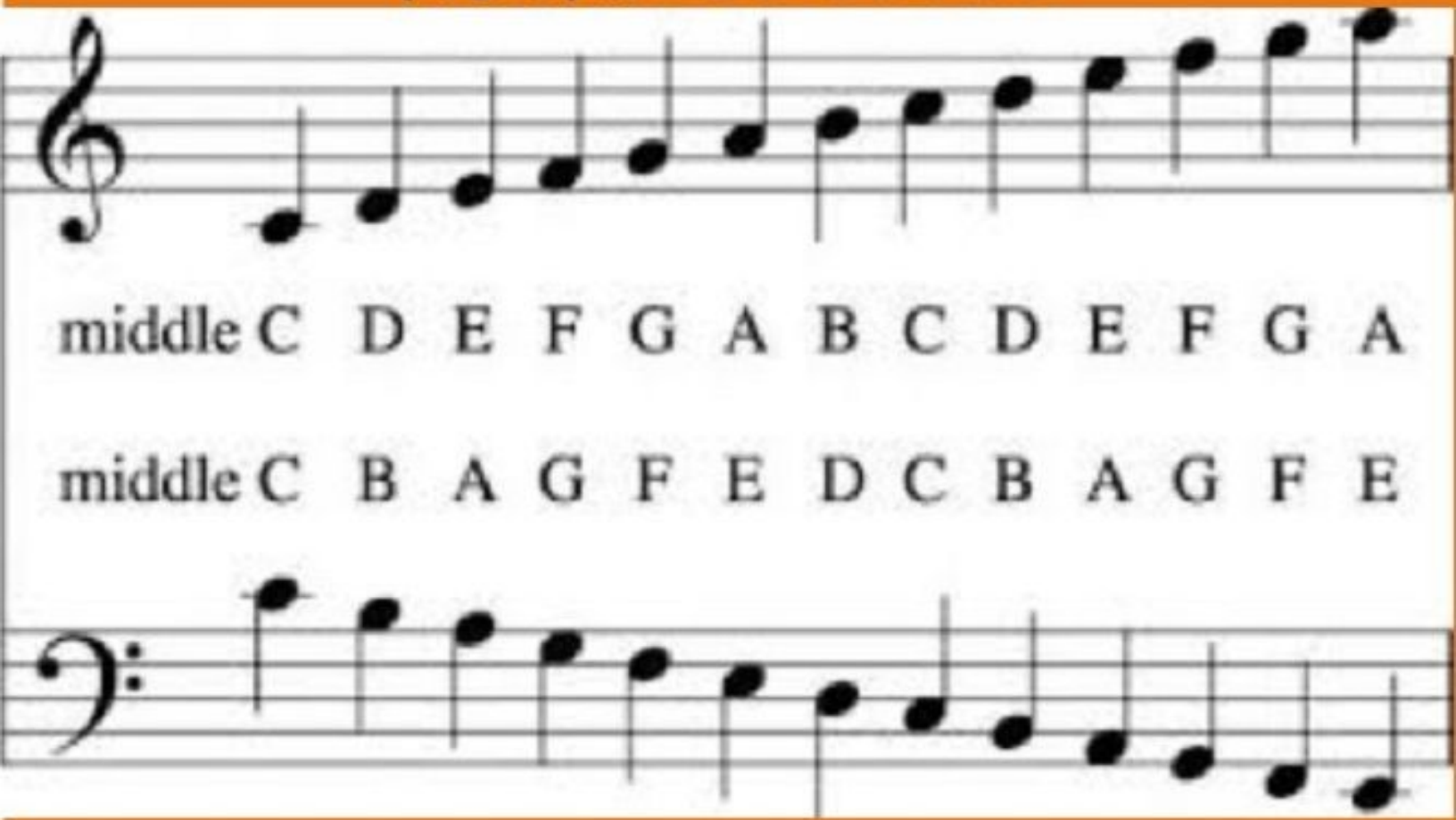
HOW TO READ MUSIC

FOR BEGINNERS

LEARN THE BASICS OF READING MUSIC FROM SCRATCH TO ADVANCE LEVEL



Frank Desmond

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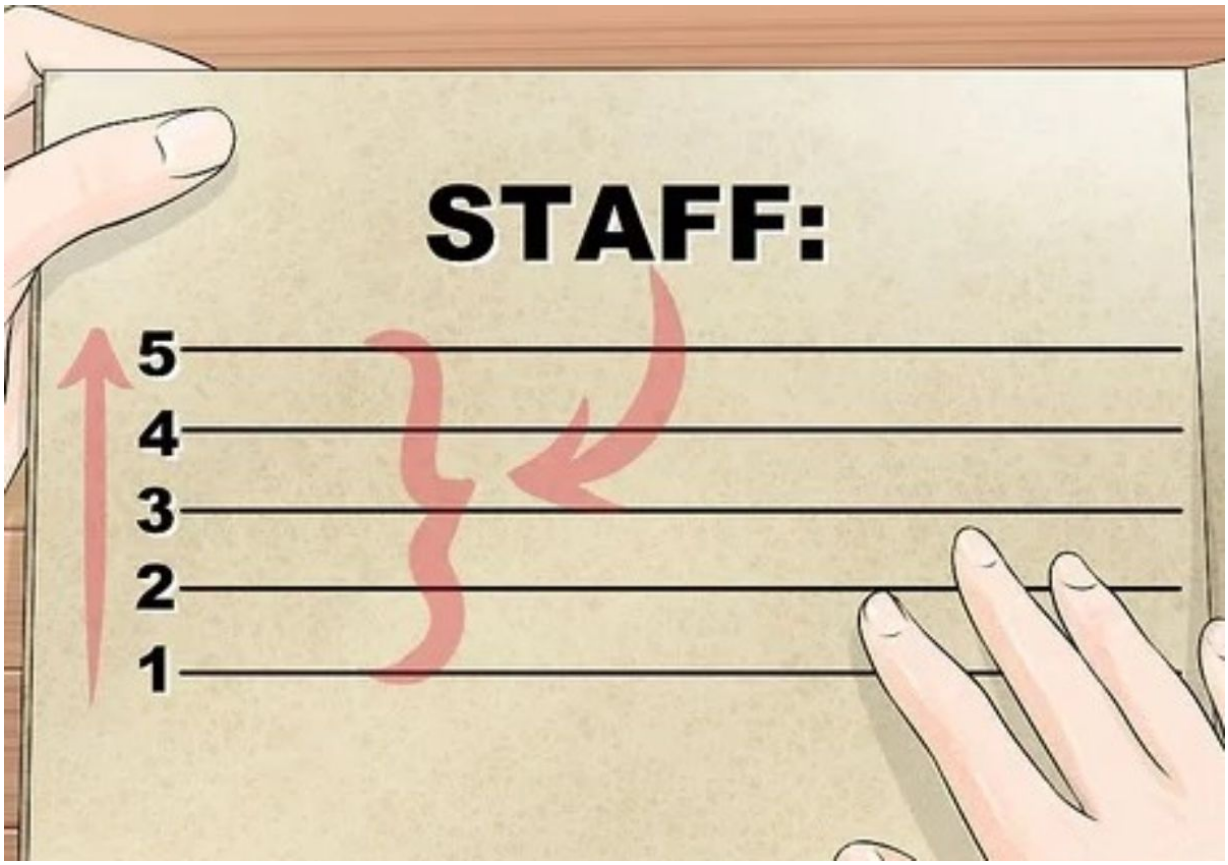
CHAPTER ONE

How to Read Music

Western composed music is a language that has encountered different degree of development for a large number of years, and even the music we read nowadays has been around for more than 300 years. It is essential to take into cognizance that music notation is really the representation of sound with symbols, from fundamental notations for pitch, length, and timing, to more unpredictable or advanced descriptions of expression, tone, timbre and even special effects. This book will explain how notes are named and written; how to read melody, interpret time signatures, keys, sharps, flats, and naturals. This piece of writing will also introduce you to the nuts and bolts of reading music, show you various further developed techniques, and suggest a number of ways to get more knowledge about the subject.

Section 1 - Learning The Basics

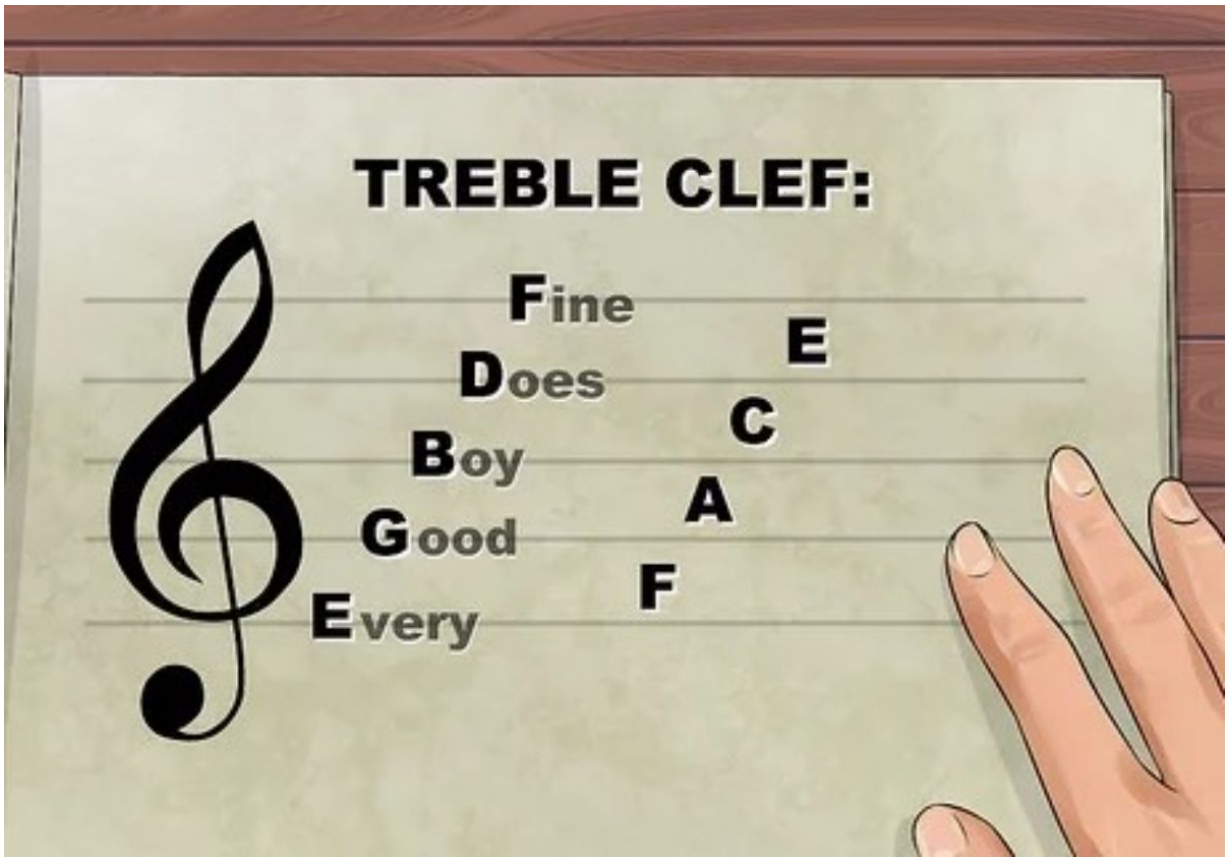
1-Get a handle on the staff.



Prior to you are getting set to start learning music, you have to obtain a sense for the fundamental information that almost everyone who reads music should to know. The flat or horizontal lines on a bit of music make up *the staff*. This is the most fundamental of all musical symbols and the foundation for all that is to tag along or follow.

- The staff is an array of five equivalent or parallel lines, and the spaces among them. You have to know that both spaces and lines are numbered for purposes of reference, and are constantly counted from lowest (base of the staff) to highest (top of the staff).

2 -Start with the treble clef.

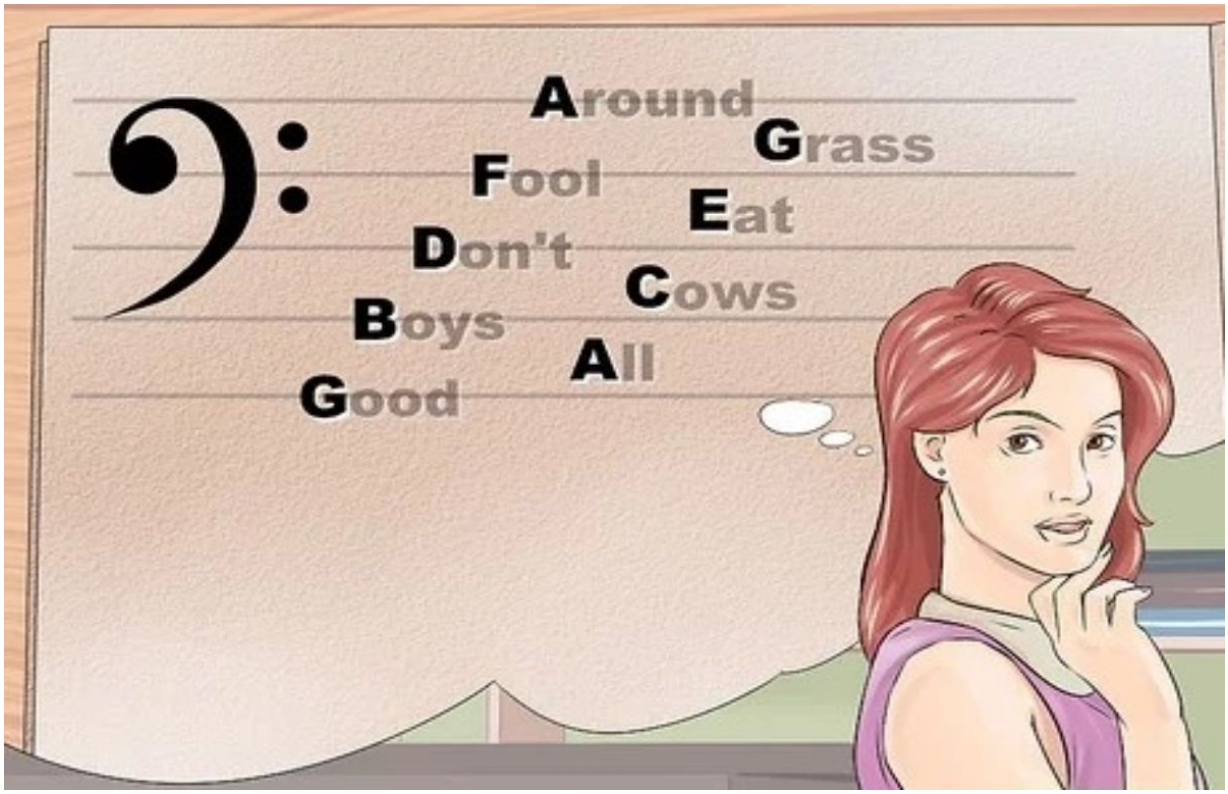


One of the first things you will come across when reading music is the *clef*. This sign, which seems like a large, fancy cursive symbol at the left end of the staff, is the legend that informs you just about what range your instrument will play in. Every voices and instruments in the higher ranges make use of the treble clef, and for this introduction to reading and understanding music, we will focus mostly on this clef for our examples.

- The G clef or treble clef, is gotten from an decorative Latin letter G. One excellent method to commit this to memory is that the line at the middle of the clef's "swirl" wraps in the region of the line that denotes the note G. Once notes are included to the staff within the treble clef, they shall have the following values:

- The 5 lines, from the base up, stand for these notes: E G B D F.
- The 4 spaces, from the base up, stand for these notes: F A C E.
- This may look like a lot to commit to memory, however you can make use of mnemonics—or word cues—that might help you keep them in mind. For the lines, ‘Every Good Boy Does Fine’ is one trendy mnemonic, and the spaces spell or bring out the word ‘FACE.’ Practicing by means of an online note recognition tool is one more fantastic way to reinforce these associations.

