

Reading Music

Reading music is an incredibly important part of any musician's education. We will be learning how to identify notes on the musical staff shortly, but first we have to learn what symbols we use to do so. The symbols shown below do just that, as well as tell us how long to hold each note. This is called rhythm.



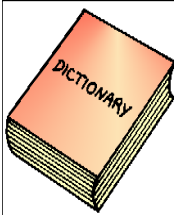
whole note

half note

quarter note

eighth note

- A whole note is held for 4 beats
- A half note is held for 2 beats
- A quarter note is held for 1 beat
- An eighth note is held for 1/2 of a beat

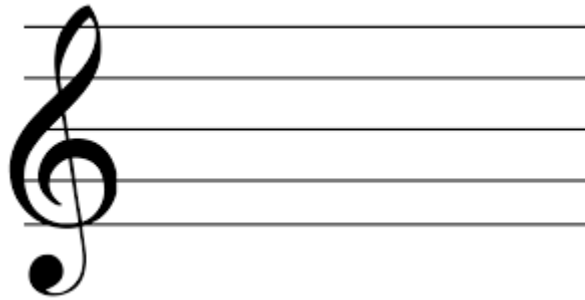


A "beat" is the pulse in music that stays the same. This is what we traditionally tap our foot or dance to.

A tool that musicians often use to help get a feel for rhythm is called a metronome. This will keep a nice and steady beat for you with no chance of it speeding up or slowing down. Find a speed that is comfortable for you, and try playing each of the rhythms above, starting on one string. This can be really hard for a bit, but you'll get the feel for it soon enough. Eventually, we'll play whole scales and songs using the metronome!

Now Let's Learn About Note Names!

A blank musical staff looks like this:



A musical staff has 5 lines, unlike the tablature we had learned about, which has 6. We have tricks to remember the names of the notes depending on whether the note shown is on a line, or on a space between two lines. That symbol you see on the left of the staff is called a treble clef. Different clefs signify how we read notes on the staff, but the treble clef is the most common, and the only one we use for guitar.

Here are the note names on the musical staff, divided by lines and spaces:



Tricks For Remembering Note Names

Remembering the names on the spaces is easy! Just spell out the word FACE.

Things get trickier with the lines though, because EGBDF doesn't really spell anything out. Below are some sentences to help us remember! The first letter of each word in the sentence follows the notes on the musical staff!

- Every Good Boy Does Fine
- Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge
- Empty Garbage Before Dad Flips
- Elvis' Guitar Broke Down Friday
- Elaine Goes Belly Dancing Friday

