

Reading & Rhythm.

Count it, clap it, read it: rhythms, time signatures and the signs on the page.

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RHYTHM

Counting Rhythms

Say the counts out loud while you clap or tap. The numbers are the beats; e, & and a split them.

Crotchets

Quavers

Semiquavers

Quaver triplets

Notes and rests

Dotted rhythms

Counts in brackets fall on a held note or a rest: keep counting them silently.

RHYTHM

Ties & Dots

A tie joins two notes of the same pitch into one longer sound. A dot adds half the note's value.

Both give the same length, as these pairs show.

Dotted minim 3 beats

Dotted crotchet 1½ beats

Dotted quaver ¾ beats

A tie can cross the bar line into the next bar; a dot can't.

PRACTICE TIP

Practise slowly. Speed comes from playing it right, not from playing it fast.

EXPRESSION & TEMPO

Articulations

Marks above or below a note tell you how to play it. Most go on the note-head side; the marcato and fermata go above.

	Staccato	Short and detached
	Accent	Play this note louder
	Tenuto	Hold it for its full length, slightly stressed
	Marcato	Strongly accented
	Fermata	Hold longer than written
	Slur	Play smoothly, without breaks (legato)

EXPRESSION & TEMPO

Dynamics

How loud or soft to play.

pp	<i>pianissimo</i>	very soft
p	<i>piano</i>	soft
mp	<i>mezzo-piano</i>	moderately soft
mf	<i>mezzo-forte</i>	moderately loud
f	<i>forte</i>	loud
ff	<i>fortissimo</i>	very loud
	<i>crescendo</i>	gradually louder
	<i>decrescendo (diminuendo)</i>	gradually softer