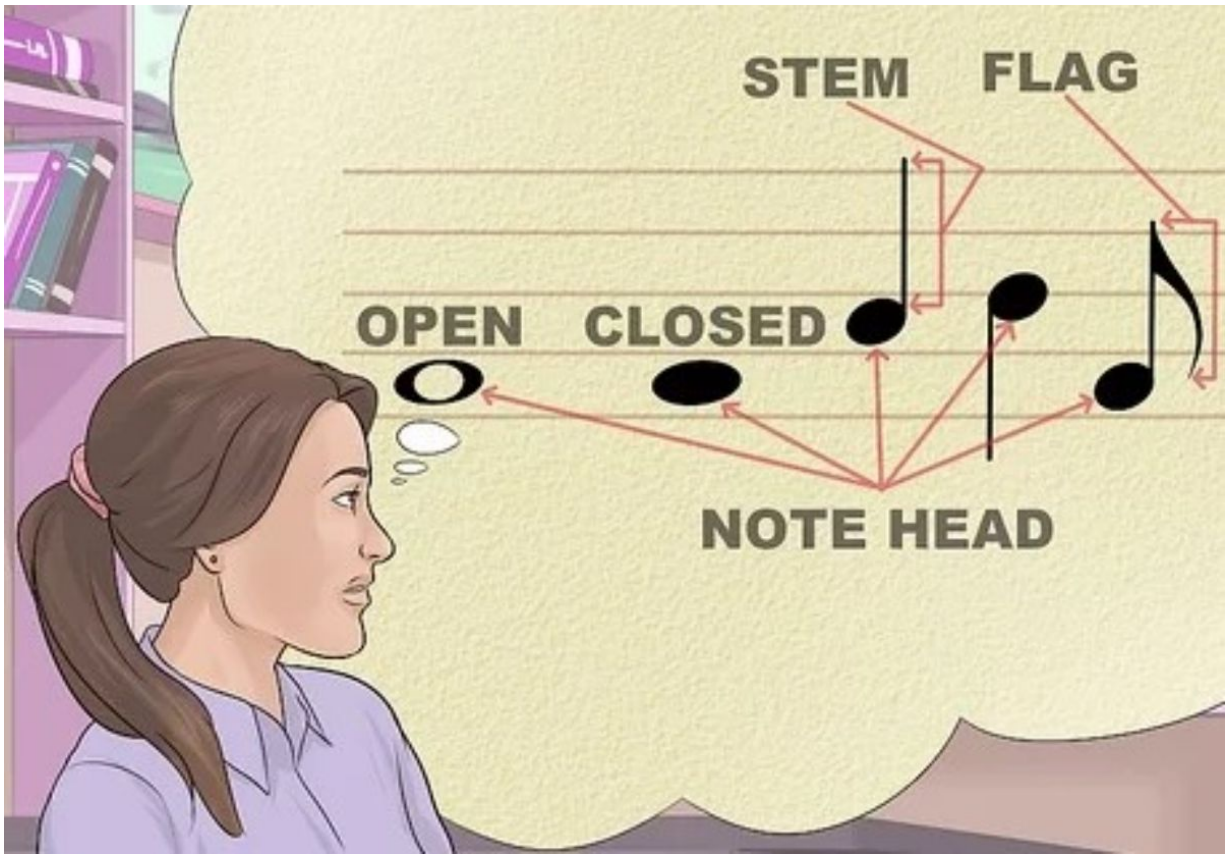
3 -Understand the bass clef.



The bass clef, also called F clef, is utilized for instruments in the subordinate registers, plus the left hand of the piano, trombone, bass guitar, and so on.

- The name "F clef" takes from its genesis as the Gothic letter F. The 2 dots on the clef stretch out on top of and beneath the "F" line on the staff. The staff of the bass clef symbolizes different notes than that of the treble clef.
- The five lines, bottom to top, stand for these notes: G B D F A (‘Good Boys Don't Fool Around’).
- The 4 spaces, base to top, stand for these notes: A C E G (‘All Cows Eat Grass’).

4 -Learn the components of a note.



Individual note symbols are a mixture of up to 3 essential components: the note head, the flags and stem.

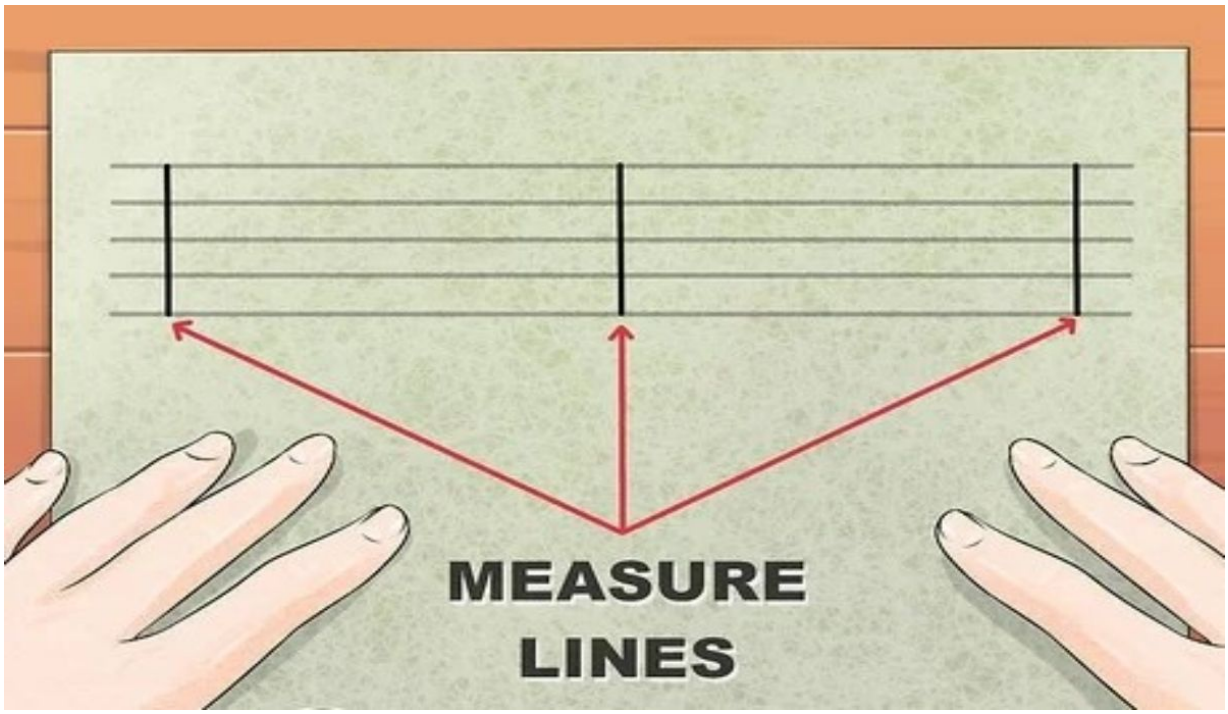
- **The note head**. This is an elliptical shape that is either open (white) or shut (dark). At its most basic, it informs

the artist what note to play on their instruments.

- **The stem**. This is the slim vertical line that is appended to the note head. Once the stem is pointing up, it connects on the right part of the note head. Once the stem is pointing down, it connects the note head on the left. The direction of the stem does not have consequence on the note, however it makes notation simpler to interpret or read and a lesser amount of cluttered.
- The common rule on stem direction is that at or beyond the middle line (B for treble clef or D for bass clef) of the staff, the stem points downward, and once the note is beneath the center of the staff, the stem points up.
- **The flag**. This is the curled stroke that is joined to the end of the stem. Regardless of whether the stem is attached to the right or left of the note head, the flag is *at all times* drawn to the right of the stem, and by no means to the left!
- Taken together, the note, stem, and flag or flags demonstrate to the performer the time worth for any specified note, as measured in beats or portions of beats. Every time you listen to music, and you are tapping or drumming your foot in time to the music, you are recognizing that beat.

Section 2 - Reading Meter And Time

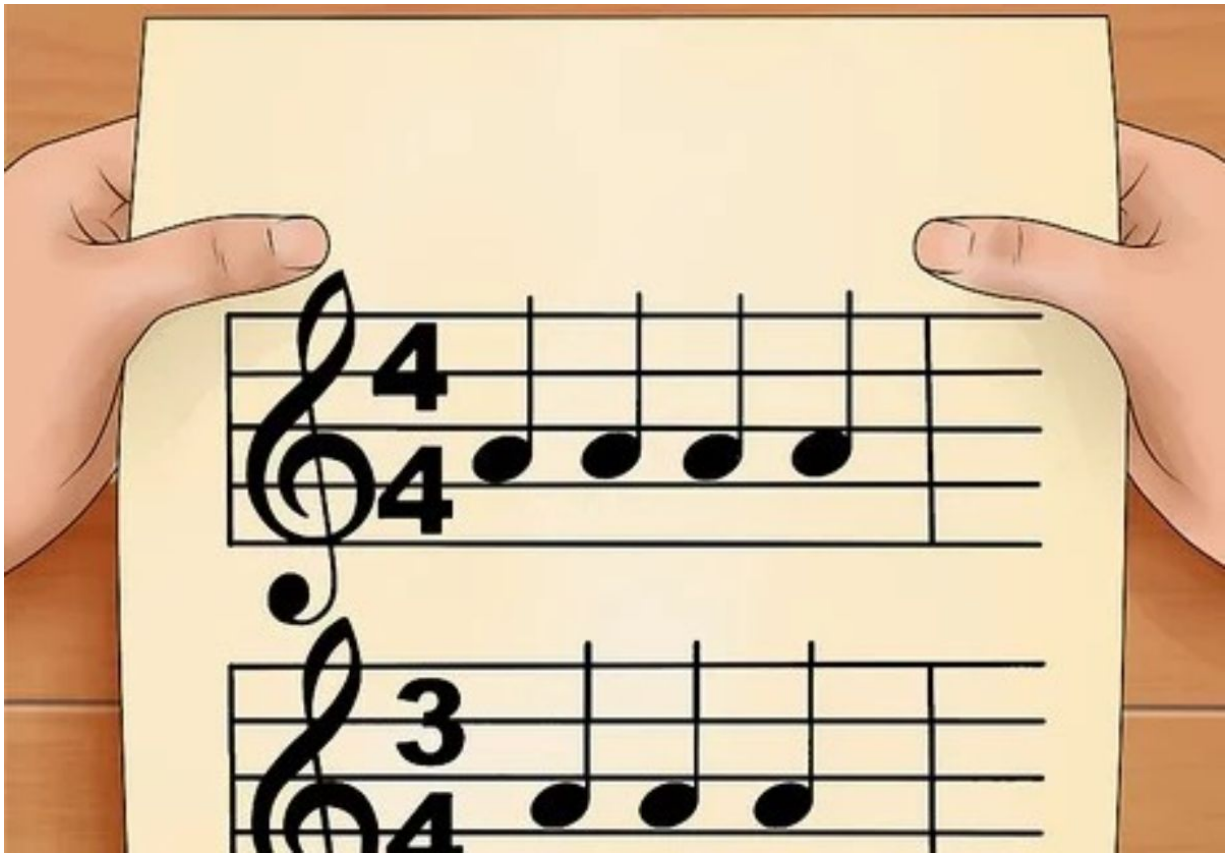
1 -Learn about measure lines.



On a piece of sheet music, you would notice thin vertical lines crossing the staff at moderately regular intervals. These lines symbolize *measures* (known as ‘bars’ in a number of places); the space prior to the first line is the first measure, the space among the first and second lines happens to be the second measure, and so on. There is need to take into cognizance that measure lines don't have an effect on how the music sounds, however they help the artist maintain their place in the music.

- As we will see beneath, another handy thing about measures is that *each one obtains the same amount of beats.* For instance, if you see yourself tapping "1-2-3-4" along to a bit of music on the radio, you have possibly intuitively found the measure lines already.

2 -Learn about timing, or meter.



Meter can be usually thought of as the ‘pulse’ or the beat of music. You sense it unconsciously or intuitively once you listen to dance or pop music; the ‘boom, tiss, boom, tiss’ of a stereotypical or conventional dance track is a straightforward example of meter.

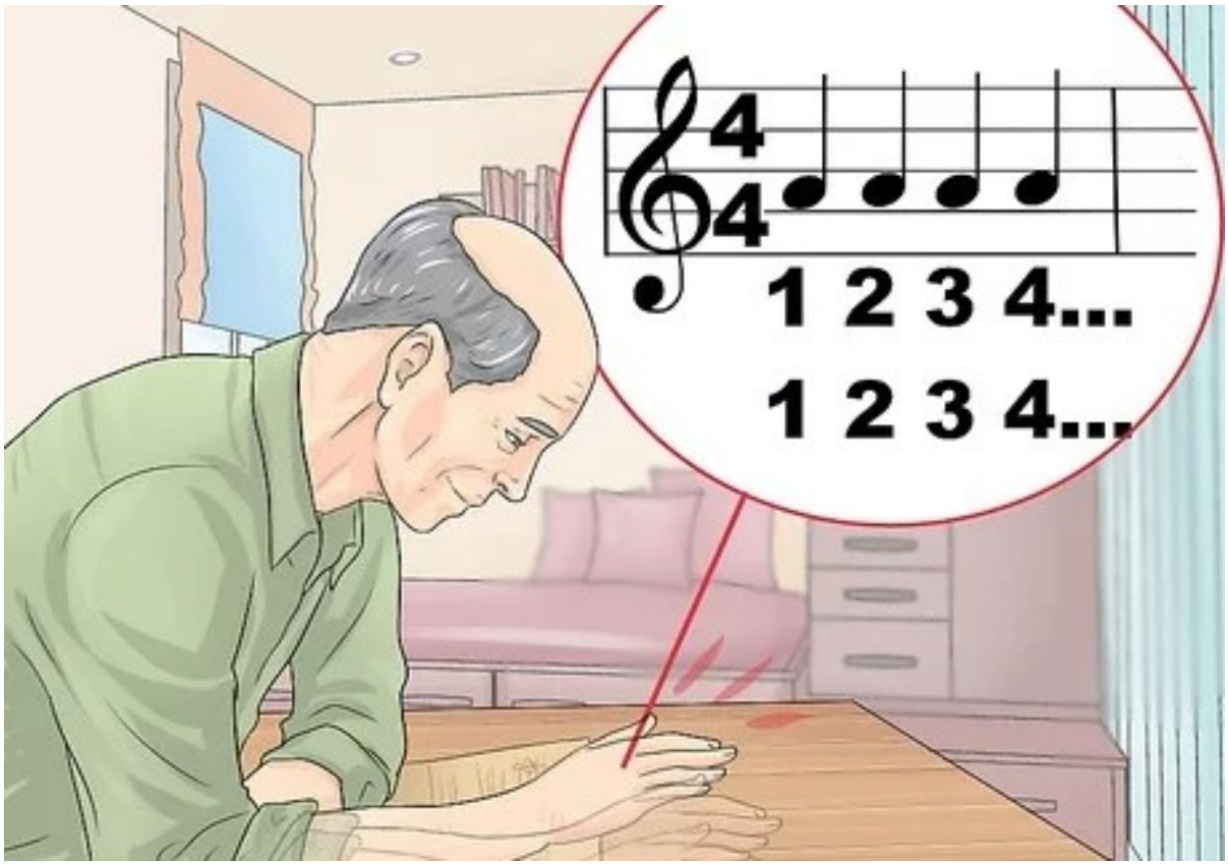
- Upon a bit of sheet music, the beat is articulated by something that seems like a fraction written next to the first clef symbol. Similar to any part, there is a denominator, and a numerator. The numerator, written in

the zenith two spaces of the staff, informs you how numerous beats there are in one measure. The denominator informs you the note worth that receives one beat (the ‘pulse’ that you tap your toe to).

- Maybe the simplest meter to comprehend is 4/4 time, or ‘common’ time. In 4/4 time, there are 4 beats in every measure and every quarter note is equivalent to one beat. This is the time signature you will hear in most trendy music. You can count along to general time music by counting ‘ONE two three four ONE two three four...’ to the beat.
- By altering the numerator, we alter the amount of beats in a measure. Another very general time signature is 3/4. For instance, a large amount of waltzes will have a stable ‘ONE two three ONE two three’ beat, making them in 3/4 time.
- A number of meters will be made known with a letter C rather than two numbers. 4/4 time is frequently shown as a big C, which represents common time. Similarly, 2/2 meter is frequently shown as a big C with a perpendicular or vertical line through it. The C with the line through it represents cut time (at times referred to as half common time).

