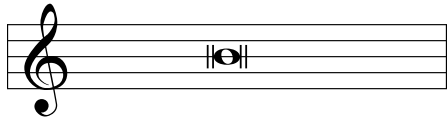


Unit 12 ~ Basic Elements of Rhythm

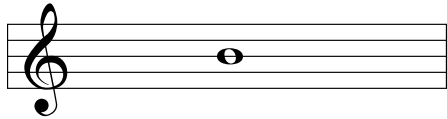
Note values

Notes in music have values, i.e., every note lasts a certain amount of time. Let's take a look at the different time values, and how they are notated.

Here's a list of all note values down to the 32nd note. As you go down the list, each note is **HALF THE VALUE OF THE NOTE BEFORE**.



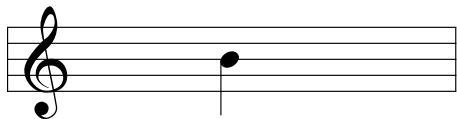
This is a breve. It's the longest possible note value. Breves are fairly rare but they do appear occasionally.



This is a whole-note. It's half the value of a breve.



This is a half-note. It's half the value of a whole-note. Notice that the half-note has a line sticking out of it. This is a 'stem'. All half-notes, and all notes shorter than half-notes, have stems.



This is a quarter-note. This is half the value of a half-note. It has a stem. Note also that the head of the note is solid black, unlike the longer notes, which have hollow heads. All notes shorter than a quarter also have solid heads.



This is an eighth-note. It's half the value of a quarter-note. It has a solid head. Note also that the stem of a single eighth-note has a curly 'beam'. (see below for how to notate consecutive eighths).



This is a sixteenth-note. It's half the value of an eighth-note. sixteenth-notes have TWO beams.



This is a thirty-second-note. It's half a sixteenth-note. It has THREE beams (a 64th note would have four beams, and so on)

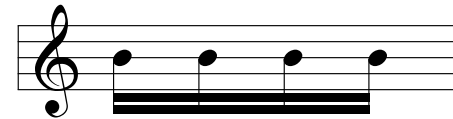
Beaming

When you have two eighth-notes in a row (or two of any note less than an eighth), those curly beams you see on the previous page often get straightened out and joined to the next eighth. This will be discussed more fully in the next unit (Time Signatures).

Here is what two eighth notes look like beamed together:

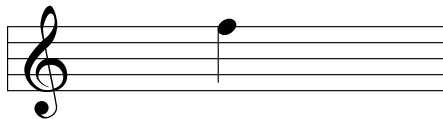


Similarly, if we have consecutive sixteenths, we often need to join their beams together:

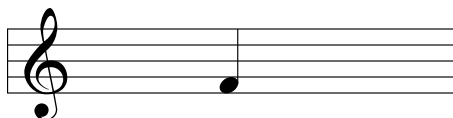


Stem Direction

For notes that have stems, we need to pay attention to the direction of the stem. If a note is above the middle line on the staff, the stem normally goes down:



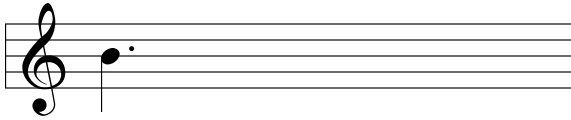
If the note is below the middle, the stem normally goes up:



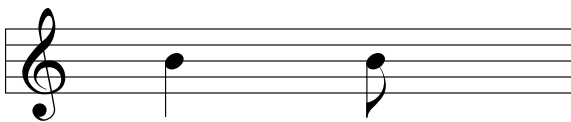
Notice that a downward-pointing stem is on the LEFT of the notehead and an upward-pointing stem is on the RIGHT of the notehead. If the note is on the middle line (i.e. B in treble clef), then the stem may go up or down.

Dots

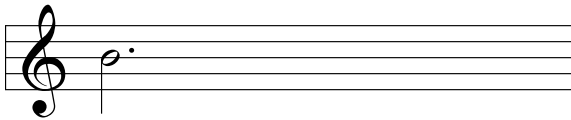
Sometimes a dot is placed immediately after a note. The dot increases the note's value by HALF the value of the note. For example a dot placed after a quarter-note makes that note worth 1.5 quarter-notes. So this dotted quarter-note ...



... has the same value as these two notes combined:

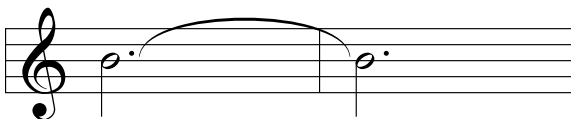


The value of the dot **DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON THE VALUE OF THE NOTE BEFORE IT**. In the above example the dot is worth one eighth-note because it comes after a quarter-note. In the following example it's worth a quarter-note, because it's placed right after a half-note:



Ties

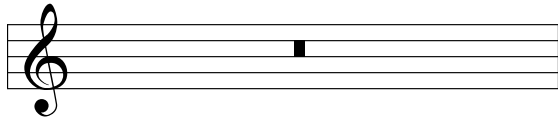
A tie is a curved line drawn from one note to another. When two notes are 'tied' together, their values are combined and they are played as a single note. Often ties occur across measure lines:



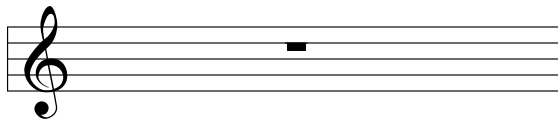
These two dotted half-notes are played as a single note that is worth a grand total of six quarter-notes (Why six? A half-note is worth two quarter-notes. A dot after a half-note is worth half that note, which is one quarter-note. So a dotted half is worth three quarter-notes, and there are two of them, making six altogether.)

Rests

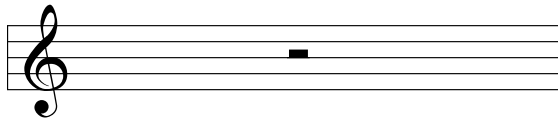
Sometimes music includes moments of silence, where the player briefly stops playing. These moments of silence are called 'rests'. For every note value listed on page 1 of this unit, there is a corresponding rest. Here they are:



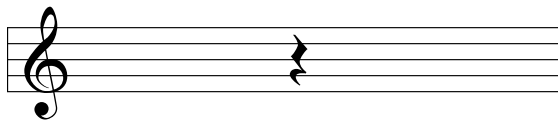
One breve rest



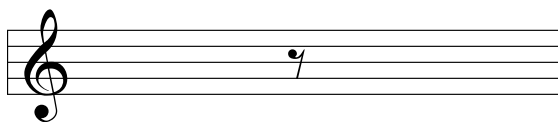
A whole-note rest



A half-note rest. Note the relative positions of whole-note and half-note rests



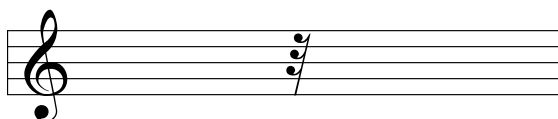
A quarter-note rest



An eighth-note rest



A sixteenth-note rest



A thirty-second note rest

The following units will discuss rests more fully.