



SIMPLE METERS

27 Sept 2017

Why have a meter?

- Easier to count to 4 over and over instead of 76
 - Ask a percussionist or bass trombone player!
- Allows for conducting
 - 2/4 (down up)
 - 3/4 (down, out, up)
 - 4/4 (down, in, out, up)

Simple Meters

(the type of beat can change)

- 4 denominator = quarter note is the beat
 - $2/4 = 2$ quarter notes each measure
 - $3/4 = 3$ quarter notes each measure
 - $4/4$ or C = 4 quarter notes each measure
- 2 denominator = half note is the beat
 - $2/2$ or C = 2 half notes each measure
 - $3/2 = 3$ half notes in each measure
 - $4/2 = 4$ half notes in each measure
- 8 denominator = eighth note is the beat
 - $2/8 = 2$ eighth notes per measure
 - $4/8 = 4$ eighth notes per measure
- 16 denominator = sixteenth note is the beat
 - $2/16 = 2$ sixteenths per measure
 - $3/16 = 3$ sixteenths per measure
 - $4/16 = 4$ sixteenths per measure

Simple Time Signatures

A **time signature** is a symbol that tells the performer how many beats will occur in each measure, what note value will represent the beat, and whether the beat is simple or compound. A time signature for a simple beat has 2, 3, or 4 as the top number. The top number indicates the number of beats in the measure; the bottom number indicates the beat note (2 = ♩, 4 = ♩, 8 = ♩, and so on). Some typical simple time signatures are listed in the following table. Notice that time signatures are not written as fractions—there should be no line between the numbers.

Time signature	Beats per measure	Beat note	Division of the beat
$\frac{2}{4}$	2	♩	♩
$\frac{2}{2}$ or C	2	♩	♩
$\frac{3}{8}$	3	♩	♩
$\frac{3}{4}$	3	♩	♩
$\frac{4}{8}$	4	♩	♩
$\frac{4}{4}$ or C	4	♩	♩

Example 2-1 illustrates how some of the songs we have been considering might be notated. The beat values were chosen arbitrarily. "Jingle Bells," for example, could also be notated correctly in $\frac{2}{2}$ or $\frac{2}{8}$ or any other simple duple time signature.

Example 2-1

"Jingle Bells"



"America the Beautiful"



"Home on the Range"



Renotate in diminution