Section 3 - Learning Rhythm

1 - **Get in the groove.**

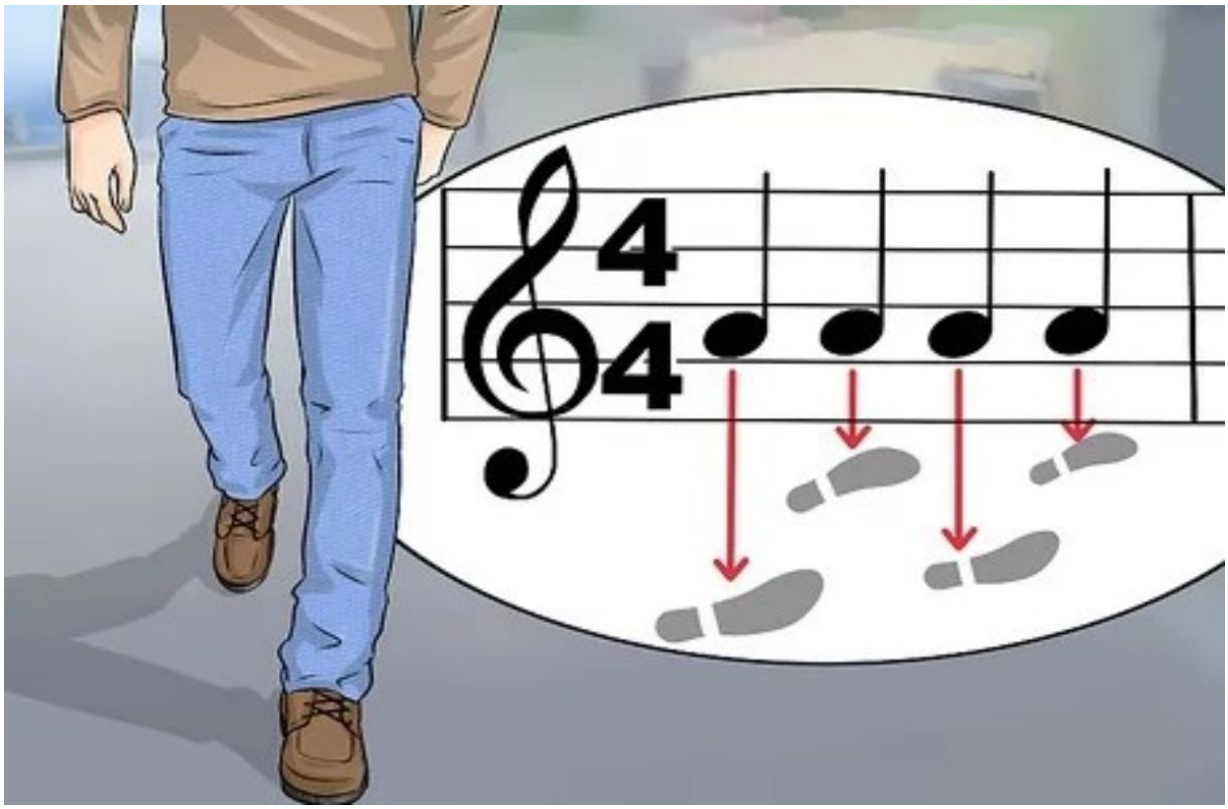


Since it integrates meter and time, ‘rhythm’ is a essential element of how the music feel. Conversely, while meter simply informs you how numerous beats, rhythm is how those beat are being utilized.

- Try this: tap your finger on top of your desk, along with count 1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4, progressively. Not very fascinating, right? Right now attempt this: on beats 1 and 3, tap stronger, and on beats 2 and 4, tap milder. That is got a varied feel to it. That is got a different vibe to it! Presently try the reverse: tapping noisy on 2 and 4, and delicate on beats 1 and 3.
- Check out Spektor Regina’s Don't Leave Me. You can obviously hear the rhythm: the calmer bass note

happens on beat 1 and beat 3, and a loud applaud and snare drum occur on beats 2 and 4. You will start to get a feeling of how music is structured. That is what is referred to as rhythm!

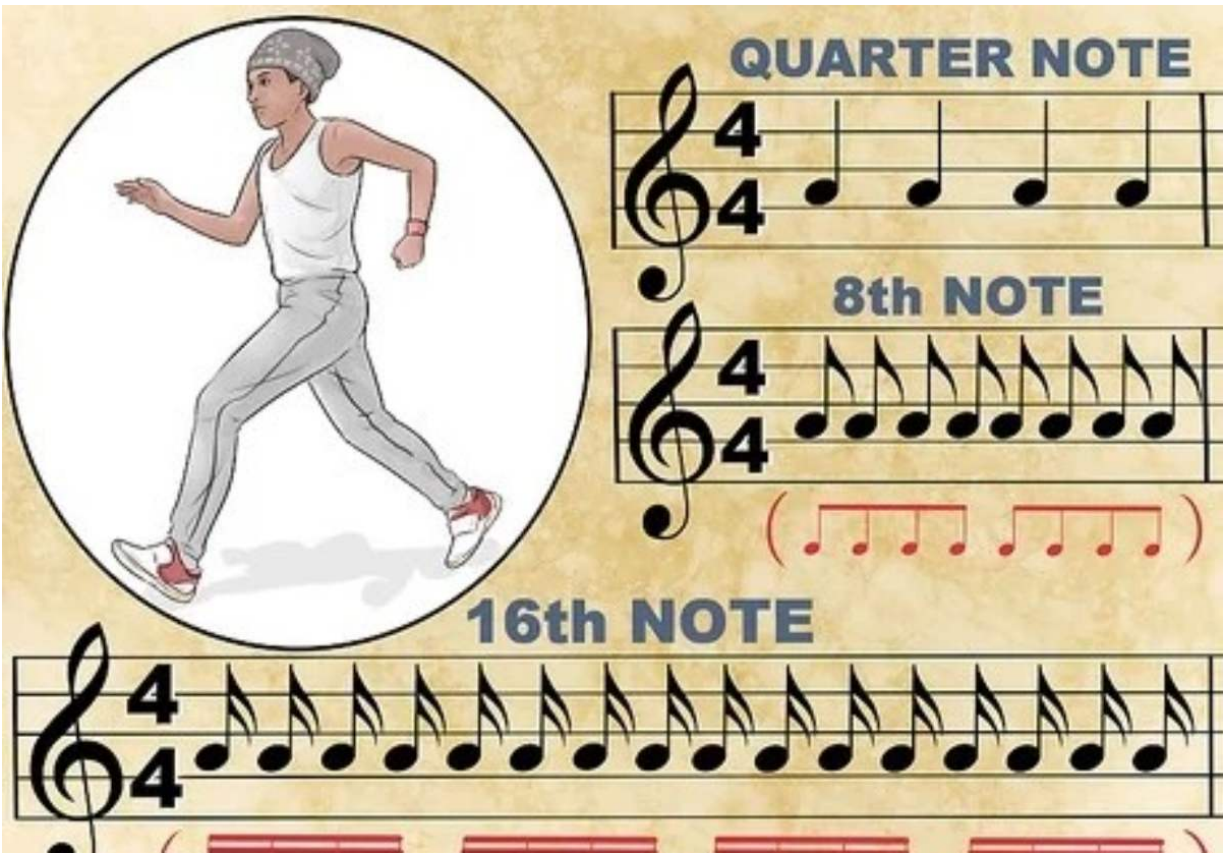
2 - Imagine yourself strolling.



Every step will equal one beat. Those are musically represented by quarter notes in glow of the fact that in a ton of Western music (which means music of the western world, not simply the music of Williams Hank!), there are 4 of these beats for each measure. Musically, the cadence of your strolling or walking will appear like this:

- Each step is one-quarter note. On a piece of music, quarter notes are the concrete black dots attached to stems devoid of any flags. You may possibly count that off as you stroll or walk: "1, 2, 3, 4-1, 2, 3, tw
- Quarter notes are known as ‘crotchets’ in a number of places, such as the UK.
- If you were to reduce your speed down to half that speed, so that you simply took a step each two beats on the 1 and on the 3, that have to be notated with half notes (for half a measure). Upon a sheet of music, half notes appear like quarter notes, only they are not concrete black; they are delineated in black through white centers.
- In some places, half notes are known as "minims".
- If you reduced your speed down even further, so that you simply took a step each four beats, on the one, you have to note down that as a whole note—or one note per measure. On a piece of music, whole notes seem like "O"s or donuts; similar to half notes devoid of stems.

3 - Speed up the pace!

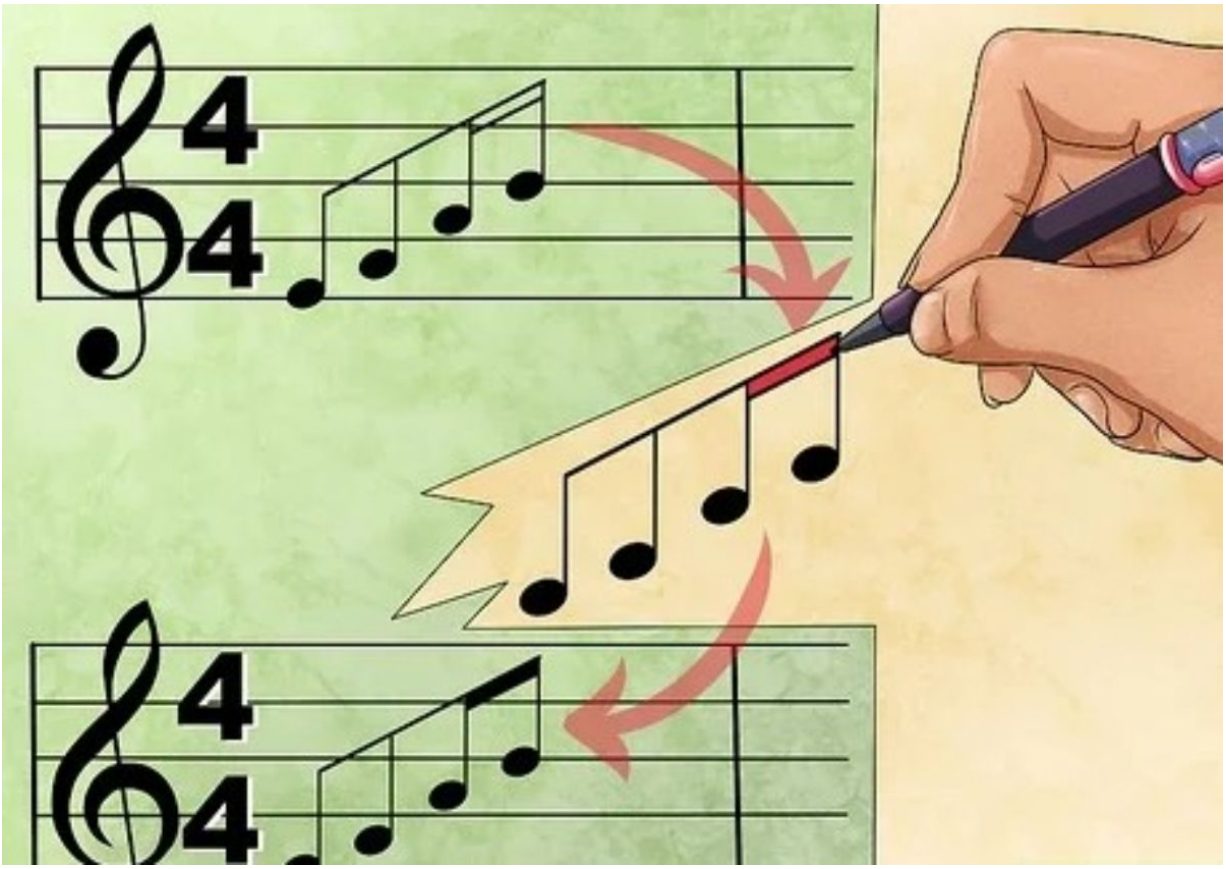


Enough of this reducing down. While you observed, when we reduced the notes down, we began taking away bits of the note. First, we had taken away the solid note, afterward we took off the stem. Right now let gaze at speeding things up. To achieve that, we are going to include things to the note.

- Return to our strolling rhythm, and imagine that in your brain (tapping your foot to the beat can be of help). Presently envision that your motor has recently pulled up to the stop, and you're about a street or two away. What do you do? You run! Also, as you run, you attempt to *flag* the vehicle driver.
- To make notes quicker in music, we include a flag. Every flag cuts the time value of the note partly in half. For instance, an eighth note (which gets one banner or flag)

is 1/2 the value (estimation) of a quarter note; and a 16th note (which gets two flags) is 1/2 the estimation of an eighth note. In terms of walking, we move from a walk or stroll (quarter note or quaver) to a run (eighth note or semiquaver)—two times as speedy as a walk, to a sprint (sixteenth note or demisemiquaver)—two times as fast as a run. View in terms of each quarter note being a step as you stroll, tap along with the above example.

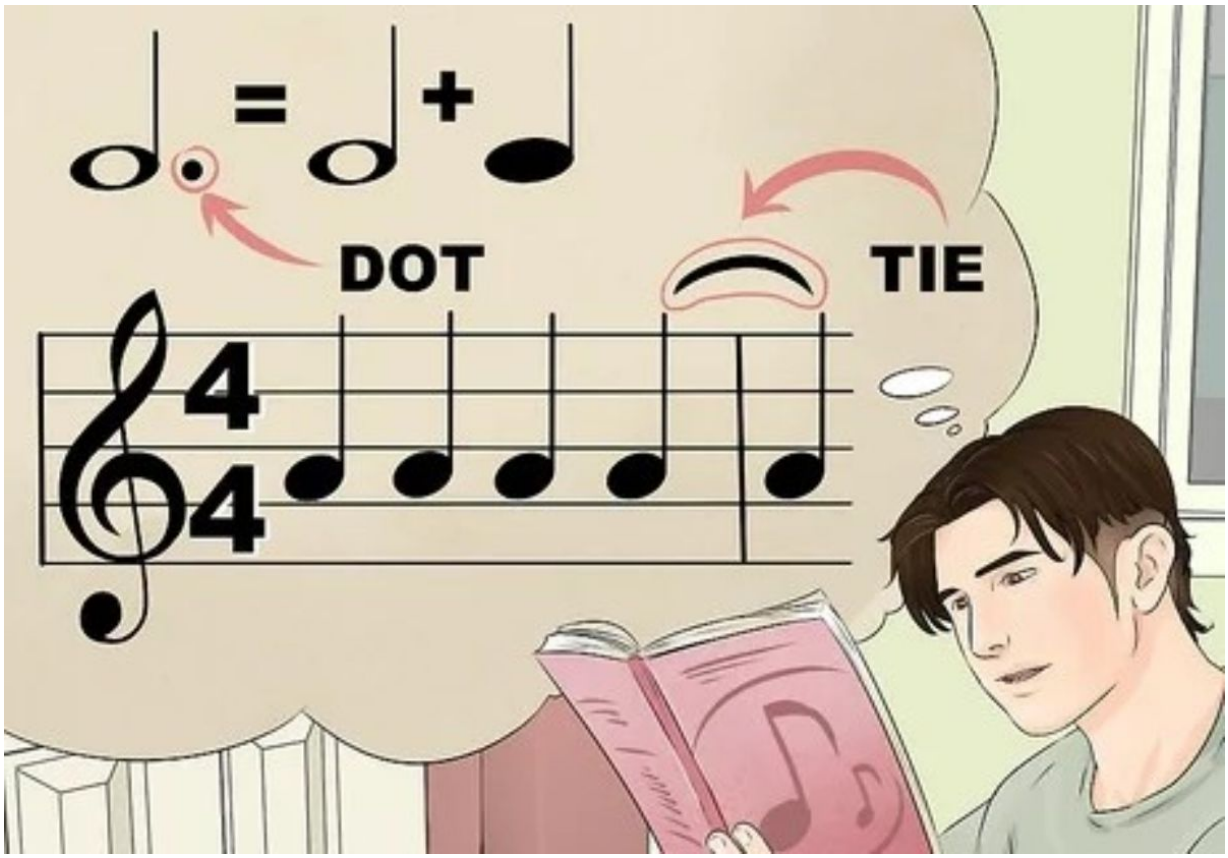
4 - Beam up!



As you can notice with that example above, things can begin to get a bit confusing when there are a lot of notes on the page as that. Your eyes begin to cross, and you are unable to find path of where you were. To categorise notes into smaller packages that make common sense visually, we make use of *beaming*.

- Beaming simply replaces individual note flags with thick lines drawn among note stems. These are categorized logically, and while more complicated music requires more intricate beaming rules, for our purposes, we will universally beam in groups of quarter notes. Compare the example beneath with the above example. Attempt tapping out the rhythm once more, and notice how much clearer beaming makes the notation.

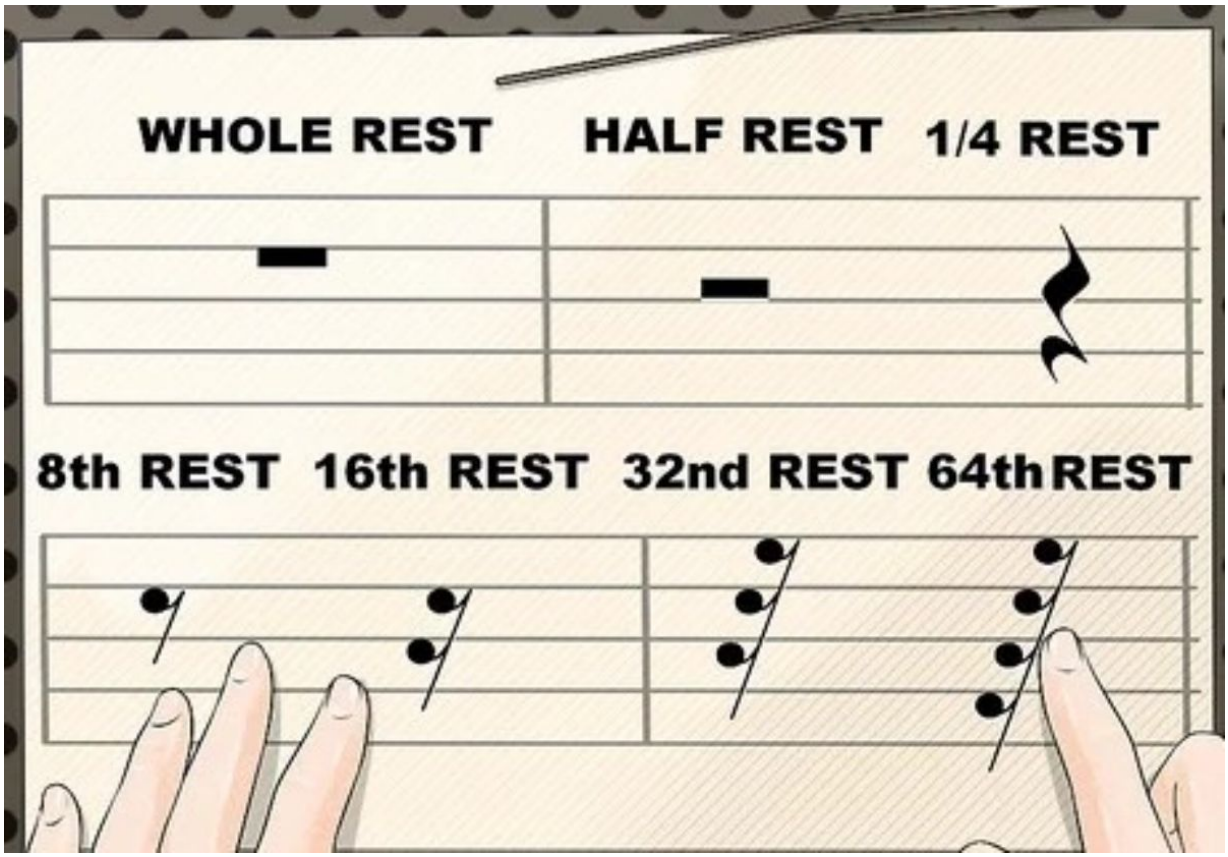
5 -Learn the value of ties and dots.



