

LESSON 10

TIME SIGNATURES

The **TIME SIGNATURE** for a musical composition is found at the beginning, next to the key signature. The time signature is made up of two numbers:



Sometimes, the letter **C** or **♩** is used instead of numbers.

C stands for $\frac{4}{4}$, or **Common Time**.

♩ stands for $\frac{2}{2}$, or **Alla Breve**. (Cut Time)

The **top** number of the time signature tells **how many beats each measure contains**.

The **bottom** number tells **which type of note receives one beat**.

2 = 2 beats or counts per measure

4 = Quarter note (♩) receives one beat

3 = 3 beats or counts per measure

8 = Eighth note (♩) receives one beat

METER is a term that describes the equal division of rhythm by the number of beats in each measure. The time signature indicates the meter. (For example, music with a time signature of $\frac{3}{4}$ has three equal beats per measure, and is in triple meter.)

b. From *Chorale* by Schumann. 2 equal beats per measure.

Handwritten musical score for 'Chorale' by Schumann. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is common time (C). The piece consists of six measures. Handwritten annotations include a '2' in the second measure of the bass line and a '2' in the fifth measure of the bass line, indicating two equal beats per measure.

c. From *Reaper's Song* by Schumann. 6 equal beats per measure.

Handwritten musical score for 'Reaper's Song' by Schumann. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The time signature is 6/8. The piece consists of four measures. Handwritten annotations include a '6' in the first measure of the bass line and a '6' in the second measure of the bass line, indicating six equal beats per measure.

d. From *Sonatina, Op. 36, No. 3*, by Clementi. 4 equal beats per measure

Handwritten musical score for 'Sonatina, Op. 36, No. 3' by Clementi. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The time signature is common time (C). The piece consists of four measures. Handwritten annotations include a '4' in the first measure of the bass line and a '4' in the second measure of the bass line, indicating four equal beats per measure.

e. From *Batgatelle* by Beethoven. 3 equal beats per measure.


Handwritten musical score for 'Batgatelle' by Beethoven. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The time signature is 3/4. The piece consists of five measures. Handwritten annotations include a '3' in the first measure of the bass line and a '3' in the second measure of the bass line, indicating three equal beats per measure.

f. From *Verso* by Zipoli. 3 equal beats per measure.


g. From *Sonata Hov. XVI:8* by Haydn. 4 equal beats per measure.

h. From *Prelude, Op. 11, No. 4*, by Scriabin. 6 equal beats per measure.

3. Determine whether each of these phrases is in $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$. In $\frac{3}{4}$, the eighth notes will be divided into groups of two. The eighth notes in $\frac{6}{8}$ measures will be divided into groups of three. Circle the correct time signature for each example.

a. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ 

b. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ 

c. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ 

d. $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ 

4. Add one note to complete each measure.

a. $\frac{6}{8}$ 

b. $\frac{3}{4}$ 

5. Add one rest to complete each measure.

a. $\frac{3}{4}$ 

b. $\frac{3}{4}$ 