

Introduction

Right from the start, it is important to learn how to write down music clearly. As a musician, unclear manuscript can waste valuable rehearsal time and might lead to performance mistakes. In an exam, badly written work may be misunderstood and could lose you vital marks.

This workbook offers advice and practical exercises, which provide a solid foundation for notating music and understanding it in context. Working through the book will equip and fully prepare you for the Grade 1 Music Theory exam; it is also an excellent resource for developing your general music literacy skills. To enhance your learning, each chapter begins with a reference to *The AB Guide to Music Theory*, a book that supplies further background knowledge on each topic. Where keywords are introduced in the text, they are highlighted in **bold** and accompanied by a definition.




Bear in mind that this workbook presents an introduction to understanding music notation: any printed music which you are learning to play or sing will provide a good model to help consolidate theory into practice. Look closely to see how the notes and signs are written, and where they are placed. Practise copying out music carefully – mastering it may be a slow process, but speed and technique will come with time.

Time values

(The AB Guide to Music Theory, Chapter 1/1)

Exercise 1











What are these notes called?

-  Name _____
-  Name _____
-  Name _____
-  Name _____

Exercise 2

How long is each note? Complete the following sentences with the right number. (As an example, the answer to the first one is given.)

Example

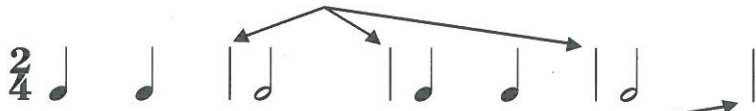
- A  lasts as long as **2** 
- A  lasts as long as _____ 
- A  lasts as long as _____ 
- A  lasts as long as _____ 
- A  lasts as long as _____ 

Bar-lines and time signatures

(The AB Guide to Music Theory, Chapter 1/2)

Exercise 1 ✓

What are these lines called? _____



What is this pair of lines called? _____

At the beginning of a piece of music you can see two numbers: for example, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{4}{4}$.

Exercise 2 ✓

What are these numbers called? _____

Exercise 3 ✓

In directions such as $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$, what does the top number tell you? _____

And what does the bottom number tell you? _____

So what is the full meaning of $\frac{2}{4}$? _____

And what is the full meaning of $\frac{3}{4}$? _____

Exercise 4 ✓

Write the sign which can be used instead of $\frac{4}{4}$. _____

Exercise 5 ✓

Add ONE note at each place marked * to complete the bar.



Exercise 6 ✓

Add the time signature at the beginning of each line.


Example

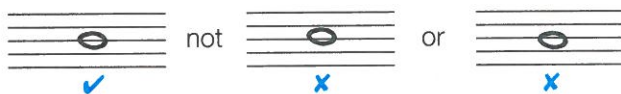


Notes on the staff

(The AB Guide to Music Theory, Chapters 1/1 & 2/1)

The semibreve (whole note)

The easiest note to draw is the semibreve (whole note): it is simply an oval, . If you draw it on a line, the line must go exactly through the middle, and the semibreve (whole note) should cover only half the space on either side. For example:



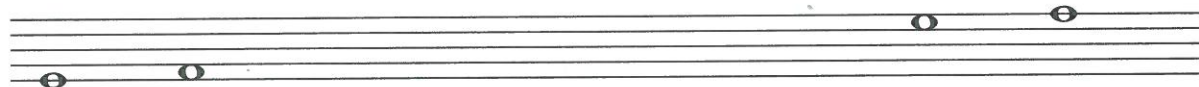
If you draw it in a space, it should fill the space (not overlap a line):



It is hard to see if the notes marked **x** are on a line or between the lines.

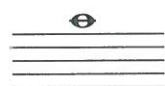
Exercise 1

Draw a semibreve (whole note) on every line and in every space between these notes.



Ledger lines

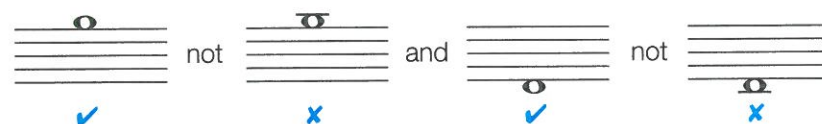
You can draw notes higher or lower than the five staff lines by drawing another line or lines. For example:



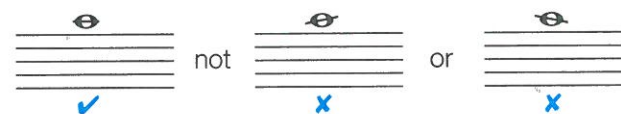
Each note has its own line:



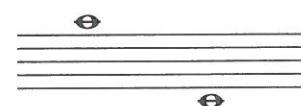
Do not draw a line over the note above the staff, and do not draw a line underneath the note below it:



When you draw extra lines, they must not slope up or down. They should be the same distance apart as the staff lines:




You can draw more than one line above or below the staff, but in Grade 1 only one line above or below the staff is used:



Exercise 2

What are these extra lines called? _____

Stems

Like semibreves (whole notes), the note-heads of minims (half notes) and shorter notes are also oval (not round), but they are a little smaller. (Some people draw black note-heads as single slanting strokes, like this:  but these are not easy to read and can lead to mistakes.)

The stem of a note goes down on the left  and up on the right 

The stems of notes on the top two lines go down.

The stems of notes on the bottom two lines go up.

The stems of notes on the middle line may go up or down.

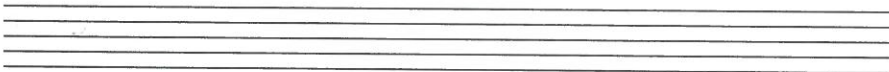


Notice how long the stems are, and do not draw them too long or too short. Also, they should stand up straight. Here are some good and bad examples:

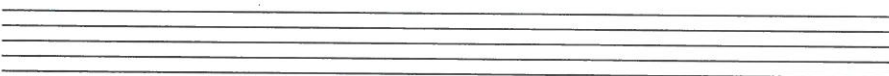






Exercise 3

Draw a crotchet (quarter note) on every line.



Draw a minim (half note) in every space.



In printed music, quavers (eighth notes) and shorter notes have curved tails   but you can draw them with straight tails  

Remember! When you draw a note with a tail, the tail always goes on the right-hand side of the stem.

Exercise 4

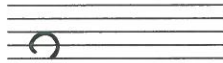
Add stems and tails to turn each note into a quaver (eighth note):



The treble (G) clef

(The AB Guide to Music Theory, Chapter 2/1)

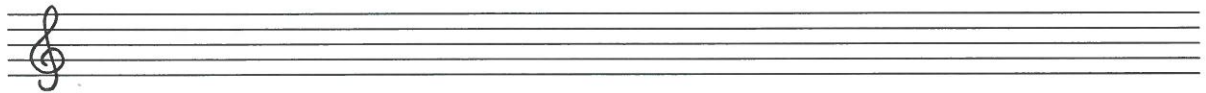
You might find the treble clef difficult to draw at first, but with a bit of practice it will become much easier. Start with the loop around the second line (G) of the staff from left to right like this –



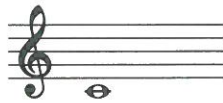
– and then follow through. The top of the clef must be just above the staff, and the bottom of the clef should be just below it.

Exercise 1

Practise by copying this treble clef:



In Grade 1, you will only use one ledger line in the treble clef: the one below the staff. This note is middle C:



Exercise 2

Write the name of each note. (The first answer is given as an example.)



Name A

The bass (F) clef

(The AB Guide to Music Theory, Chapter 2/1)

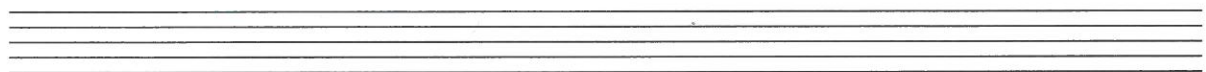
You can draw the bass clef in two ways (the first way is the most common):



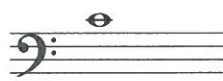
They both have two dots: one on either side of the F line.

Exercise 1

Try drawing some bass clefs:



In Grade 1, you will only use one ledger line in the bass clef: the one above the staff. This note is middle C:



More on time values

(The AB Guide to Music Theory, Chapter 1/1-2)


Exercise 1

What is this note called:  ? _____

How long is each note? Complete the sentences.

Example

A  lasts as long as **2** 





A  lasts as long as _____ 







A  lasts as long as _____ 





A  lasts as long as _____ 








Exercise 2

Add ONE note at each * to complete the bar.

(a)     * |

(c)    *    |

(b)    *  |

(d)       *  |


Notes with tails are often joined (beamed) together. For example, you can write:


 as ;  as ; and  as 

Exercise 3

Join up the quavers (eighth notes) and semiquavers (16th notes) in these pieces of music.