Where a flag will cut the value of a note in half, the dot has a similar —but the opposite—function. With restricted exceptions that do not come into play here, the dot is at all times placed to the right of the note head. When you notice a dotted note, that note is augmented by one half the length of its original value.

- For instance, a dot placed after a half note (minim) would be equal to the half note plus a quarter note. A dot positioned after a quarter note (crotchet) would be equal to a quarter note plus an eighth note.
- Ties are similar to dots—they expand the value of the original note. A tie is just two notes linked together with a curved line among the note heads. Not like dots, which are abstract and based totally on the value of the original note, ties are explicit: the note is increased in length by precisely as long as the second note value.
- One reason you would utilize a tie versus a dot is, for instance, when a note's period will not fit musically into the space of a measure (bar). In that case, you just include the leftover duration into the following measure as a note, and bind the two jointly.
- Note that the tie is drawn from note head to note head in the contrary direction as the stem.

6 -Take a rest.

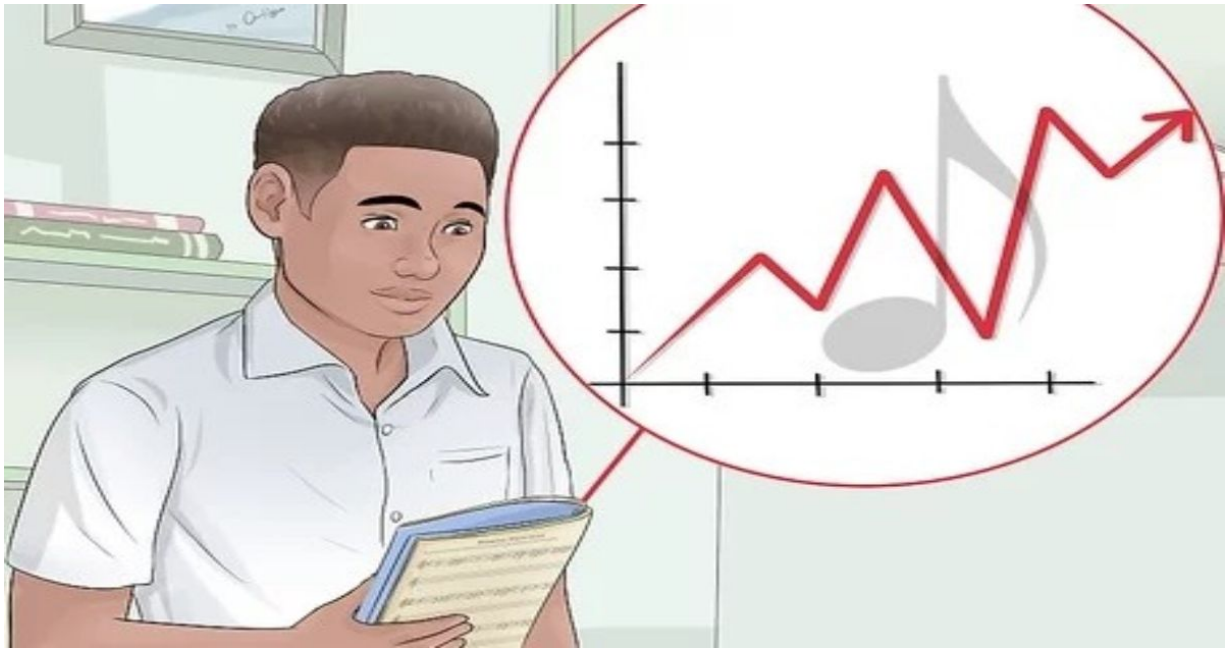


A few say music is just a series of notes, and they are half right. Music is a sequence of notes and the spaces among them. Those spaces are known as *rests*, and even in silence, they can actually add motion and life to music. Let's take a look at how they are notated.

- Like notes, they have particular symbols for particular durations. A full note rest is a rectangle descending from the fourth line, and a half note rest is a rectangle resting on the third line and pointing upwards. The quarter note rest is a squiggly line, and the rest of the rests are an angled bar that looks like a number "7" with the same number of flags as their equivalent note value. These flags *at all times* sweep to the left.

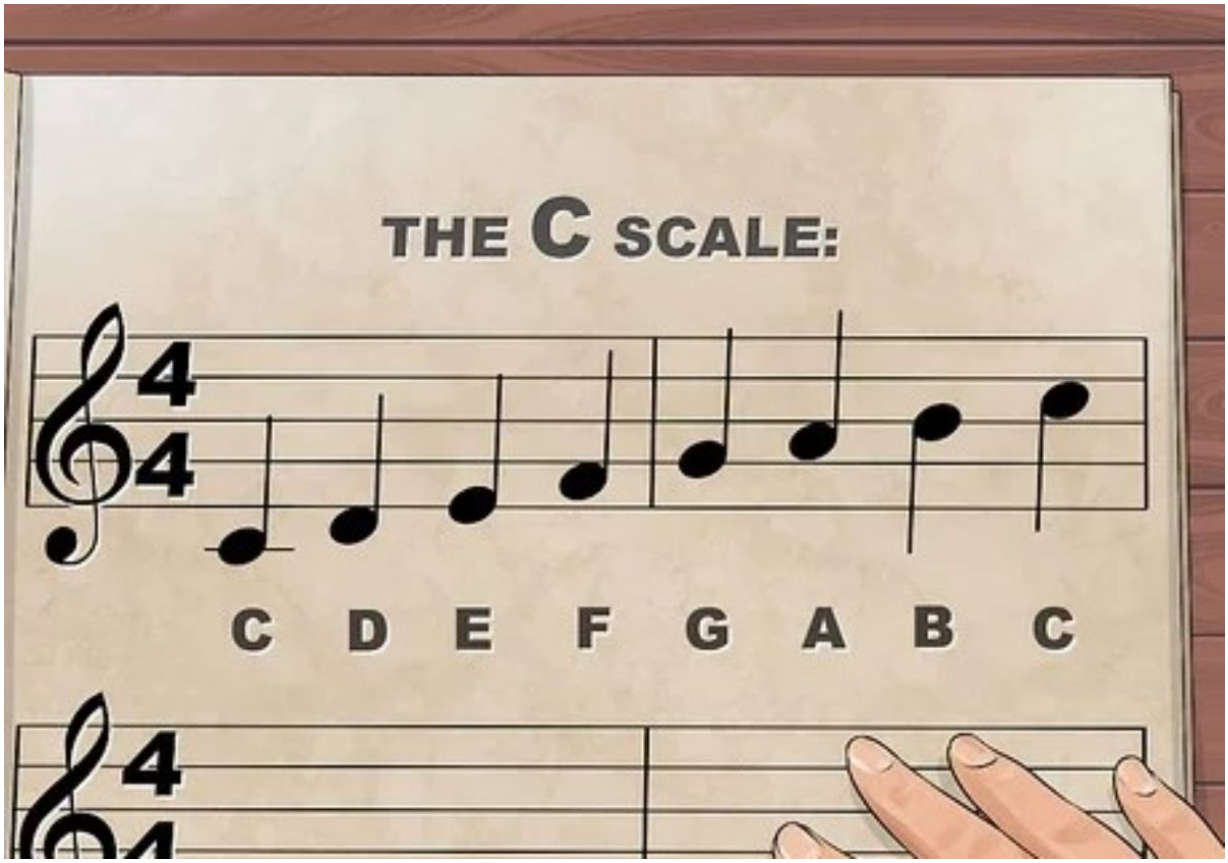
Section 4 - Learning Melody

1 -**Make sure you understand the above, and then let's dive into the fun stuff:**



reading music! We now have the fundamentals down: the staff, the parts of a note, and the basics of notating durations of notes and rests.

2 -Learn the C scale.

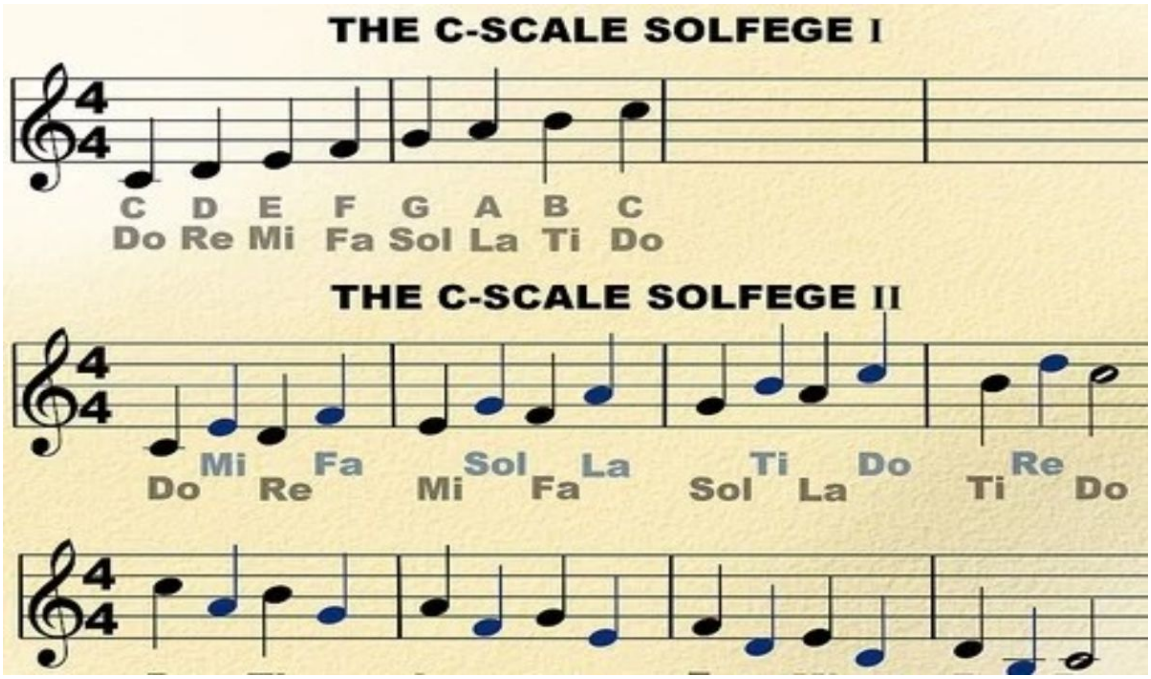


The C major scale is the first scale we make use of when teaching how to read music because it is the one that utilizes just natural notes (the white keys on a piano). After you have that locked into your brain cells, the rest will follow naturally.

- First, we will show you what it appears like, afterward we will show you how to make sense of it, and start to read music! Here is what it seems like on the staff. Observe the "C scale" above.
- If you will have a look at the first note, the low C, you will observe that it really goes below the staff lines. When that occurs, we simply attach a staff line for that note only—hence, the little line through the note head. The lower the note, the more staff lines we include. However we don't need to be anxious about that now.

- The C scale consisted of eight notes. These are the counterpart of the white keys on the piano.
- You may or might not have a piano handy, but at this point, it is significant for you to start to get an idea of not just what music looks like, but of what it *sounds* like, too.

3 -Learn a little sight singing—or "solfège."



That might sound frightening, but chances are, you already know it: it's the fancy way of saying "do, re, mi."

- By learning to sing the notes that you see, you will start to develop the skill of sight-reading—a skill that can take a lifetime to perfect, but will be useful right from the beginning. Let's take a look at that C scale again, with

the solfege scale added. Observe the ‘C Scale Solfege 11’ above.

- likelihood are, you may know the Rogers and Hammerstein song ‘Do-Re-Mi’ from *The Sound of Music.* If you could sing the ‘do re mi’ scale, do that right away while you glance at the notes. If you need a refresher course, you can hear the song on YouTube.
- Here's a slightly more advanced version, walking up and down the C scale using the solfège notes. Observe the ‘C Scale Solfege 1’ above.
- Practice singing Solfege—part II a few times, until it becomes familiar. The first couple times, read very little by little so that you can look at each note as you sing it. The next couple times, replace the ‘do re mi’ for C, D, E. The objective is to sing the real notes.
- Keep in mind our note values from before: the high C at the end of the first line, and the low C at the end of the second line are half notes, whereas the rest of the notes are quarter notes. If you visualize yourself walking, yet again, there is a note for each step. The half notes take two steps.

4 - Congratulations, you're now reading music!

Section 5 - Reading Sharp, Flats, Naturals, And Keys

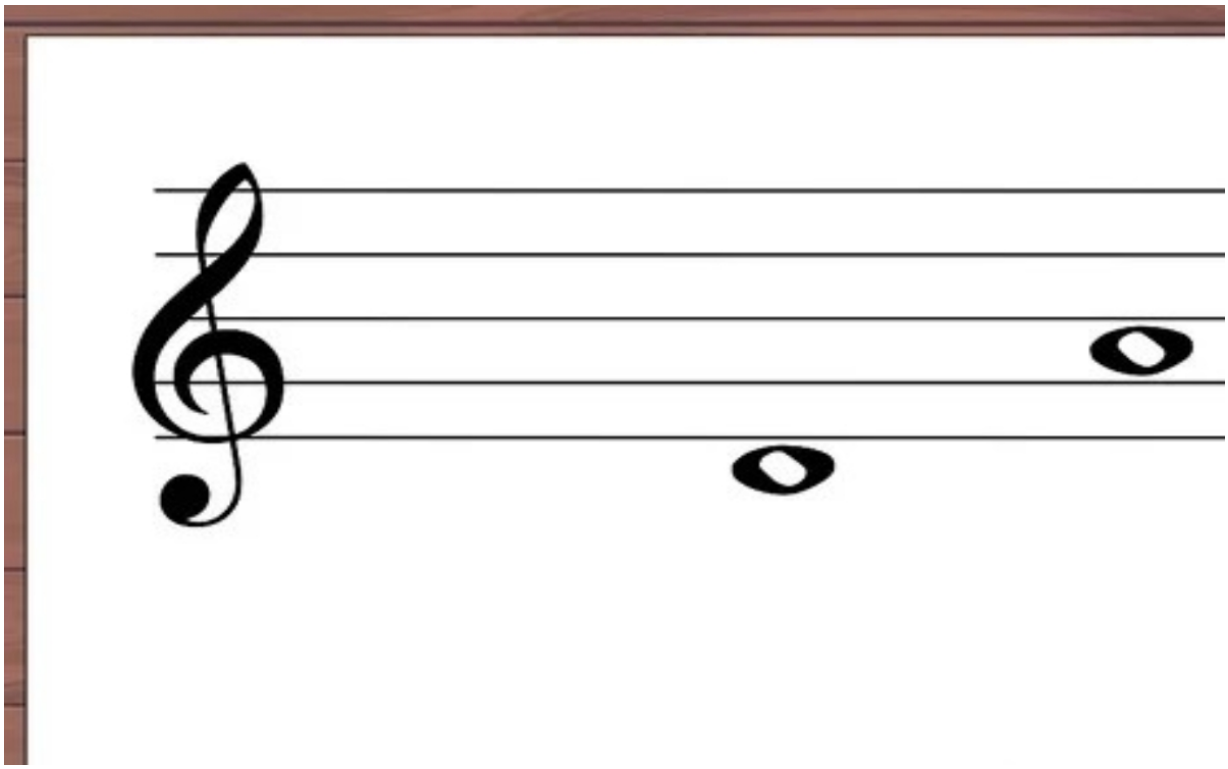
1 -Take the next step.

So far we have been able to covered the very basics of rhythm and melody, and you have to acquire the basic skills needed that you now understand what all those dots and squiggles stand for. While this may enable you pass through basic Flutophone class, there are still a number of things you will need to become familiar with. Chief among these are key signatures.

