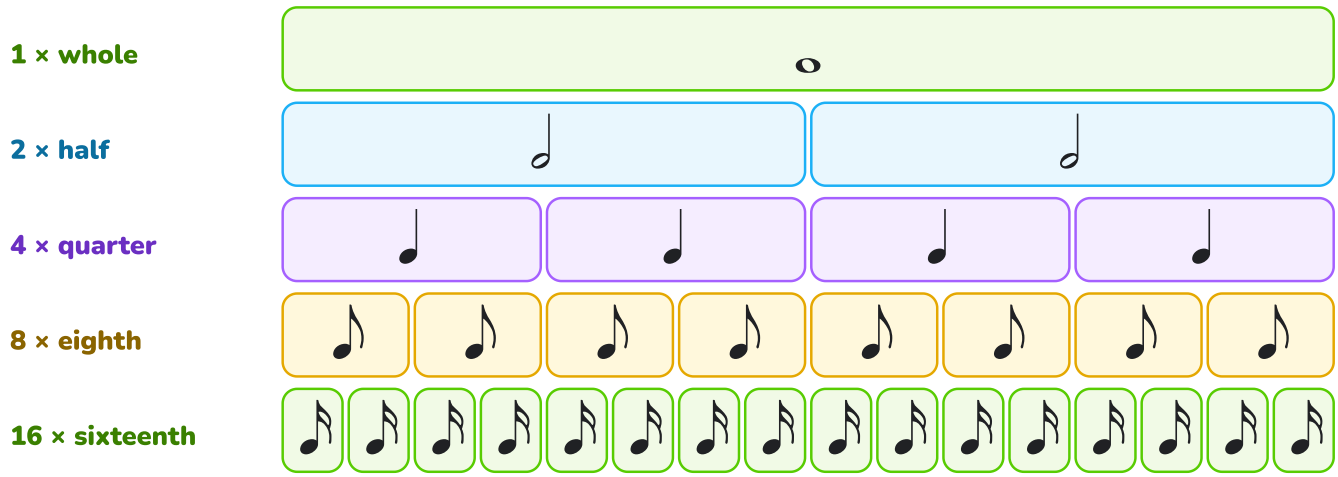
Note Values, Rests & Time

How long does a note last? How do you count it right?

1 The note tree

Every row lasts the same time – one whole note fills exactly one 4/4 bar.



2 Notes and their rests

Every note has a rest that lasts just as long. Counted in 4/4 time.

	Whole note	4 beats		Whole rest hangs below the 4th line
	Half note	2 beats		Half rest sits on the 3rd line
	Quarter note	1 beat		Quarter rest
	Eighth note	½ beat		Eighth rest
	Sixteenth note	¼ beat		Sixteenth rest

3 The dot makes it longer

A dot after a note adds half of its value.

 Dotted half = 2 + 1 = **3 beats**

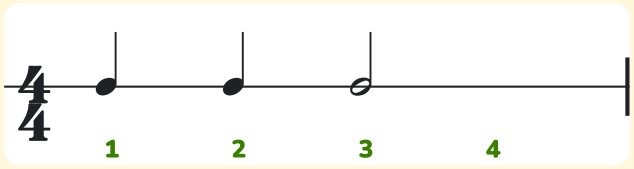
 Dotted quarter = 1 + ½ = **1½ beats**

4 The most important time signatures

The top number tells you how many beats – the bottom one which note value gets one beat.

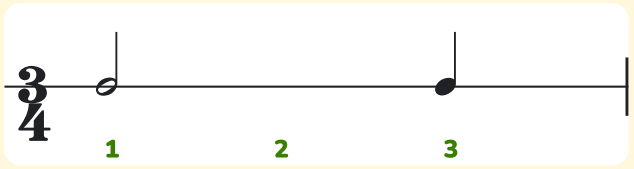
4/4 time

The most common: four quarter notes per bar.



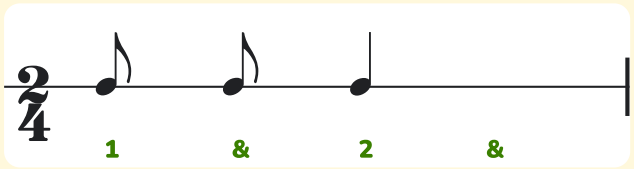
3/4 time

Waltz time: three quarter notes – “one, two, three”.
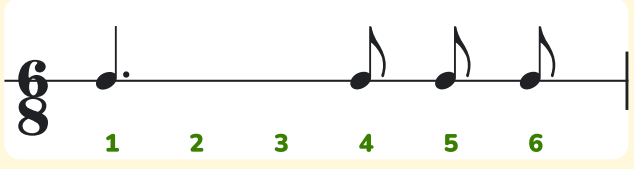


2/4 time

March and polka: two quarter notes. Count eighths with “and”.



6/8 time

Six eighth notes, felt as two groups of three.



Note math: how many beats (quarter notes) in total?



Answers: 3 · 1½ · 6 · 4 · 1 · 4