

A Musical Tutorial

Musical Terms

Use the Search Button to find the desired musical term.

Mezzo Forte

mf

Moderately loud.

A Tempo

Return to original tempo (speed).

Accent Sign



Play the note louder, stress, accent.

Allegretto

Moderately fast.

Allegro

Fast.

Andante

Slowly, moderate walking pace.

Binary Form

Dual, two part. A form of movement with two distinct sections.

Coda



Ending, passage ending the movement.

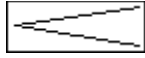
Common Time

C

The common time symbol is another way to indicate 4/4 time.

Crescendo

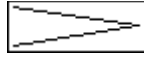
cresc.



Gradually play louder.

Diminuendo

dim.



Gradually play softer.

Da Capo al Fine

D. C. al Fine

Go back to the beginning and play to Fine.

Dynamics

Musical notation that indicates volume change.

Fermata



Hold the note longer than its written value.

Fine

The end.

Forte

f

Loud.

Fortissimo

ff

Very loud.

Semitone, Half Step

Distance between two adjacent keys with no key in between them.
See also whole tone.

Largo

Very slowly. Large broad, stately movement.

Legato

Smooth and connected, slurred

Sharp



Raise the note by a semitone by playing the key immediately to the right.

Flat



Lower the note by a semitone by playing the key immediately to the left.

Natural



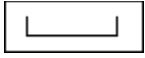
Cancels a flat or a sharp. A white key on the keyboard.

Octave Sign

8va

When written above notes, play the notes one octave higher.
When written below notes, play the notes one octave lower.

Pedal Sign



Press and hold damper pedal for notes included in the pedal sign.

Damper Pedal

The right-most piano pedal. Also known as the loud pedal.

Slur



Notes smoothly connected together, legato.

Quarter Note



In Common Time , 4/4, a quarter note represents one beat.

Half Note



In Common Time , 4/4, a half note represents two beats.

Dotted Half Note



In Common Time , 4/4, a dotted half note represents three beats.

Whole Note



In Common Time , 4/4, a whole note represents four beats.

Time Signature

Two numbers placed at the beginning of the music, right after the key signature. The top number indicates how many beats per measure, while the bottom number indicates the type of note that gets one beat.

Example Time Signatures:

4

4

Four beats per measure. Quarter note gets one beat.

6

8

Six beats per measure. Eighth note gets one beat.

Key Signature

The sharps or flats at the beginning of the staff.

Beat

The division of a measure is counted in beats.

See [time signature](#).

Measure



The music between two bar lines. The metrical unit of musical composition.

Staff



Five parallel lines used in music notation.

Bar Line



Bar lines divide the staff into measures.

Bass Clef



Also known as the F clef, fixes the place of the note F. The F line passes between the two dots of the clef. Normally indicates notes to be played with the left hand.

Treble Clef



Also known as the G clef, fixes the place of the note G. The clef curls around the G line. Normally indicates notes to be played with the right hand.

Interval

The distance (in pitch) between notes is measured in intervals.(2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, etc)

ie: The distance from one white key to the next white key is a 2nd. Every other white key is a third.

Staccato



Separated and detached. Short and disconnected, abrupt. Staccato is represented as a dot under or over a note.

Scale

An continuous alphabetical sequence of notes from any note to its octave.

Octave

An interval of a perfect 8th.

Repeat Signs



Repeat from the beginning.



Repeat the section between the two repeat signs.



Repeat from beginning playing the second ending on the second repetition.

Ternary Form

Three part. A form of movement with three distinct sections.

Ritardando

rit.

Gradually slow down.

Tempo

Rate of speed, movement.

Tie



A curved line joining notes of the same name. The notes are held for their combined value.

Transpose

Perform or rewrite in a different key than the original.

Chord

Three or more notes sounded at the same time.
See also triad.

Triad

A three note chord composed of the root, 3rd, and 5th.

Root

The lowest note of a chord or triad in its fundamental position.

Whole Tone, Whole Step

Distance between two adjacent keys with one key in between them.
See also semitone.

Eighth Note



In Common Time , 4/4, an eighth note represents one half beat.

Sixteenth Note



In Common Time , 4/4, a sixteenth note represents one quarter beat.

Grave

Extremely slow, very solemn.

Moderato

A moderate pace.

Vivace

Fast and lively.

Rapido

Rapid.

Presto

Very quickly.

Prestissimo

As fast as possible.

Pianissimo

pp

or

ppp

Very soft.

Piano

p

Soft.

Mezzopiano

mp

Moderately soft.

Whole Rest



In Common Time , 4/4, a whole rest represents a four beat rest.

Rest

A period of silence.

Half Rest



In Common Time , 4/4, a half rest represents a two beat rest.

Quarter Rest



or



In Common Time , 4/4, a quarter rest represents a one beat rest.

Eighth Rest

7

In Common Time , 4/4, an eighth rest represents a one half beat rest.

Sixteenth Rest



In Common Time , 4/4, a sixteenth rest represents a on quarter beat rest.

Thirty-Second Note



In Common Time , 4/4, a 32nd note represents one eighth beat.

Double Flat



Lower the note two semitones by playing the second key immediately to the left.

Double Sharp



Raise the note by two semitones by playing the second key immediately to the right.

Arpeggio



Notes of a chord are played successively instead of being played simultaneously.

Dal Segno



Repeat from.

IE.

When used in conjunction with D.S. al Fine - repeat from the dal segno sign and play to Fine.

D. S. al Fine

D. S. al Fine

Go back to the dal segno sign and play to Fine.

Trill



A quick succession or alteration of two notes either a tone or semitone apart.