- You may have seen sharps and flats in music: sharp looks like a hashtag (♯) and a flat looks like a lowercase B (♭). They are placed to the left of a note head and indicate that the note to follow is played a half-step (semitone) higher for a sharp, or a half-step lower for a flat. The C scale, as we have learned, consists of the white keys on the piano. When you are beginning to

read music, it's easiest to think of the sharps and flats as the black keys. C major and A minor don’t have sharps or flats.

2 - Know the whole tones and semitones.



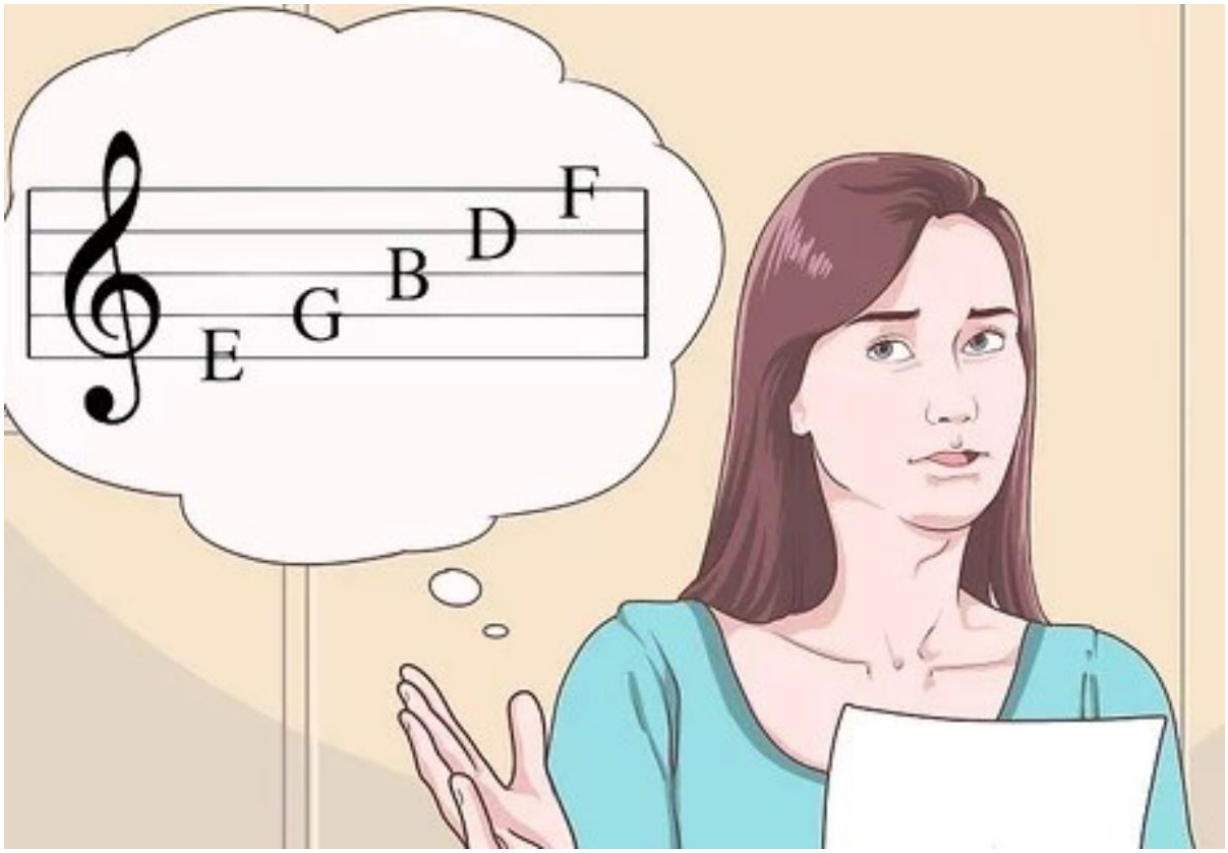
In Western music, you have to know that notes are either a whole tone or a semitone apart. If you look at the C note on the piano keyboard, you'll see there's a black key between it and the next note up, the D. The musical distance among the C and the D is known as a whole tone. The distance between the C and the black key is known as a semitone. Now, you might be thinking what that black key is called. The answer is, ‘it depends.’

- An excellent rule of thumb is if you are going up the scale, that note is the sharp version of the starting note. When moving down the scale, that note have to be the flat version of the beginning note. Thus, if you are

moving from C to D with the black key, it would be written using a sharp (♯).

- In this case, the black note is written as C♯. When moving down the scale, from D to C, and using the black note as a passing tone between them, the black key would be written using a flat (♭).
- Conventions like that make music a little easier to read. If you were to write those three notes going up and used a D ♭ instead of a C♯, the notation would be written using a natural sign (♮).
- Notice that there's a new sign—the natural. At any time you spot a natural sign (♮) that means that the note cancels any sharps or flats earlier written. In this example, the second and third notes are both "D"s: the first a D ♭ , and so the second D, since it goes up a semitone from the first D, has to have the note "corrected" to show the right note. The further sharps and flats scattered about a sheet of music, the more a musician should take in before the score can be played.
- Frequently, composers that previously utilized accidentals in previous measures might put ‘unnecessary’ natural signs to provide clarity for the player. For example, if a previous measure in a D major piece used an A♯, the next measure that uses an A may be notated with an A-natural instead.

3 - Understand key signatures.



So far, we have been taken a look at the C major scale: eight notes, all the white keys, starting on C. Nevertheless, you can begin a scale on *any* note. If you simply play all the white keys, although, you would not be playing a major scale, but something known as a 'modal scale'.

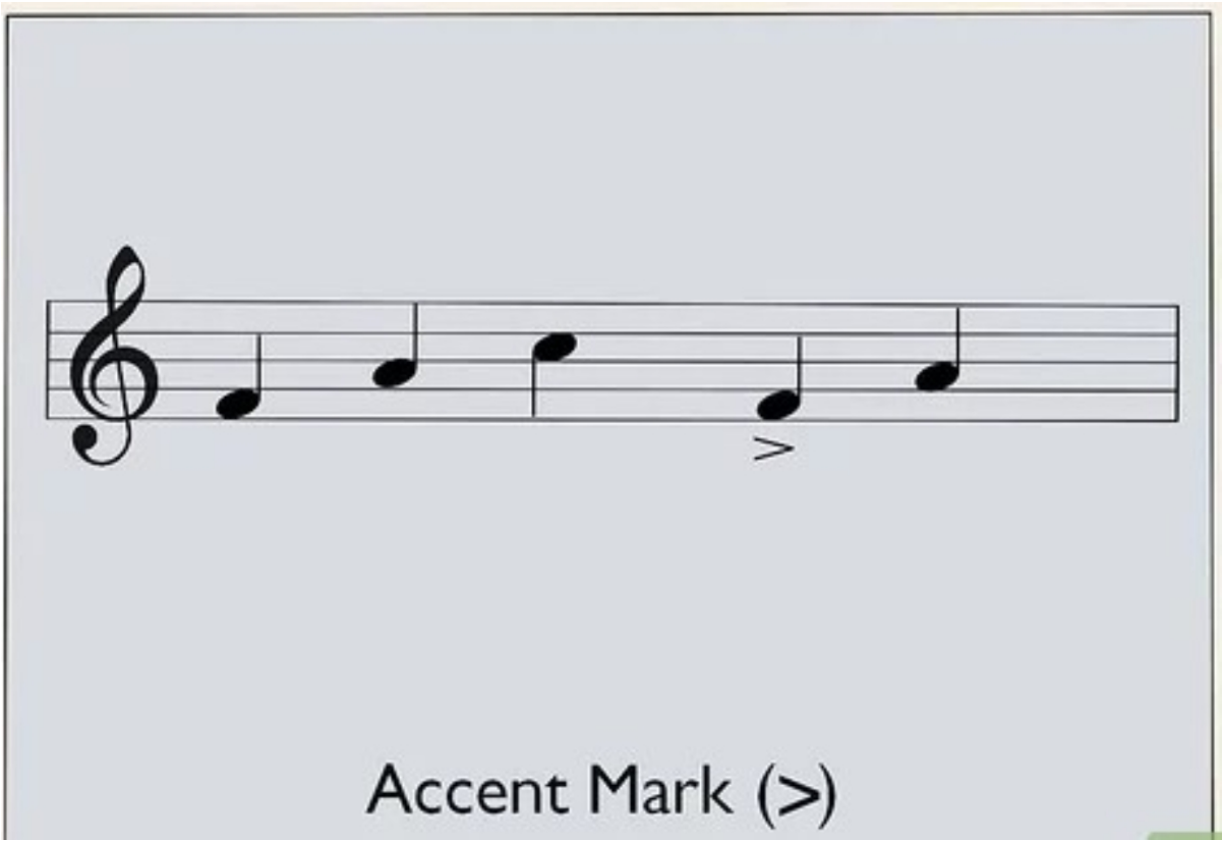
- The beginning note, or *tonic*, is as well the name of the key. You might have heard someone say 'It is in the key of C' or something similar. This example means that the

basic scale begins on C, and includes the notes C D E F G A B C. The notes in a major scale enclose a very particular relationship to each other. Take a look at the keyboard above.

- Note that among most notes, there is a whole step. However there is only a half step (semitone) between E and F, and between B and C. All major scale has this equal relationship: whole-whole-half-whole-whole-whole-half. If you begin your scale on G, for instance, it could be written similar to this:
- Notice the F♯ near the top. In order to uphold the right relationship, the F has to be raised a semitone so that it is a half step from the G, not a whole step. That is easy enough to read by itself, but what if you started a major scale in C♯? (See above.)
- Now it starts to get complicated! In order to minimize the confusion and make music simpler to read, key signatures were created. Each major scale has a specific set of sharps or flats, and those are made known at the very beginning of the music. Taking a look once more at the key of G, we see that has one sharp—F♯. Rather than putting that sharp close to the F on the staff, we take it all the way to the left, and it is just presumed from that point on that every F you see is played as an F♯. (See above picture.)
- This sounds, and is played, precisely the same as the G major scale above, without key signature.

Section 6 - Reading Dynamics And Expression

1 -Get loud—or get soft!



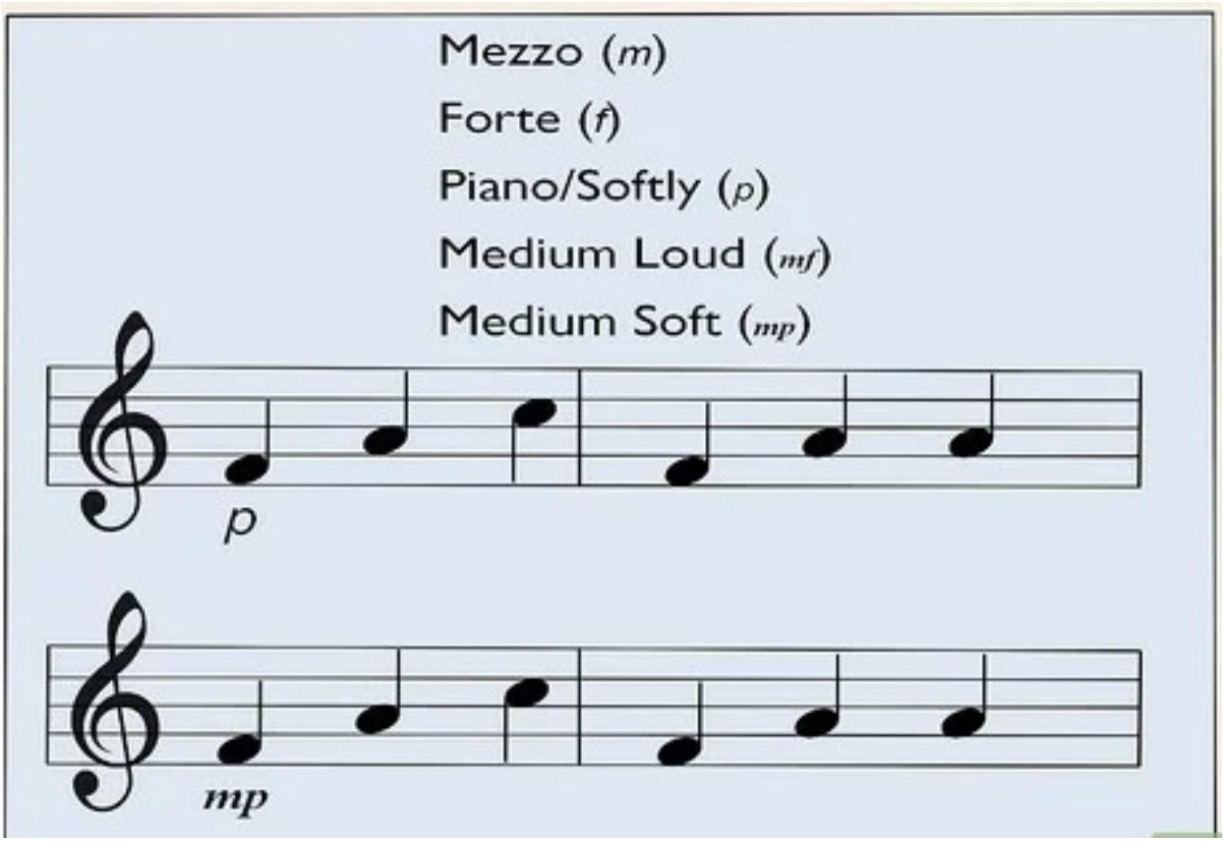
When you listen to music, you have possibly observed that it is not all at the same volume, all the time. A number of parts get truly loud, and a number of parts get actually soft. These variations are known as ‘dynamics.’

- If the rhythm and meter happen to be the heart of the music, and notes and keys are the brains, then dynamics are certainly the voice of the music. Consider the first version above.
- On top of your table, tap out: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8, etc. (the *and* is how musicians "say" eighth notes). Make sure every beat is tapped at the

same loudness, so that it sounds a bit like a helicopter. Now take a look at the second version.

- Notice the accent mark (>) above every F note. Tap that out, just this time, accent all beat that you notice the accent mark. Now, rather than a helicopter, it ought to sound more like a train. With only a subtle shift in accent, we totally change the character of the music!

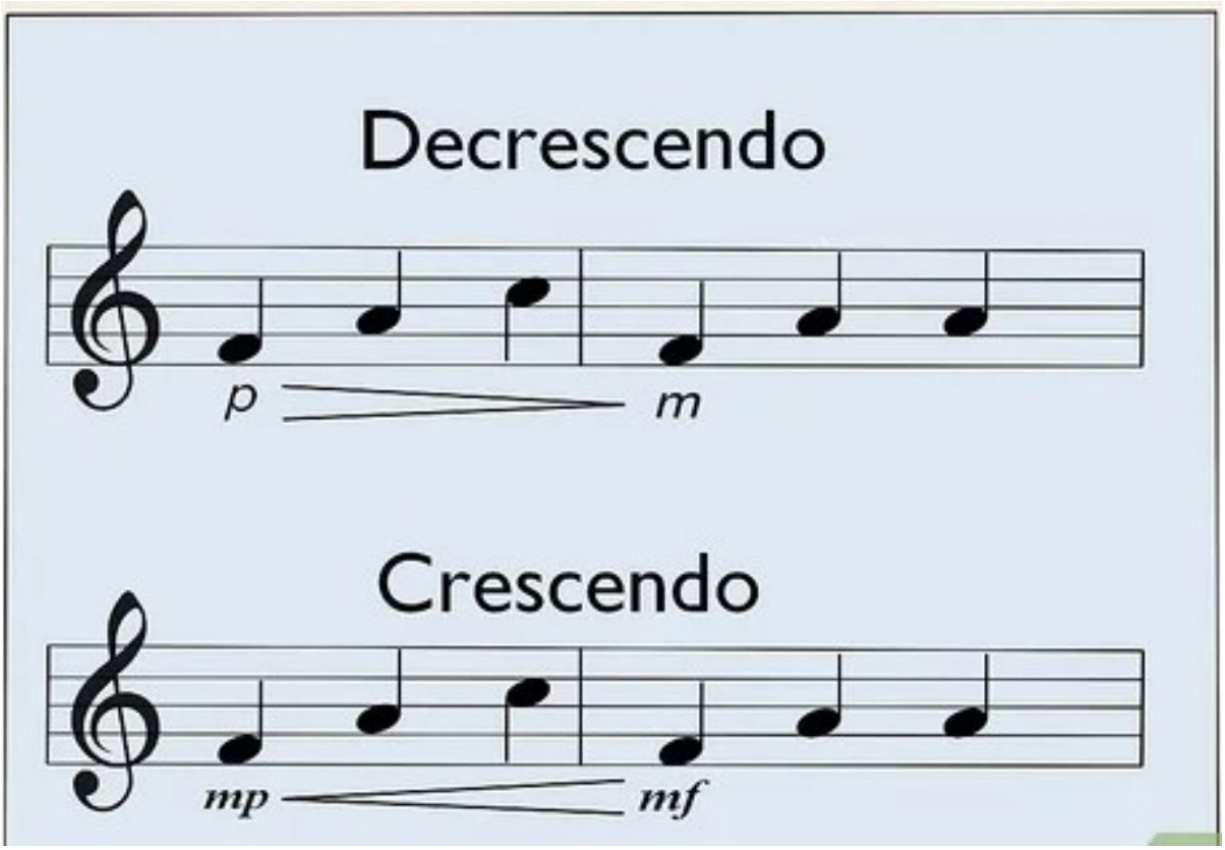
2 - Play it piano, or fortissimo, or somewhere in between.