Example





(c) 



(a) 



(d) 



(b) 



(e) 



(The AB Guide to Music Theory, Chapter 3/1)

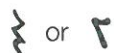
The semibreve (whole-note) rest hangs *below* a line, usually the fourth line, like this:



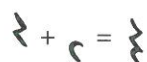
The minim (half-note) rest sits *on* a line, usually the third line, like this:



You can draw a crotchet (quarter-note) rest in two ways:



The first one is a little harder to draw, but try to use it because it is often used in printed music. Draw it like this – a sideways ‘z’ on top joined to a sloping ‘c’ below:



Exercise 1 ✓

Now practise drawing crotchet (quarter-note) rests. Copy this one:



Usually, you draw the crotchet (quarter-note), quaver (eighth-note) and semiquaver (16th-note) rests in the middle of the staff, like this:



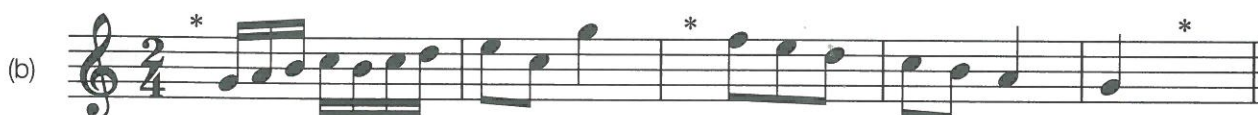
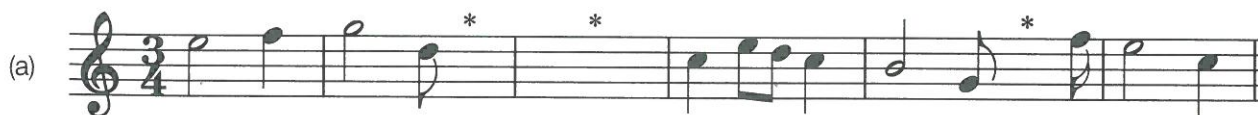
Exercise 2 ✓

Add ONE rest at each * to make the bars complete. A completely silent bar always has a



rest – not only in $\frac{4}{4}$ but also in $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{4}$.

Example



Time Names and Time Values

Date:

1 Fill in the missing notes.



Time Name	Note	Rest
semibreve		
minim		
crotchet		
quaver		
semiquaver		

Time Value											

2 Write the time name of the note.

3 Write the time name of the rest.

4 Write a rest which has the same time value as the note.



Time Signatures

Date:

7 Rewrite the following in notes of twice the value.

8 Rewrite the following in notes of twice the value.

a

Both are in (duple, triple, quadruple) time.

b

Both are in (duple, triple, quadruple) time.

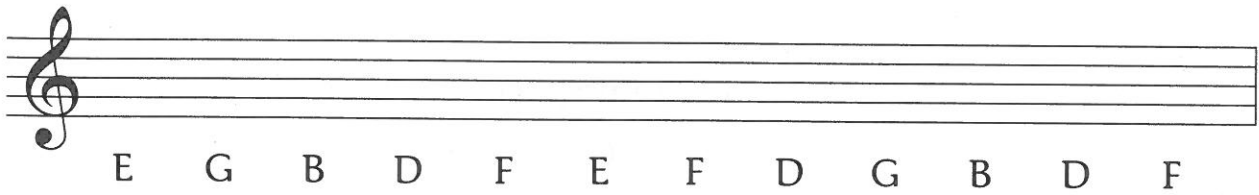
c

Both are in (duple, triple, quadruple) time.

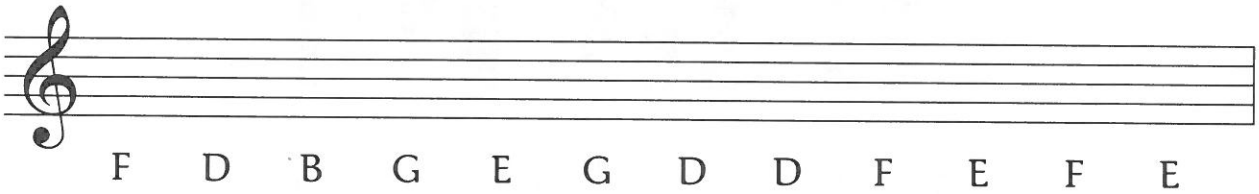


The Treble Staff

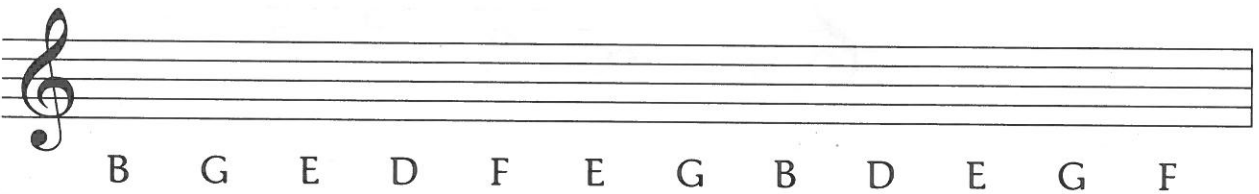
Write these notes on the lines of the treble staff.



