

LEARNING ABOUT BEATS AND RHYTHM

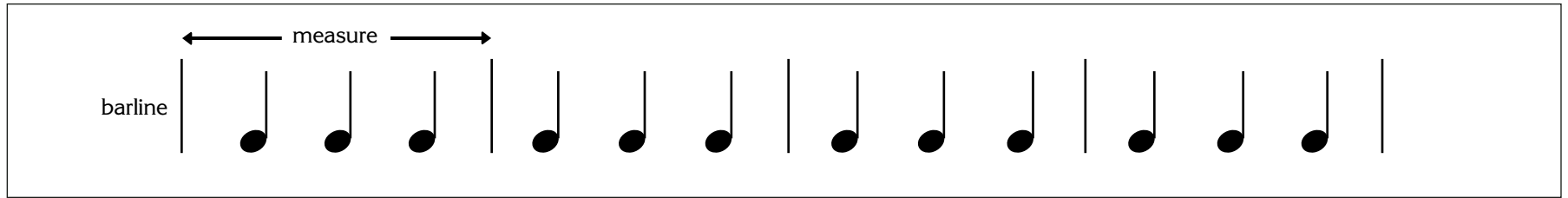
The first step in reading **rhythm** is finding the **beat**. The beat in music is steady, like your heartbeat or a ticking clock. The rhythm in a piece of music is based on a constant **fundamental beat** that you can hear and feel. When you tap your foot to lively music, you are feeling the fundamental beat and marking it with your foot. This fundamental beat can be shown by evenly spaced musical **notes** like these:



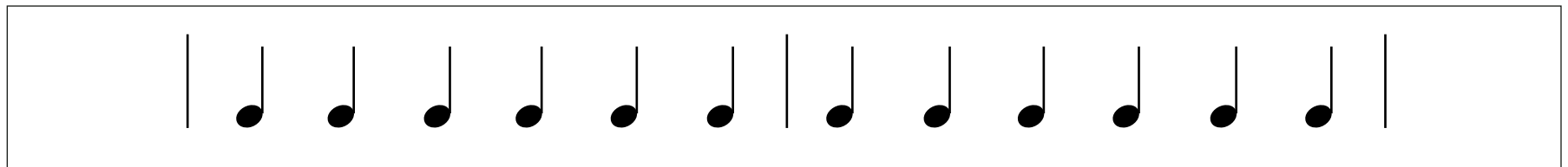
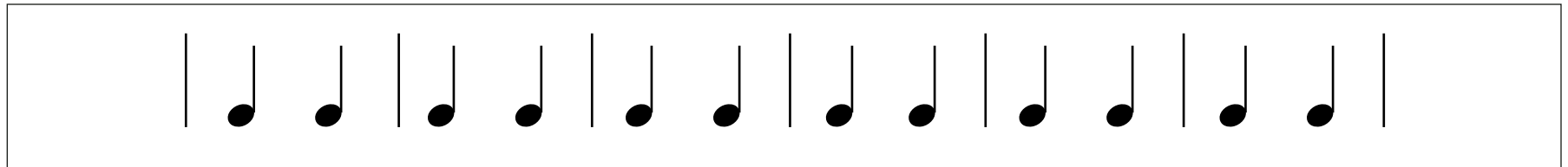
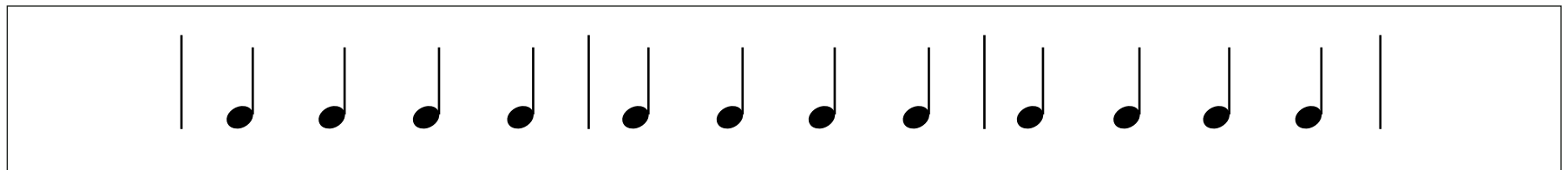
* **1** Tap these beats on a table or on your lap. Tap once for each note.

*The numbers in the black boxes correspond to selections on the audiocassette. Each example begins with one measure of rhythmic clicks.

In written music, beats and notes are grouped into **measures**. Measures are divided by **barlines**.



Music can be written with any number of beats per measure. Most hymns and children's songs have three beats per measure as shown above or four beats, two beats, or six beats per measure as shown below.