Just like you don't always talk at the same level—you modulate your voice louder or softer, depending on the situation—music modulates in level too. The way the composer informs the musician what is intended is by utilizing dynamic markings.

- There are dozens of dynamic markings you might see on a piece of music, but a number of of the most common ones you will find will be the letters *f*, *m*, and *p*.
- ***p*** means "piano," or "softly."
- ***f*** means "forte," or "loud."
- ***m*** means "mezzo," or "medium." This modifies the dynamic after it, as in ***mf*** which means "medium loud", or ***mp***, which means "medium soft."
- The more ***f***s or ***p***s you have, the louder or softer the music is to be played. Try singing the example above (using solfège—the first note in this example is the tonic, or "do"), and use the dynamic markings to notice the difference.

3 - Get louder and louder and louder, or quieter and quieter and quieter.



Another very usual dynamic notation is the *crescendo*, and it is corollary, the *decrescendo* or ‘diminuendo;. They are visual representations of a gradual change in volume which look like stretched-out "<" and ">" symbols.

- A crescendo gradually gets louder, and a decrescendo gradually decreases the volume. You will observe that, with these two symbols, the "open" end of the symbol stands for the louder dynamic and the closed end stands for the quieter dynamic. For instance, if the music directs you to steadily go from forte to piano, you will notice an ***f', then a stretched out ">", then a 'p'.***
- Sometimes a crescendo or diminuendo will be represented as the shortened words *cresc." (crescendo) or* dim. *(diminuendo).*

Section 7 - Advancing

1 - Keep learning!

Trying to learn to read music is like trying to learn the alphabet. The fundamentals take a little bit to learn, but are quite easy, overall. However, there are so many nuances, concepts, and skills that you can learn that it can keep you learning for a lifetime. A number of composers even go thus far as to write music on staff lines that form spirals or patterns, or the even utilize no staff lines at all! This piece of writing should give you a good foundation to keep growing!

2 - Learn these key signatures.

There is at minimum one for every note in the scale—and the savvy student will see that in a number of cases, there are two keys for the same note. For instance, the key of G♯ sounds precisely the same as the key of A♭! When playing the piano—and for the purposes of this article, the difference is academic. Nevertheless, there are a number of composers—particularly those that write for strings—who will put forward that the A♭ is played a little "flatter" than the G♯. Here are the key signatures for the major scales:

- Keys not using sharps or flats: C
- Keys using sharps: G, D, A, E, B, F♯, C♯
- Keys using flats: F, B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, C♭
- As you can see above, as you move through the sharp key signatures, you add sharps one at a time until every note is played sharp in the key of C♯. As you move

through the flat key signatures, you add flats until every note is played flat in the key of C♭.

- It may be of a little relieve to know that composers typically write in key signatures that are comfortable for the player to read. D major is a very common key for string instruments to play for the reason that the open strings are closely linked to the tonic, D. There are few works out there that have strings play in E♭ minor, or brass playing E major - it's as much a pain for them to write as it is for you to read.

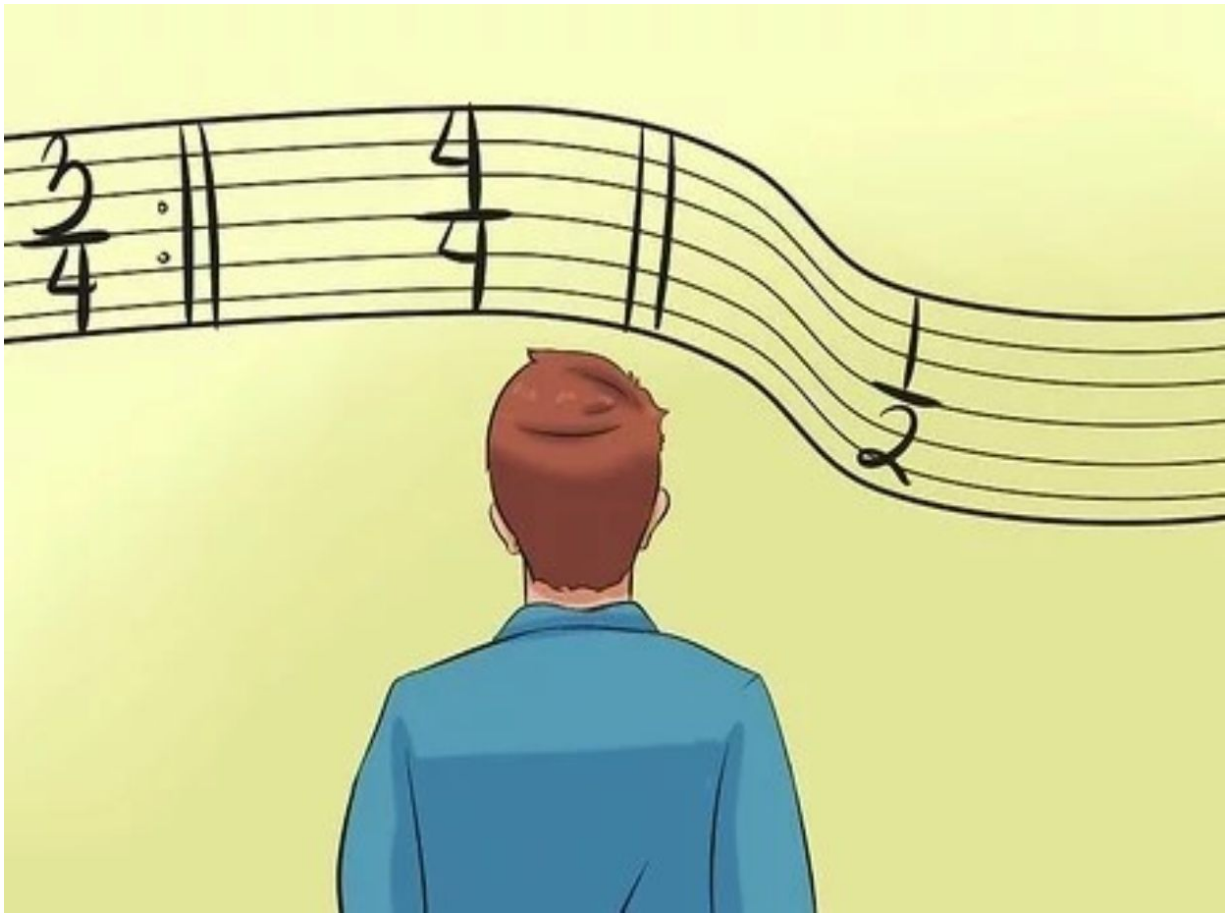
CHAPTER TWO

How to Sight Read Music

In order to build up your skills as a musician, advance in your craft, and become employable, you have to become acquainted with knowledge to sight read music. It is important to bear in mind that sight reading is a crucial part of nearly all auditions, and an extremely vital part of being able to stay up in an orchestra, choir, or band setting. If you learned to play your instrument or sing by ear, learning to sight read music will help make you a more balanced and efficient musician and performer.

Part 1- Brushing Up on Music Theory

1 - Understand the different types of notes.



When sight reading music, you will come across whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. These notes are characterized or epitomized by differing duration, or the time-span the note is played. The whole note is the longest, and they become shorter in that order. For instance, a sixteenth note is 1/16 of a whole note.

- While you may assume music and math don't have anything in common, understanding the different kinds of music notes is as easy as understanding basic divisions. For instance, a quarter note is 1/4 of a whole note.

Simply put differently, you could play 4 quarter notes in the time you would play 1 whole note (just as you could play 2 half notes in the time you have to play 1 whole note).

- Each note has a varied symbol. The parts or elements of the symbols are the head (this is the round part of the note), the stem (this is the line that projects or extends from the head), and the flag (this is the curved line coming off the stem, like a flag).
- A whole note is indicated by just an open note head, with no stem or flag. A half note comprises an open note head and a stem. A quarter note comprises a closed (filled in) head and a stem. An eighth note has a bunged or closed head, a stem, and one flag, while 2 together have a single bar combining them. A sixteenth note has a bunged head, a stem, and two flags or two bars combining as numerous as 4 sixteenth notes.

2 - Familiarize yourself with time signatures.

Time signatures surface on all pieces of sheet music, and they inform you the amount and kind of notes in each measure. To put it simply, time signatures notify you the beats of each bar of the song you would be playing.

- As far sight reading is concerned, this is the very first thing you would note about a piece, so it is enormously significant that you understand time signatures in detail. Practice various rhythm exercises to make yourself feel more at ease working within varied time signatures.
- If the time signature is **4/4**, that indicates that each measure comprises four quarter notes. The top number has to do with the number of beats per measure, and

the bottom has to do with the kind of note being utilized to measure the beats (in this case, quarter notes).

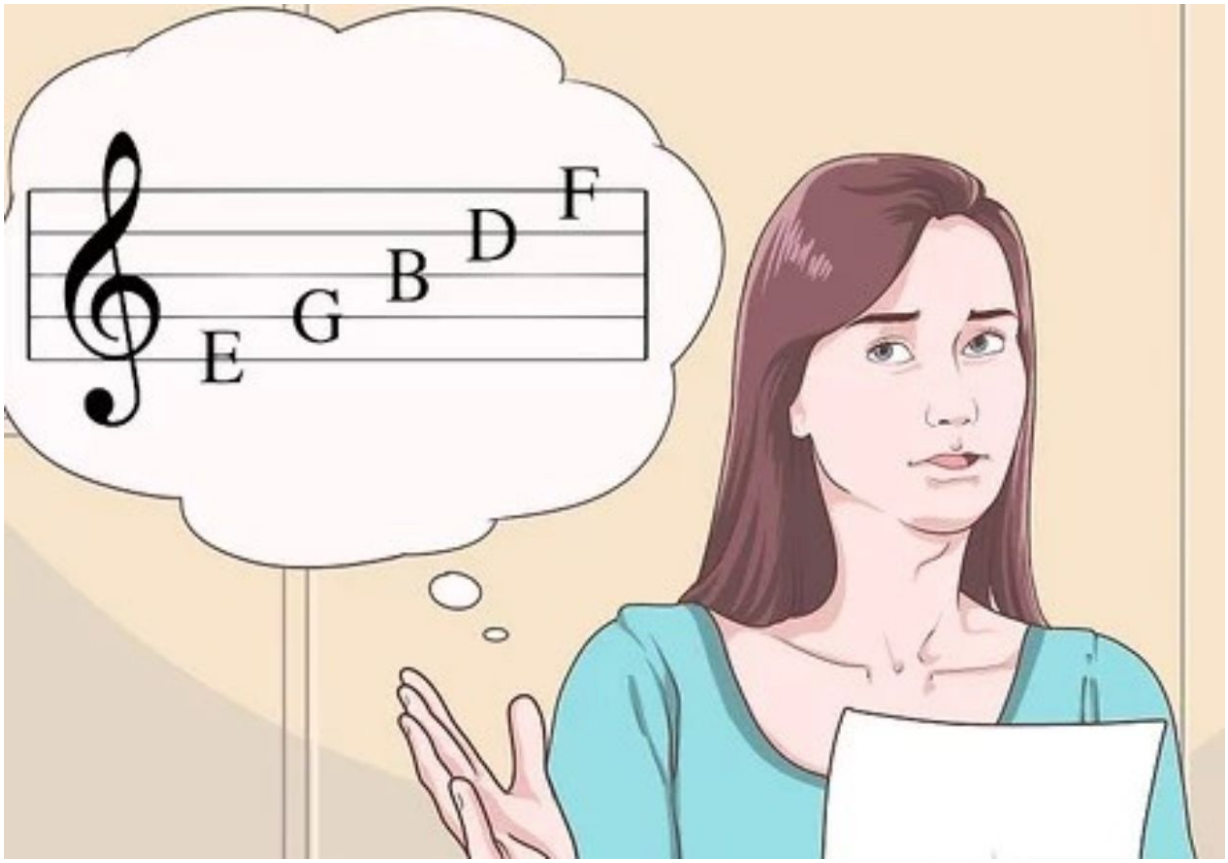
- A time signature of **3/4** indicates that there are 3 quarter notes, **6/8** implies 6 eighth notes, **3/2** implies 3 half notes, and so on.
- Make use of a metronome to help keep up track of tempo. Some pieces will have an M.M. with a number and a note showing; this is the planned approximate tempo after it is fully practiced. Practice at a slower tempo at first, afterward slowly increase the tempo on the metronome as you become more comfortable with the piece.

3 - Memorize key signatures.

The key signature is a group of signatures that directs you to play a definite note a half-step higher or lower than you typically would. Basically, the key signature informs you how many sharps or flats might be in the piece, which in turn informs you the key the piece is in, and therefore it is a vital component of sight reading. The key signature can be found right next to the staff, usually at the beginning of a line of musical notation.

- To read sharp (major) key signatures, take a look at the last sharp on the key signature and go a half-step beyond that. Hence if the last sharp is a C, the key will be in D major.
- To read flat (minor) key signatures, take a look at the second to last flat (read the flats left to right). If the second to last flat happens to be E, then the song is in E-flat major.
- F major (or D minor) is the exemption to this rule as this specific key signature simply has one flat (B-flat).
- If the piece happens to be in a minor key, decide what the major key of the piece will be and move down a minor third to identify the major key's relative minor. For instance, the relative minor of G major is E minor, given that this is a minor third beneath G.

4 – Study where each note falls on the staff.



There are two(2) types of clefs: treble and bass. The notes seem different owing to which clef you are utilizing. Learning the location of each note on either sets of clefs and put into practice until you recognize the notes just by taking a look at them.

- On a treble clef, the line notes bring or spell out EGBDF from bottom to top. Utilize the mnemonic device, ‘Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge.’
- On a treble clef, the space notes bring or spell out FACE from bottom to top.
- On a bass clef, the line notes spell out GBDFA coming from base (bottom) to top. Utilize the mnemonic device, ‘Good Birds Don’t Fly Away.’

- On a bass clef, the space notes spell out ACEG from coming (base) bottom to top. Utilize the mnemonic tool, ‘All Cows Eat Grass.’

5 - Practice your scales.

The practicing of scales would help either vocalists and instrumentalists become more acquainted with the names of each note and where each note falls on the staff. If you are an instrumentalist, rehearse or practice the scales devoid of looking at

your hands. This will take a number of practice to master, but it is necessary for becoming a competent sight reader.

- If you are taking a look at your hands, you are not able to allow your eyes center on reading the music.
- Instrumentalists have to also practice sight singing. This will enable you to work on phrasing, intonation and musicality.
- Check for key signature changes, codas and repeats

Part 2 – Developing Your Sight Reading Skills

1 – Pay adequate attention to the music in front of you.

In other words, act as though every piece of music you are sight reading is the only thing that matters to you in the world at that time, freeing your mind of other every day disruptions and worries. Sight reading entails a lot of moving parts – you have to keep up track of notes, rhythms, key changes and a thousand other changeable or variables. It is not possible to sight read absolutely without focusing your whole brain on the task at hand.

- Dare yourself to sight read a full piece of music without making any mistakes or errors.
- Whenever your mind starts to wander, refocus and begin the piece yet again.

2 – Check for any apparent changes in key, style, tempo, or dynamic.

Read through the piece of music and mark (if you can) any tempo changes, key changes, or change in dynamics.