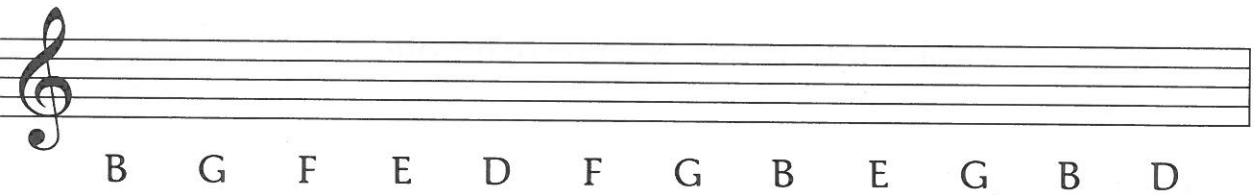
E G B D F E F D G B D F



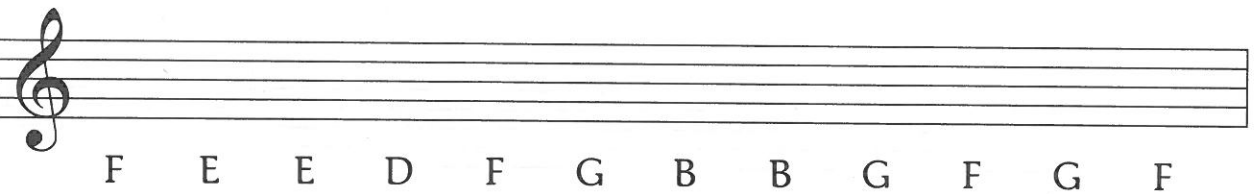
F D B G E G D D F E F E



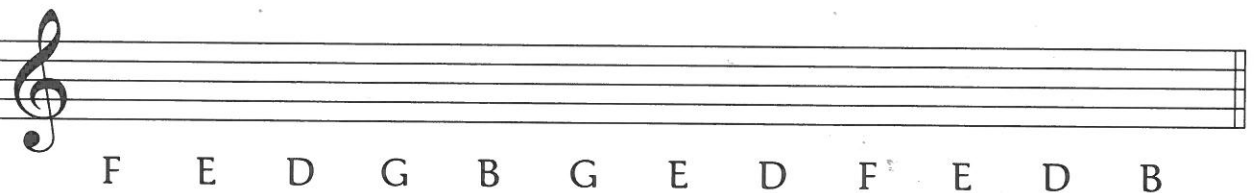
B G E D F E G B D E G F



B G F E D F G B E G B D



F E E D F G B B G F G F



F E D G B G E D F E D B

SPELLING FUN

Name the following notes. They spell words.

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), Bb5 (quarter). Below the staff is a dashed line with slashes: _ _ _ / _ _ / _ _ _ / _ _ _

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), Bb5 (quarter), C6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter). Below the staff is a dashed line with slashes: _ _ _ / _ _ _ / _ _ _ / _ _ _

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), Bb5 (quarter), C6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter). Below the staff is a dashed line with slashes: _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _

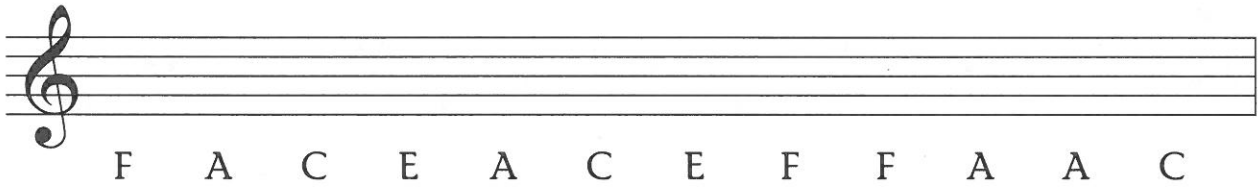
A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), Bb5 (quarter), C6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter). Below the staff is a dashed line with slashes: _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), Bb5 (quarter), C6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter). Below the staff is a dashed line with slashes: _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _

