MUSICAL ALPHABETS AND THE STAFF

We use letters to help us assign names to particular musical pitches. Unlike the actual English alphabet, the musical alphabet has only seven letters that repeat over and over in sequence. The letters are A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.

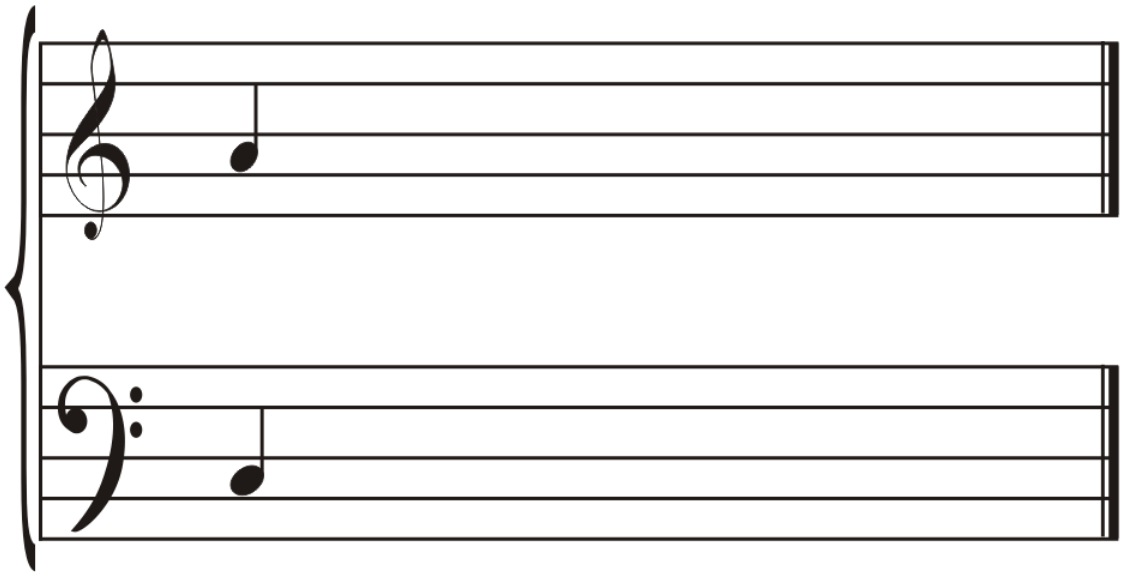
Rather than writing the letter names out for each in sheet music we know their names by where they are placed on the staff.

The Grand Staff

The Grand Staff is a musical construct which allows the full spectrum of musical pitches to the seen. This is the staff used for things such as piano parts and four-part choral writing.

The Grand Staff is actually two separate staves joined by a brace on the left hand side. The upper staff is used for the treble clef (upper voices), and the lower staff is used for the bass clef (lower

voices). The top and bottom staves have five lines (and four space between) each.

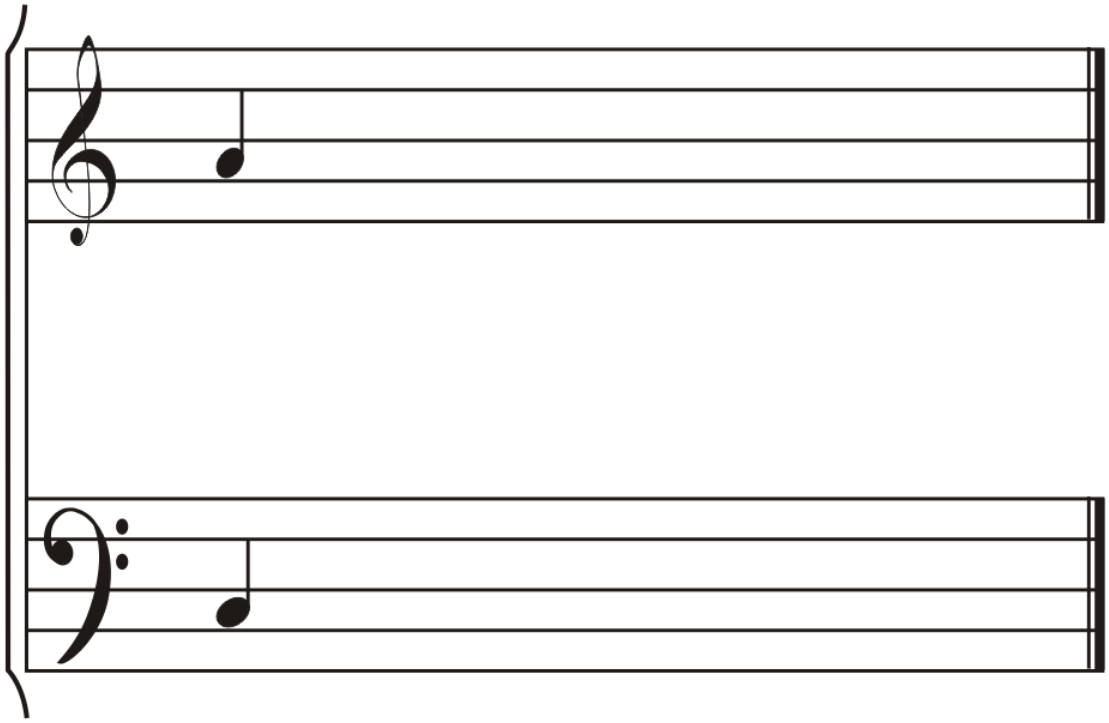


Clefs

The top staff is designated as the "treble" by the use of the treble (or G) clef symbol. The curl  of the symbols circles the second line from the bottom of the top staff designating it as the "G" line. There, a note placed on this line would be called "G".