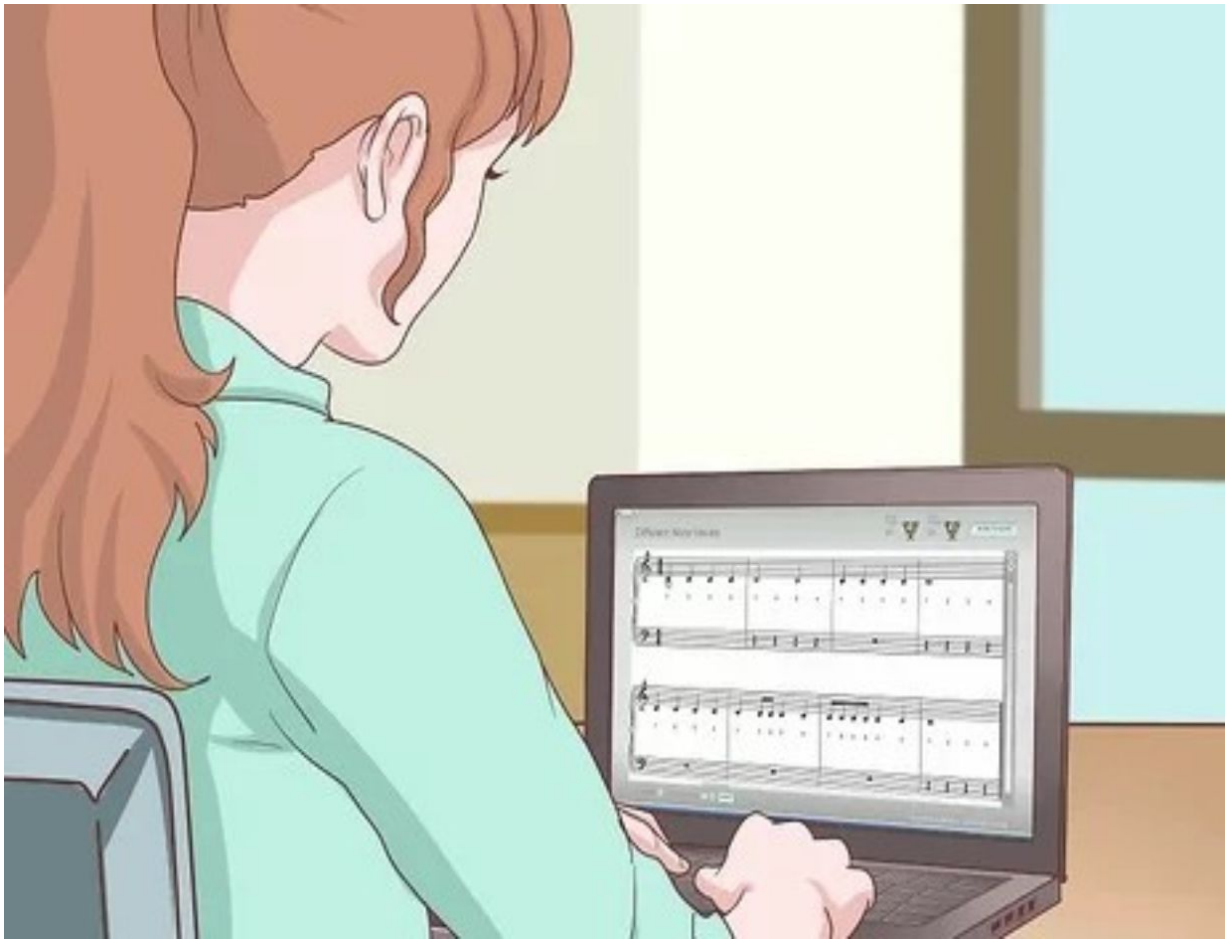
3 - Divide music into large chunks.

As a first-timer in sight-reading, you might try to count every beat, divide each rhythm, and tap maniacally to the beat. Calm down! It is vital to know that every piece of music has plenty of notes and attempting to count and identify every single one can be very tiring and impractical. Rather, split the piece into bigger chunks of music and strive to read it that way.

Try to cut each measure into 2 parts, and note down where the downbeats are. This is a technique of interpreting the music in a more stress-free, musical way.

Now you can take a look at 2 beats, or even a whole measure, at a time. This is a lot less disordered than trying to count every and each beat.

4 - Look for familiar rhythms.



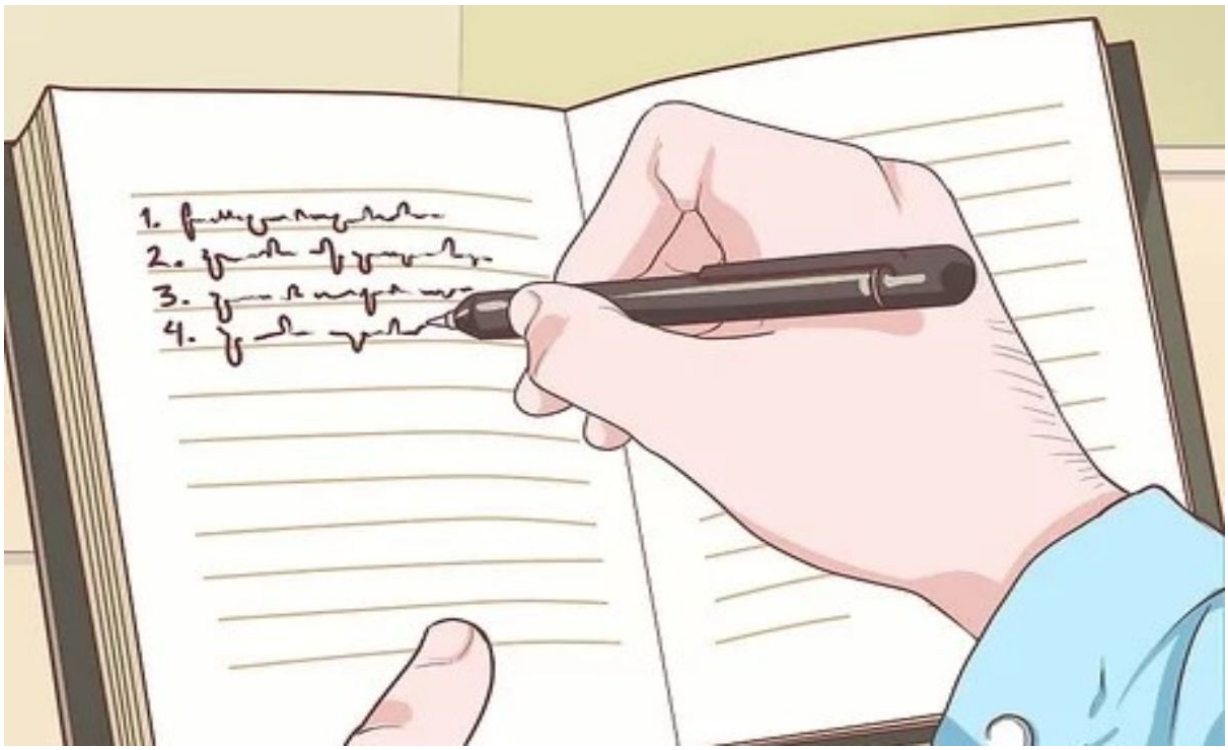
While each piece of music you come across is wonderfully unique, there are surely repeating patterns that you will constantly meet. Buy sight reading practice materials. Children improve at reading words by reading multiple books. Musicians improve at reading music by

sight reading numerous pieces. Try going online to sites like Piano Marvel to gain access to sight reading exercises and music pieces you can rehearse or practice reading.

Also search online for free sheet music websites.

You can inquire of your music teacher if they have spare music they would be ready to let you copy.

5 - Keep a practice journal.



Practice frequently. The most excellent sight readers are musicians who are confident and relaxed in their skills. To become an experienced sight reader can take a couple of years, but implementing good practice habits is something you can do immediately (right now). Strive to practice your sight reading for a minimum of 15 minutes daily.

- Write down what you practiced and the duration of your practice in your journal.
- You have to practice sight reading gradually. You can always improve the pace after you feel more at ease with the music.

6 - Use drills to improve.

Not only will practice drills enable you identify certain patterns and commit to memory note types, key signatures, and time signatures, it

will also enable you become a more sure musician. Websites like TheSightReadingProject.com authorize you to practice for free online. Get a cheap music book, turn over to a random page, and begin sight-reading something. Just like what is obtainable in any other skill, the more you practice sight read, the more confident and competent you will become. As you feel more at ease with the basics, you can begin fine-tuning your skills.

Part 3 - Preparing To Sight Read

1 - Read through the music.

When you first see the piece, get a moment to look it over devoid of your instrument. Attempt tapping out the rhythm, reading the notes and looking over the structure to observe which bars will be repeated. Every time you come across a new piece of music, you have to go through a fundamental checklist in your head.

- Commit to memory the key signature, divide the music into chunks, note every repeating rhythms and tricky spots, and tune out the day's distractions.
- Check for any markings that indicate changes in speed, volume or accidentals.
- If you have go-ahead, mark these changes on your sheet music with a pencil.

2 - Play through the piece in your head.

Seize a moment to sound the piece out and check for patterns within the music. See if there are areas or places where the melodies repeat themselves. Learn the piece as hard as you can before you ever think of picking up your instrument.

Check for places in the music where there are scales or arpeggios.

The more acquainted you are with the music, the less difficult it will be to sight read when you really have your instrument in hand.

3 - Breathe and brush off mistakes.

Sight reading can be devastating or overwhelming, but breathing can help you stay focused and can even keep you on tempo. Relax your body and your mind and attempt to focus on the work. Continue going if you make an error, because freezing up can only make the problem worse. Make a mental note to practice the area or part that caused you a problem, and afterward forget about it. There is more music to play, and you would be amazed how often an audience misses a little mistake.

- If you are a singer or if you play a wind instrument, make use of a pencil to mark where you have to take a breath.
- Don’t beat yourself up if you are unable to read the music flawlessly your first time out. Sight reading is a skill that requires time to develop.
- The ability to keep going even when you make a mistake is a significant sight reading skill.

CHAPTER THREE

How to Sight Sing

All typically skilled musicians learn to read music, but singers have to be able to turn this into notes without utilizing the physical manipulation of the instrument as a guide. This is a powerful skill that takes ample of practice, but you do not require perfect pitch to achieve this. Ensure you have the fundamentals covered, and continue practicing daily, and ultimately you will be able to sing pieces without any advance preparation.

Part 1- Learning and Practicing

1 - Learn the solfege system. You might have heard singers sing ascending scales such as this: Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do. (In case you haven't, look out this example to study the intervals between notes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_pq9s9USml). ‘Do’ is at all times assigned to the ‘tonic’ or ‘root note’ of the scale, like the C in the C major scale or G in a G major scale. By means of singing the solfege scale ascending from here, you would hit every note in that scale.

- A number of singers reinforce the varied syllables by changing hand shape also. This is discretionary (optional).
- A minority of singers like better other systems, such as ‘1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1.’

2 - Use solfege for minor scales.

This is given explanation here so you can refer to the solfege system frankly above, but you might wish to wait until you have got loads of practice with the solfege system before you attempt this. In minor scales (which exist in numerous forms), a number of the intervals between notes are lowered from a whole step (like from C to D) down to a half step (C to C♯). In solfege, these notes halfway between definite intervals are specified by altering the vowel sound in the solfege syllable. Here are a number of instances, with the lowered notes in bold:

- Natural minor :do re **me** fa sol **le te** do
- Harmonic minor :do re **me** fa sol **le** ti do
- Melodic minor, from ascending: do re **me** fa sol la ti do
- Melodic minor, descending: do **te le** sol **fa me re** do

- The chromatic scale, which goes up only in half steps, includes a number of syllables that are not often utilized in songs. Learning it is not recommended until you are at ease with sight-singing.
- Knowing these can enable you sight-sing a note in the sheet music that is a half step down or up from the scale you are singing in. These are marked using a flat symbol ♭ (half step down) or a sharp symbol ♯ (half step up).

3 - Practice solfege with your favorite songs.

Learning solfege is quite tough, particularly without a music teacher to guide or direct you. You have to practice as frequently as you can

by picking your preferred songs and striving to identify the ‘tonic note’ of the piece, which you will sing as Do, then sing the full song in solfege. There are a number of ways to find the tonic note:

- When a note in the song feels like it is ‘coming home’ or getting a conclusion, this is frequently the tonic note. Songs frequently end on this note.
- Endeavor to play the melody on the piano, while you listen to the song. Turn off the music and try to sing ‘Do Re Mi...’ while making use of only the piano keys utilized for the song. Continue attempting diverse notes for ‘Do’ until you succeed.
- If you hear a sudden shift in the emotional tone of the melody, it might have changed keys. Concentrate on only one section at a time, because changing your "Do" note mid-song can be really difficult for beginners.

4 - Learn how to read music.

It is likely to begin from the first note on the page and count the number of spaces and lines up or down to the next note. Learning how to read music is a much more proficient way to go about this, and will enable you sight-sing quicker and smoother. You can begin by memorizing the mnemonics beneath, but to get it to sink in you will require every day practice, maybe with an online note recognition tool.

- In the treble clef, keep in mind the lines from bottom to top by repeating Every Good Boy Does Fine. The spaces among them spell FACE.
- In the bass clef, bear in mind the lines from bottom to top with Good Boys Do Fine Always. And for the spaces among them: All Cows Eat Grass.

5 - Practice counting from C.

This is the note generally utilized as the baseline note for singers. Play C on a piano, or make use of a metronome with a pitch function that produces C. you have to practice singing up or down the scale to locate a different note. This is the method you will make use of to find the beginning note of a song.

- If you would like to train relative pitch, you can attempt to find a song you know by heart that starts with C, and utilize it as a baseline. Remember that people often begin singing a song in a different key each time, so test yourself with a piano to ensure you can begin on the right pitch each time.
- On the other hand, carry a tuning fork with you and listen to it all through the day as frequently as you can. Presume or guess the note, then make use of the tuning fork to observe if you are right.

6 - Practice jumping across intervals.

The most significant skill for sight-singing is the capacity to jump from 1 note to another without making an error or mistake, even if the 2 notes are nowhere close to each other in the scale. Include solfege exercises such as the following into your day by day practice routine:

- (low)Do Re Do Mi Do Fa Do Sol Do La Do Ti Do (high)Do
- Sing a song you know by heart making use of solfege. Slow down and repeat as essential until you can sing the entire song utilizing the right syllables. (It helps to sing the solfege scale in the right key a couple times before you start.)

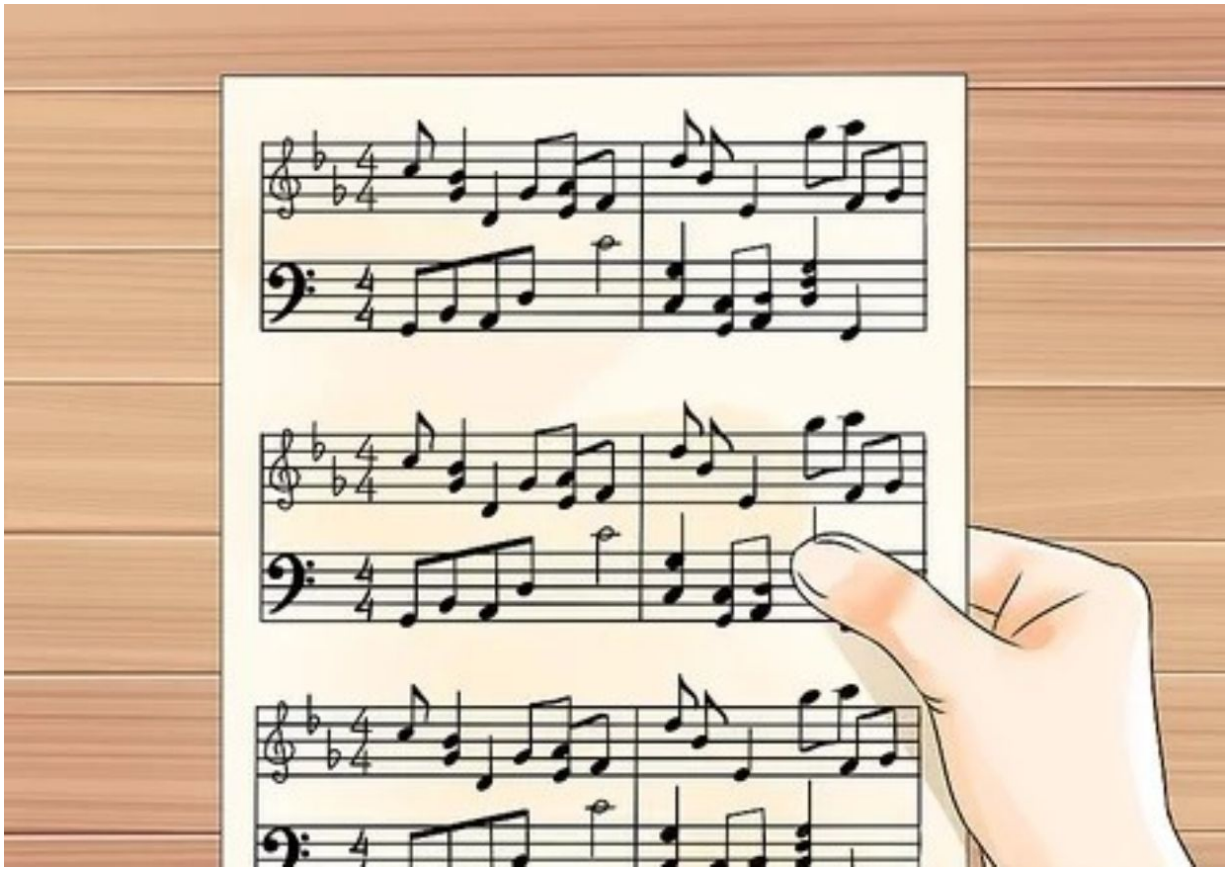
- For example, ‘Mary Had a Little Lamb’ starts with Mi Re Do Re Mi Mi Mi and ‘Happy Birthday’ begins with Sol Sol La Sol Do Ti.

7 - Practice rhythm.

One method to do this is to subdivide while listening to a song or reading sheet music. Clap to the beat of the song, but divide each beat into subsections, chanting out loud "1–2" or "1-2-3-4" among each clap.

- There are apps accessible, such as Rhythm Sight Reading Trainer, that can assist you with this.