2 Tap each line of notes on this page. Tap evenly, once for each note. Do not pause at the barlines.

Counting the Beats

Counting the beats correctly will help you read rhythm better. Count the beats in each measure of the examples below, starting at *one* again after every barline.



say: 1 2 3 | 1 2 3 | 1 2 3 | 1 2 3

say: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

say: 1 2 | 1 2 | 1 2 | 1 2

3 Count aloud as you clap the beats in the examples above. Count aloud as you clap the beats in the examples on the previous page.

The Time Signature

You can find out the number of beats per measure for any hymn or song by reading the **time signature** at the beginning of the music. The time signature is made up of two numbers, one above the other:

$\frac{3}{4}$

$\frac{4}{4}$

$\frac{2}{4}$

The top number shows the number of beats per measure. The bottom number shows the kind of note that is the fundamental beat for each measure. You will learn more about the bottom number later.

The time signature for this example is $\frac{3}{4}$ (say “three-four”).



Count the beats per measure and write $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, or $\frac{4}{4}$ in the boxes below.



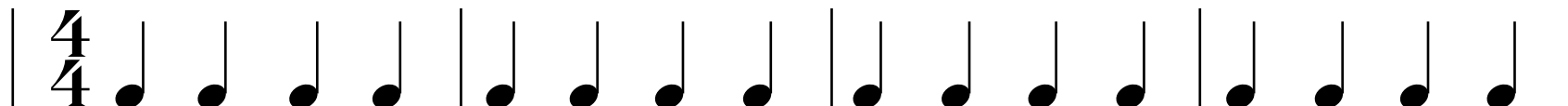
Open a hymnbook and find time signatures, measures, and barlines in several hymns. Look up “Time signature” in this manual’s Glossary of Musical Terms for more information.

Time and Tempo

The number of beats per measure and the time signature usually stay the same from the beginning of a song to the end. In only a few hymns does the time signature change (see, for example, "Come, Come, Ye Saints" [*Hymns*, no. 30]).

Another aspect of rhythm that usually stays the same throughout a hymn or song is **tempo**. The tempo is the speed of the fundamental beat and should stay even from beat to beat.

4 Clap the following lines three times, using a different tempo each time. Clap the line fast, then slow, then medium fast. Count as you clap.



The Downbeat

Each beat in a measure is important, but the first beat, the **downbeat**, is the strongest. Although it is felt more strongly, it is not usually played or sung more loudly.

Clap the following lines, emphasizing the downbeats.



When listening to a song, you can find out the time signature by listening for or feeling the downbeats. Since you know the downbeat is count one, continue counting beats until you feel the next downbeat. The number of counts from one downbeat to the next is the top number of the time signature.

Listen to a recording of music or to someone playing a piano. Can you feel the beat? Is the tempo fast or slow? Clap with the beat, emphasizing the downbeat. Count the beats to find the top number of the time signature.

Notes and Rhythm

On the page, beats are written as musical notes. There are several kinds of notes, and each kind receives a different value or number of beats.

Time signatures with four as the bottom number give notes these values:

quarter notes (♩) one beat

half notes (♪) two beats

dotted half notes (♩.) three beats

whole notes (♩) four beats

Time signatures with other numbers on the bottom give these same notes a different number of beats.



You can quickly learn to read rhythm by using rhythmic names to express each kind of note. Say “dah” for the first beat of each note and “ah” for the other beats of the note.

Note name	Number of beats	Note	Rhythmic name
Quarter note	1	♩	dah
Half note	2	♪	dah-ah
Dotted half note	3	♩.	dah-ah-ah
Whole note	4	♩	dah-ah-ah-ah

Practicing the Rhythmic Names

5 Clap a steady beat while saying the rhythmic names of the notes below. Asterisks (*) show when to clap. Review and practice the rhythmic names until you know them well.

4/4

Dah * dah * dah * dah * Dah * dah * dah * dah *

4/4

Dah * - ah * dah * - ah * Dah * - ah * dah * - ah *

3/4

Dah * - ah * - ah * Dah * - ah * - ah * Dah * - ah * - ah * Dah * - ah * - ah *

4/4

Dah * - ah * - ah * - ah * Dah * - ah * - ah * - ah * Dah * - ah * - ah * - ah * Dah * - ah * - ah * - ah *

Combining Rhythmic Notes

The four notes you have learned can be combined in several ways within a measure. These combinations give each piece of music its distinct rhythm.

6 Clap a steady beat while saying the rhythmic names of the notes below.

$\frac{4}{4}$ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♩. ♩ | ♩ |

Dah dah dah dah Dah - ah dah - ah Dah dah dah dah Dah - ah - ah - ah Dah dah dah dah Dah - ah dah - ah Dah - ah - ah dah Dah - ah - ah - ah

Note the **double bar** at the end of the line. Double bars should be placed at the end of every piece of music.