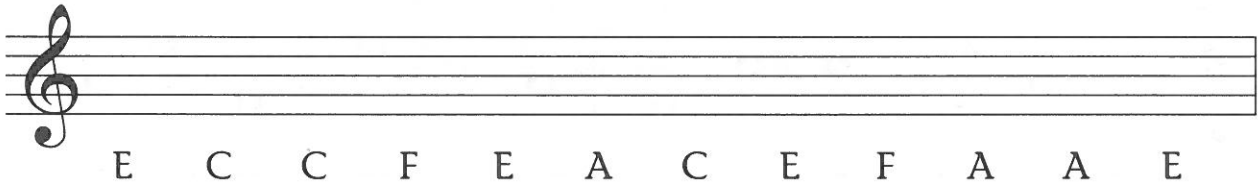
A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), Bb5 (quarter), C6 (quarter), D6 (quarter), E6 (quarter). Below the staff is a dashed line with slashes: _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _

The Treble Staff

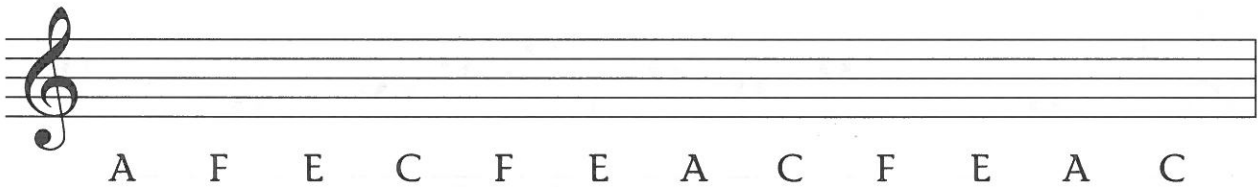
Write these notes in the spaces of the treble staff.



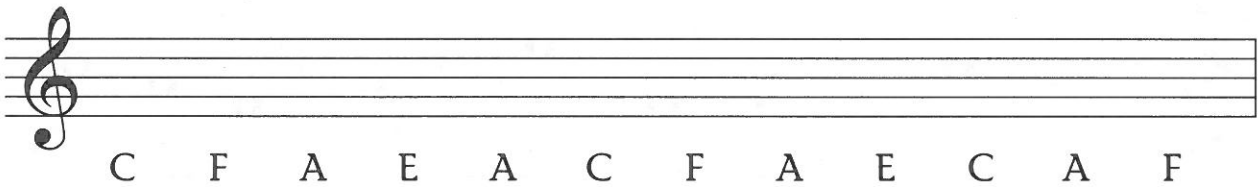
F A C E A C E F F A A C



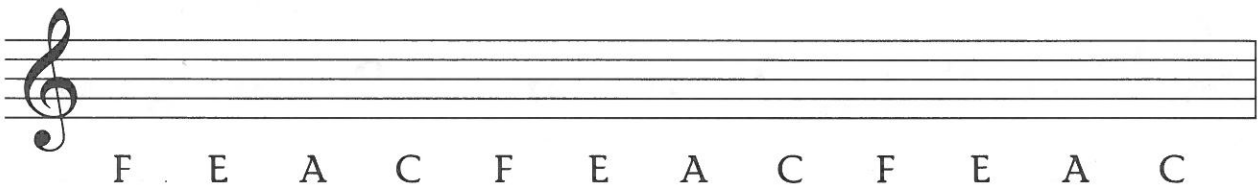
E C C F E A C E F A A E



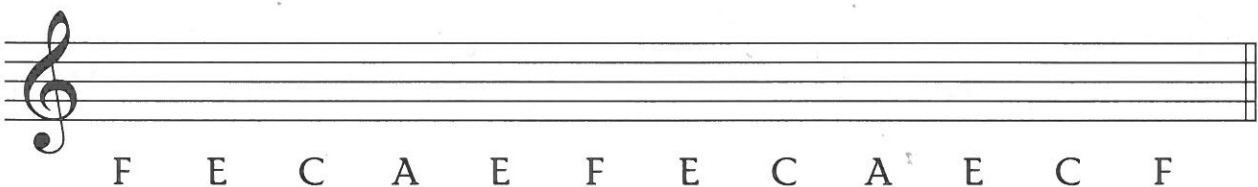
A F E C F E A C F E A C



C F A E A C F A E C A F



F E A C F E A C F E A C



F E C A E F E C A E C F