8 - Practice sight-singing.



Sight singing is a tough skill, and it needs much practice to arrive at the point where you can at ease sing any sheet music that comes across your way. Explore online or in libraries for sheet music of different or unfamiliar songs, try to sing them, afterward check whether you got it correct by finding a recording online. Repeat this on a daily basis if possible.

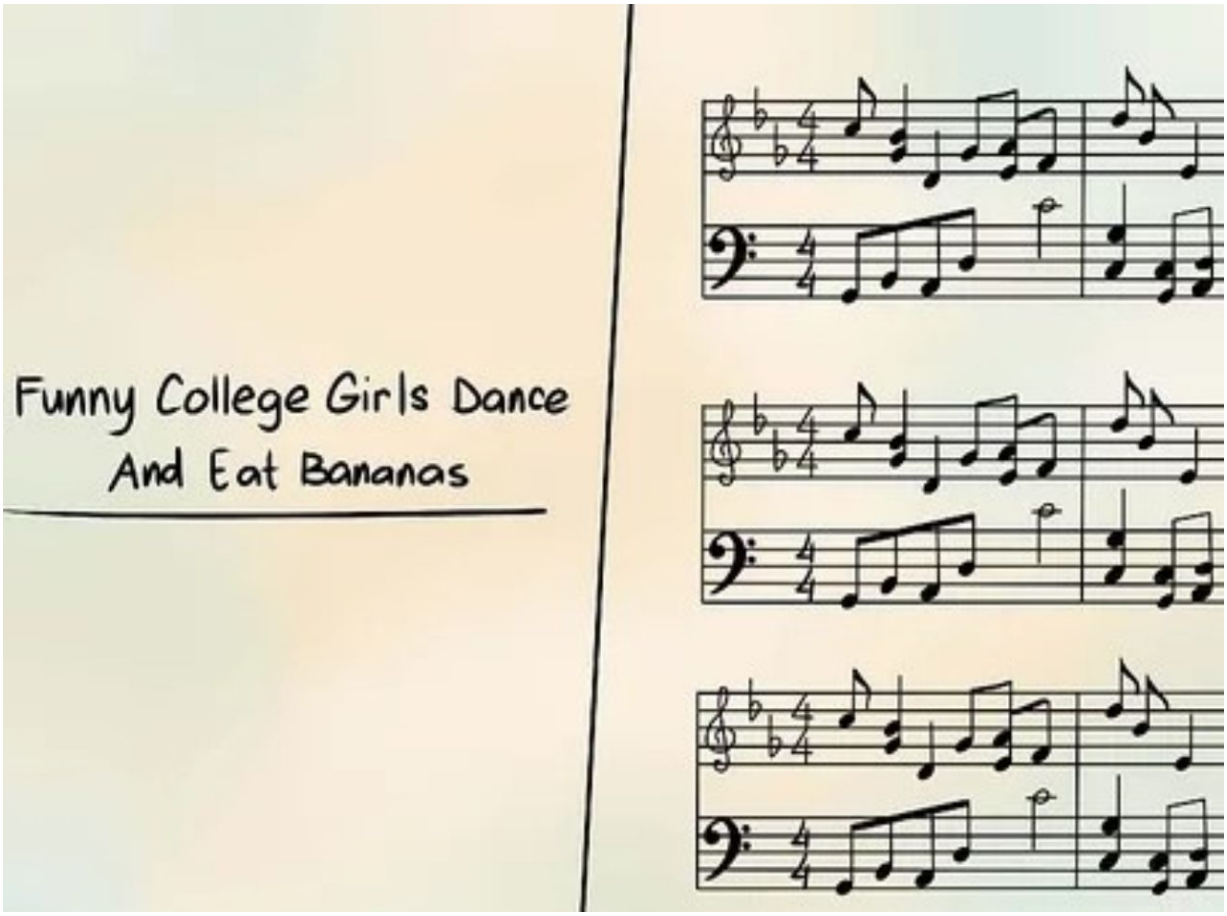
- Sing it using or with solfege first, afterward with the lyrics if there are some.
- Ensure the sheet music is written for your vocal range.

Part 2 - Sight-Singing a Piece of Music

1 - Assess the time signature. The time signature appears like a fraction and is noted at the starting of a piece of music. The top number informs you how many beats there will be every measure, and the bottom number informs you what type of notes those beats will be in this song.

- For example, if 3 is on top and 1 is on the bottom, there would be 3 whole note beats for each (per) measure. If 5 is on top and 2 is on the bottom, there would be 5 half note beats for each measure. If 6 is on top and 8 is on the bottom, there would be 6 eighth-note beats for each measure.
- The most common time signature (at times just written with the letter C signifying “common time”) is 4 on top and 4 on the bottom, which implies there are 4 quarter-note beats for each measure.

2 - Identify the key.



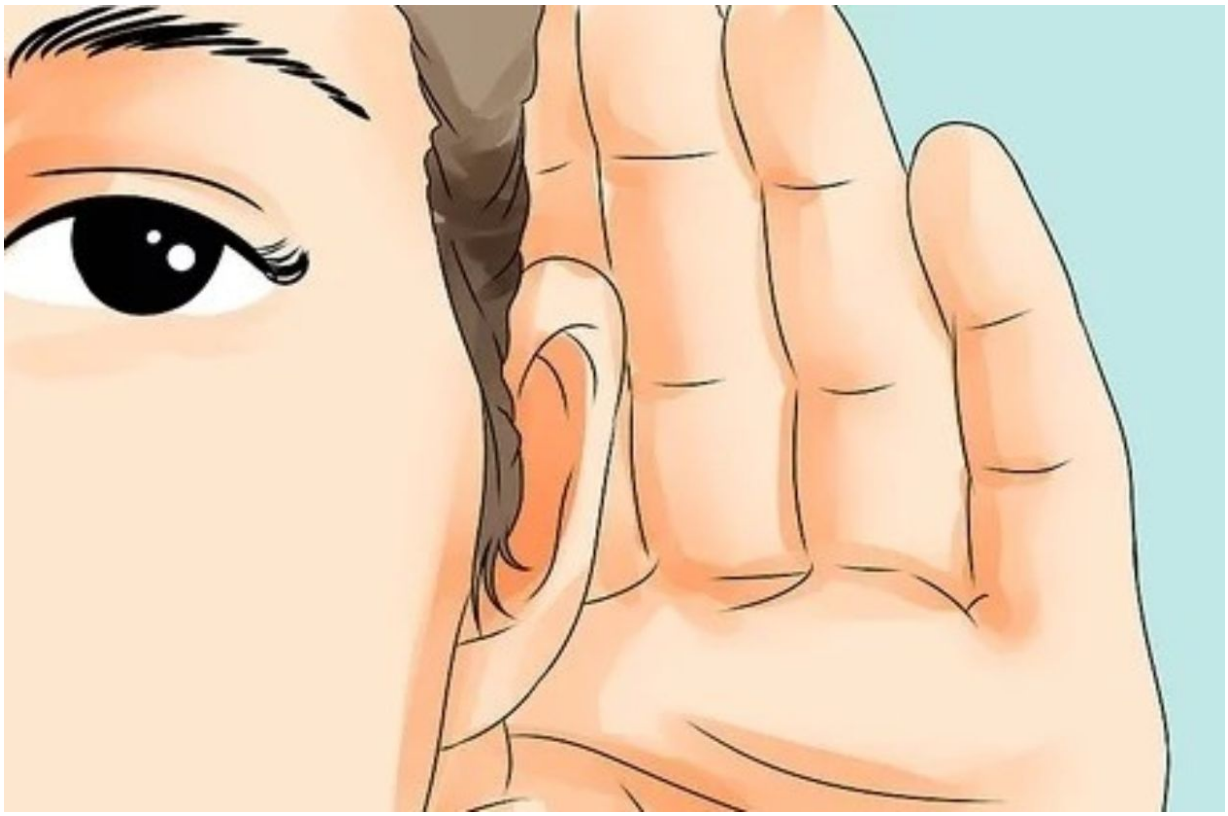
At the starting of the sheet music, next to the clef symbol, sharp ♯ and flat ♭ signs make up the "key signature." These tricks will enable you commit to memory what each key signature seems like:

- If there are no sharps or flats next to the clef, the scale is C major or A minor, so C or A will be Do for this song, respectively.
- The rightmost sharp in the key signature is Ti on the solfege scale. Move up one half step (a space or line) and you will find the root note which the scale is named for, and which you can consider as Do. On the other hand, utilize this mnemonic to identify the scale by the

number of sharps there are (beginning at one sharp): Green Day And Elvis Buy Four Cats

- The rightmost flat in the key signature happens to be Fa, and the flat to its left is the root note Do. Identify the scale by how many flats there are (beginning at one flat): Fat Boys Eat Apples During Geometry Class

3 - Listen to the root note.

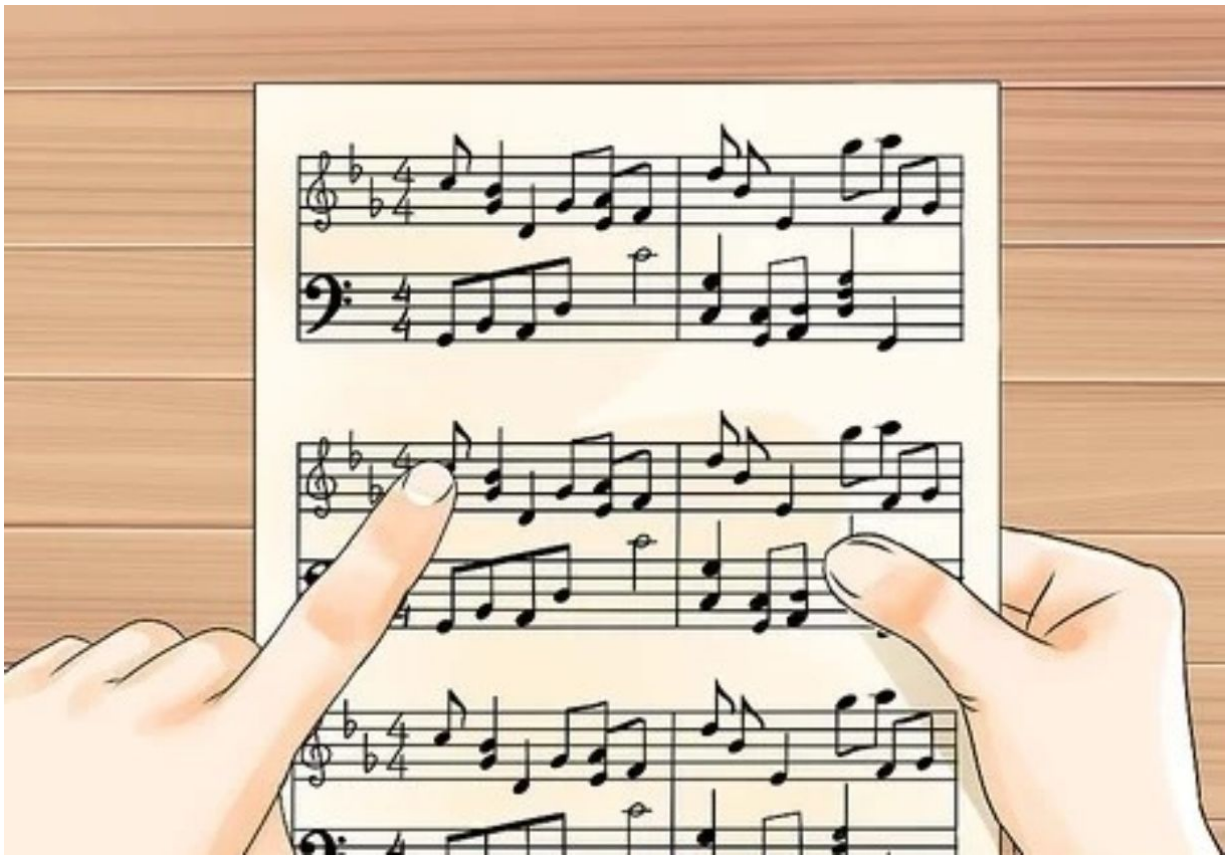


Except you have great pitch, you will require to listen to the root tone. This is constantly the note in the name of the key signature, hence when you are singing a song written in A, you will wish to listen to an A. You can make use of a piano, a metronome with a pitch function, a tuning fork, or pitch software on a phone app or website.

4 - Run through the solfege scale.

Using the root note as Do, sing the solfege scale up and down once or two times to get a feel for the notes you will be singing. Keep in mind to utilize the minor solfege syllables for minor scales.

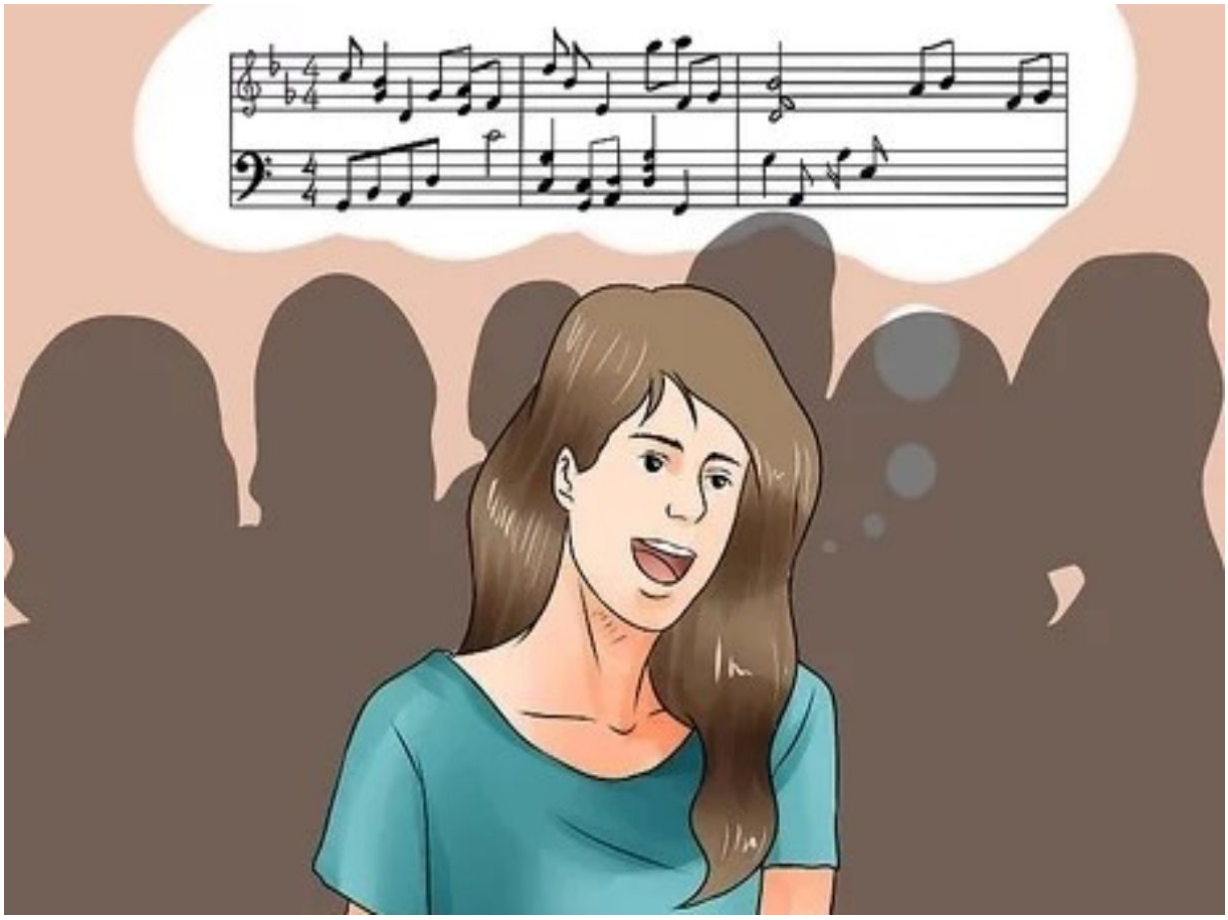
5 - Check the rhythm and tempo.



The vertical bar lines on sheet music will assist you detect or ascertain the beat of the music. Tap this onto your leg with your fingers if it enables you obtain a sense of it. There might as well be a tempo mark informing you how fast to sing, such as ‘90’ for 90 beats for each minute. Feel at ease to sing it slowly if you require to, except you are being accompanied.

- Italian words are frequently utilized as tempo descriptions also, like andante for a ‘walking pace’ of around 90 beats per minute. Adagio for slow and allegro for fast are two (2) of the most common.

6 - Cope with difficult passages.



If you are singing on your own or unaccompanied, particularly when you are practicing, slow down a little when you are experiencing difficulty with a passage. If you are being accompanied or singing in a group, lower the volume instead while you are struggling, however maintain a confident, clear tone. As you school your sight-singing and get a feel for the song you are singing, even your presumptions or guesses would be right more and more frequently.

You can utilize an app such as AnyTune to slow down tricky passages in a recording without altering the pitch.