Draw barlines to divide the following lines of notes into measures. The top number of the time signature will tell you how many beats to put in each measure. End each line with a double bar.

$\frac{4}{4}$ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩. ♩ ♩

$\frac{2}{4}$ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

$\frac{3}{4}$ | ♩. ♩. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩.

7 Say the rhythmic names of these three lines. Then clap a steady fundamental beat while saying the rhythmic names.

Reading the Rhythm of the Hymns

Read music like you read a book—from left to right. When you come to the end of a line, begin on the next line without pausing.

Clap a steady beat and say the rhythmic names of the hymns on the following pages.



8

In Humility, Our Savior

(Hymns, no. 172)

3/4

Dah - ah dah Dah dah dah Dah - ah dah Dah dah dah

○ ● ○ ● ● ● ● ● ○

○ ● ● ● ● ○ ● ● ● ●

○ ● ○ ● ● ● ● ● ○ ||

Sweet Is the Work

(Hymns, no. 147)



3/4

Dah dah dah Dah - ah dah Dah - ah dah Dah - ah - ah

USING THE HYMNBOOK

Many of the songs you will conduct are from the hymnbook, and you should learn about its resources. Using these resources will help you conduct the hymns. The items described below are numbered on the sample hymn on page 17.

1. The title of the hymn.
2. The hymn number. It is correct to refer to *hymn numbers* rather than *page numbers*.
3. The mood marking, suggesting the general feeling or spirit of the hymn.
4. The suggested tempo (rate of beats per minute) for the hymn. Here, ♩ = 84–96 tells us that 84 to 96 quarter notes can be played in sixty seconds, or about three quarter notes every two seconds.
5. The treble clef sign (♩) and the bass clef sign (♭). These are placed on five-line staves (══════).
6. The key signature, showing what key the hymn is written in. This tells how many sharps or flats the hymn has.
7. The time signature (see p. 7).
8. Introduction brackets, showing a suitable piano or organ introduction.



9. The hymn text. There are six verses (or stanzas) in this text.
10. Additional verses of the text. You are encouraged to include these when you sing the hymns.
11. The author of the text.
12. The composer or music source.
13. Suggested scriptures that may be cross-referenced with the hymns. Study these scriptures to help you better understand the meaning and spirit of the hymns.

Turn to “How Great Thou Art” (*Hymns*, no. 86) and identify the items listed above. This hymn has a **refrain** on the second page which is sung after each verse. Look through the hymnbook and find another hymn with a refrain.

The section “Using the Hymnbook” (*Hymns*, pp. 379–86) has more helpful information. Turn to page 383 and read the helps for beginning music directors.

① Sweet Is the Work ② 147

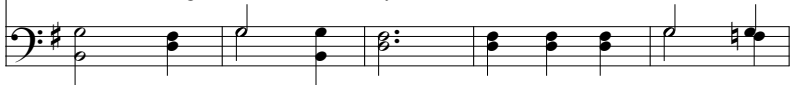
③ *Fervently* $\text{♩} = 84-96$



⑨ Sweet is the work, my God, my King, To praise thy
 2. Sweet is the day of sa - cred rest. No mor - tal
 3. My heart shall tri - umph in my Lord And bless his
 4. But, oh what tri - umph shall I raise To thy dear



name, give thanks and sing, To show thy love by
 care shall seize my breast. Oh, may my heart in
 works and bless his word. Thy works of grace, how
 name through end - less days, When in the realms of



morn - ing light, And talk of all thy truths at night.
 tune be found, Like Da - vid's harp of sol - emn sound!
 bright they shine! How deep thy coun - sels, how di - vine!
 joy I see Thy face in full fe - lic - i - ty!



⑩ 5. Sin, my worst enemy before,
 Shall vex my eyes and ears no more.
 My inward foes shall all be slain,
 Nor Satan break my peace again.

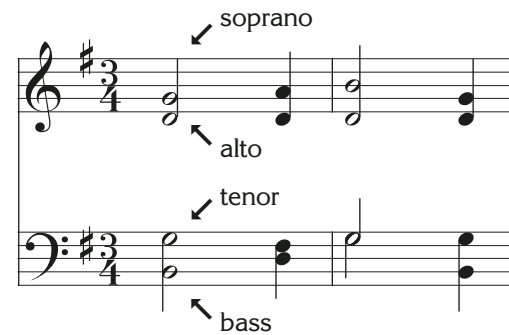
6. Then shall I see and hear and know
 All I desired and wished below,
 And every pow'r find sweet employ
 In that eternal world of joy.

⑪ Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

⑫ Music: John J. McClellan, 1874-1925

⑬ Psalm 92:1-5
 Enos 1:27

The notes in the treble staff are for women's voices
 (although men often sing the top notes or the melody).



The notes in the bass staff are for men's voices.