augmented/Diminished
Perfect 5th	**7**	**C–G**	**Perfect**
Minor 6th	8	C–A ♭	Minor
Major 6th	**9**	**C–A**	**Major**
Minor 7th	10	C–B ♭	Minor
Major 7th	11	C–B	Major
Octave	12	C–C	Perfect

Chapter 8. The Chromatic Scale

A chromatic scale is a scale that includes all 12 pitches within an octave, moving entirely in half steps (semitones).

Key features:

- Contains every note available in Western music within an octave – all 7 natural notes plus all 5 sharps/flats.
- Interval pattern: H – H – H – H – H – H – H – H – H – H – H – H (12 consecutive half steps)
- Has no “tonic pull” or key center in the way major/minor scales do – every note is equally spaced, so no note sounds more “home” than another
- Can be notated using sharps or flats depending on context/direction

Example starting on C:

C – C♯/D♭ – D – D♯/E♭ – E – F – F♯/G♭ – G – G♯/A♭ – A – A♯/B♭ – B – C

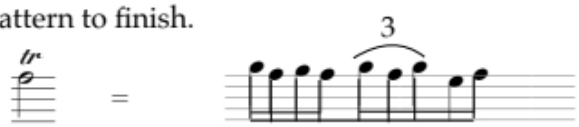
Common uses:

- Passing tones and embellishments in melodies
- Chromatic scales in technical practice/exercises (common in piano pedagogy)
- Certain Jazz and 20th – century classical compositions use it more structurally, sometimes abandoning a fixed tonal center altogether.

Chapter 9. Ornaments

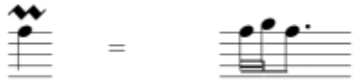
Ornaments are embellishments around the written notation involving playing more notes than written in accepted patterns determined by the symbol given. Look carefully where the ornament is placed. If it is placed after a note then that note must be written (played) before the ornament is realized.

The trill involves playing alternating notes after and including the given note. A trill often ends with a turn pattern to finish.



The turn involves playing notes either side of the given note, beginning with the note *above* that which is written.

The upper mordent alternates once, a note higher than the given note and then back again.



The lower mordent alternates once, a note lower than the given note and then back again.

The acciaccatura squeezes in a note above the written note but without altering the time value of the given note - it takes value from the previous note.

The appoggiatura add in a note above the written note, but share the time value equally with the given note.

Chapter 10. Instruments

String Family

Instruments in the string family can play single notes and double notes / double stopping. Although advanced players can play more notes simultaneously.

Violin	Treble Clef
Viola	Alto Clef (sometimes treble clef)
Cello	Bass Clef (sometimes tenor clef)
Double Bass	Bass Clef

Woodwind Family

Instruments in the woodwind family can only play single notes.

Flute	Treble Clef
Oboe	Treble Clef
Clarinet	Treble Clef
Bassoon	Bass Clef

Brass Family

Instruments in the brass family can only play single notes.

Cornet	Treble Clef
Trumpet	Treble Clef
Horn	Treble Clef (sometimes bass clef)
Trombone	Bass Clef (though other clefs can be used)
Tuba	Bass Clef

Percussion

Only tuned percussion uses standard notation

Glockenspiel	Treble Clef
Xylophone	Treble Clef
Tubular Bells	Treble Clef
Timpani	Bass Clef

Untuned percussion, (E.g. snare drum) has its own notation system.

Chapter 11. Performance Directions

ritenuto

tempo

allegretto

MM h = 60

dolce e espressivo

maestoso

simile (sim.)

troppo

vivo

leggiero

comodo

marziale

pesante

rubato

stringendo

triste

volta

all breve

con sordini

arco

una corda

affetuoso

8va