

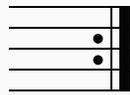
Common Notes and Symbols in Music

There are many types of music notes to help you decipher a musical composition. The following table lists some of the most commonly found music notes and symbols and their meanings. Keep in mind that all note and rest beat values assume a 4/4 time signature.

Symbol	Name	Description
	Quarter note	Note is played for one beat.
	Quarter rest	Rest (do not play) for one beat.
	Half note	Note is held for two beats.
	Half rest	Rest for two beats.
	Whole note	Note is held for four beats.
	Whole rest	Rest for four beats.
	Eighth note	Note is played for 1/2 a beat.
	Eighth rest	Rest for 1/2 a beat.
	Sixteenth note	Note is played for 1/4 of a beat.
	Sixteenth rest	Rest for 1/4 of a beat.
	Thirty-second note	Note is played for 1/8 of a beat.
	Thirty-second rest	Rest for 1/8 of a beat.
	Sixty-fourth note	Note is played for 1/16 of a beat.

	Sixty-fourth rest	Rest for 1/16th of a beat.
	Dotted note or rest	Add half the beat value of the note or rest. For example, a dotted half note equals three beats.
	Beamed notes	Eighth, sixteenth, thirty-second, and sixty-fourth notes may be connected in groups by a beam. This makes the notes easier to read and helps organize the music.
	Tied notes	A tie connects two or more notes and their beat values together. Tied notes should be played as a single note and held for the length of their combined beats.
	Triplets	Triplets divide one beat into three equal beats.
	Grace notes	A grace note is an extra note added for flare and is not a necessary part of a music composition. It does not have a specific beat value but is played rapidly prior to a valued note's beat.
	Broken chord	Also called an arpeggio, a broken chord symbol means to play the notes of the chord separate (from bottom to top) instead of at the same time.
	Staff	Consists of five lines and four spaces. Notes are written on the lines, in the spaces and above and below the staff. Each line and space represents a note on the musical scale.
	Bar line	A bar line divides the musical staff into measures.
	Treble clef	Also called the "G" clef, this symbol is found at the beginning of a music staff and represents treble notes.
	Bass clef	Also called the "F" clef, this symbol is found at the beginning of a music staff and represents bass notes.
	Key signature	The number of sharps or flats at the beginning of a musical piece that determines what key to play or sing in.

	Time signature	Determines the beat or rhythm of the musical piece. The top number of the time signature tells how many beats are in each measure, while the bottom number determines what type of note gets one beat. The example to the left shows a time signature of 6/8. This means there are six beats per measure and an eighth note gets one beat.
C	Common time	This symbol indicates a time signature of 4/4 (four beats per measure, quarter note gets one beat).
	Cut time	Indicates a time signature of 2/2 (two beats per measure, half note gets one beat).
	Grand staff	When the treble and bass clef staves are connected by a brace, this is called the grand staff.
	Sharp	A sharp symbol in front of a note directs you to play or sing that note one half step higher for the duration of the measure.
	Flat	A flat in front of a note directs you to play or sing that note one half step lower for the duration of the measure.
	Natural	A natural sign in front of a note cancels out a previous flat or a sharp in a measure.
<i>p</i>	Piano	Play or sing softly.
<i>pp</i>	Pianissimo	Play or sing very softly.
<i>ppp</i>	Pianississimo	Play or sing very, very softly.
<i>f</i>	Forte	Play or sing loudly.
<i>ff</i>	Fortissimo	Play or sing very loudly.
<i>fff</i>	Fortississimo	Play or sing very, very loudly.
<i>mp</i>	Mezzo piano	Play or sing moderately softly.

	Mezzo forte	Play or sing moderately loudly.
	Glissando	A glissando mark between two notes tells you to quickly slide your fingers up or down the keys or strings between those notes, starting and ending on the written notes. Vocalists may also perform glissandos.
	Crescendo	Gradually play or sing louder.
	Decrescendo	Gradually play or sing softer.
	Staccato	Play or sing the note in a detached manner, with clear separation between notes.
	Marcato (accent mark)	Play or sing the note forcefully with emphasis.
	Legato	Also called a slur, this symbol indicates you should smoothly connect a group of notes.
	Breath Mark	This symbols tells a performer to take a breath. For a violinist, it means to lift the bow.
	Trill	To rapidly play two notes back and forth, the written note and usually the note above it.
	Repeat Sign	Instructs you to repeat sections of music. If a repeat sign is seen at the end of the music, go back to the beginning and play it again.
	Fermata	Hold the note for as long as the musician or conductor deems appropriate, usually at least twice the beat value of the note. Fermatas are often seen at the end of a musical piece.