The bottom staff is designated as the "bass" by the use of the bass (or "F") clef symbol. The top curl of the bass clef symbol designates the second

line from the top of the bottom staff as the "F" line. Therefore, a note placed on this line would be named "F".



In the case of piano music, the treble clef staff is generally used for right hand and the bass clef is used for the left. In choral writings (such as hymnals) the treble staff is used for women (sopranos and altos), while the bass staff is used for men (tenor and bass).

Another kind of clef is C clef. It is called so because it establishes the pitch of the middle C on the line intersecting the clef. The two C-clefs in use

today are the Alto clef and the Tenor clef. The Alto clef has the third line bisecting the clef, showing the third line to be Middle C. The Tenor clef has the fourth line bisecting the clef, showing the fourth line to be Middle C.

Notes

In music, the term note has two primary meanings: a sign used in musical notation to represent the relative duration and pitch of a sound, or a pitched sound itself.

There are different kinds of notes; each having a different note value i.e. duration. They are whole note (semi-breve), half note (minim), quarter note (crochet), eight note (quaver), sixteenth note (semi-quaver), etc.

When eight and sixteenth notes occur in group, they are usually joined with a beam.

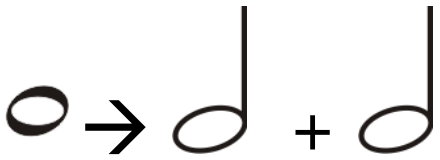


Beamed quaver



Beamed semi-quaver

The relative values of these notes are indicated by the note name: a half note is held for half the number of beats as a whole note; a quarter note receives a quarter of the number of beats that whole note receives, etc. That is:



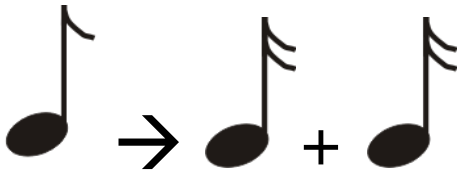
One whole note contains two minims or half notes;



One half note contains two crochets or quarter notes;



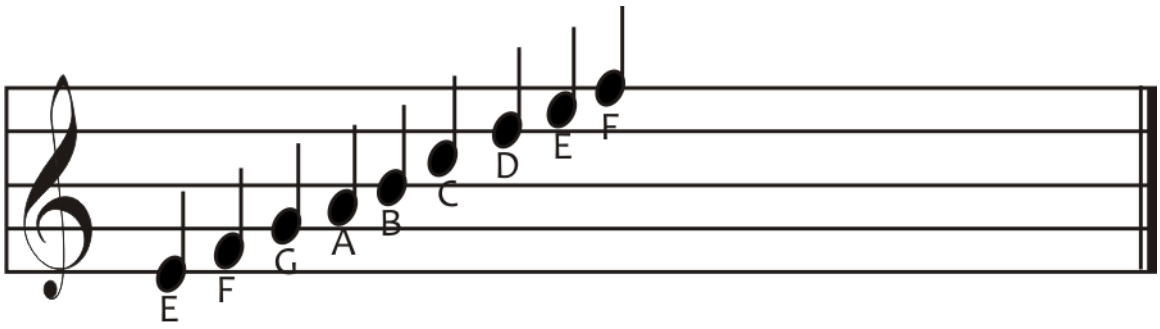
One quarter note contains two quavers or eight notes;



One eight note contains two semi-quavers or sixteenth notes; etc.

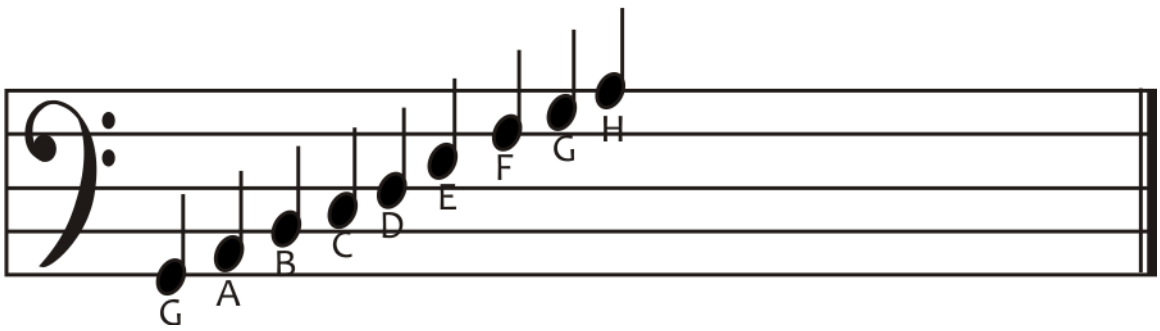
Note Alphabets on Staff

On a treble staff, the second line from the bottom is G. Therefore, the note names on the treble staff are as follows:



Since F, A, C, and E are the notes that occupy the spaces in the treble clef, we can thus call it the FACE clef for easy remembrance of how the notes are drawn on the staff.

On the bass clef, the second line from the top is F. Thus, the note names on the bass staff are as follows:



An acronym for remembering how notes are named on a bass staff is All Cows Eat Grass (i.e. ACEG)

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Igwuruta, Igwuruta-Ali, Omagwa, Isiokpo, Elele, Omudioga, Egbeda, Ubimini, Ikiri, Omoku.