



At the beginning of a piece of music you will see two numbers on top of each other (a bit like a fraction without the line). The top number tells you how many beats are in each bar, and the bottom number tells you what type of beats. For example, $\frac{3}{4}$ means that there are 3 crotchet beats per bar.



Simple Time



Until now you will have only seen 4 at the bottom of time signatures, which means the beat is counted in crotchets.

You will also notice that beats in all of these time signatures can be divided by 2, into quavers. These are called simple time signatures.

Compound Time

In compound time signatures the beats divide into 3. They are written as dotted notes, for example:

$\frac{6}{8}$ is a new time signature that you will come across. This means that there are 6 quaver beats per bar, as the 8 at the bottom means quavers.



If we were to count a bar of 6/8 we could count each quaver '1,2,3,4,5,6' or more commonly, we would count in dotted crotchet beats. There are 2 dotted crotchet beats per bar in 6/8, so we would count the bar in 2.



1 2 = 1 2



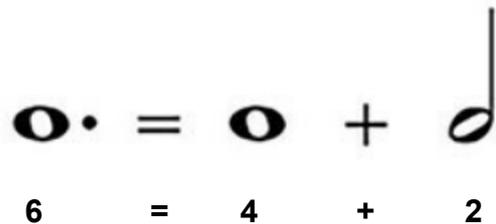
artforms Dotted notes and Ties

Dotted notes

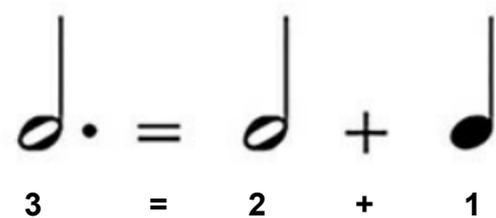
A dot at the side of a note increases its length by half of the value of the note.

Here are some common examples:

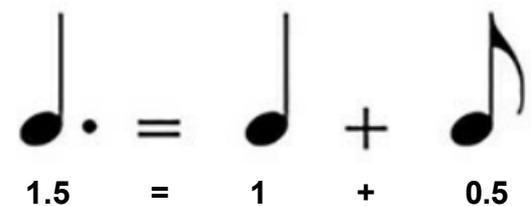
A dotted semibreve lasts for 6 beats because half of a semibreve (4 beats) is a minim (2 beats), then we add the two values together.



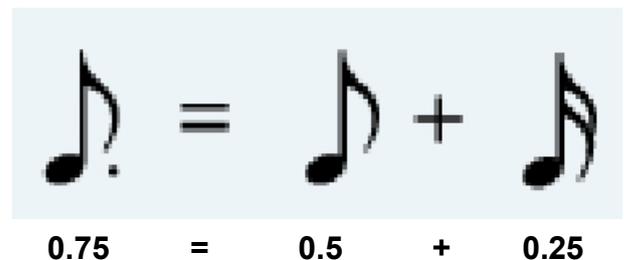
A dotted minim lasts for 3 beats because half of a minim (2 beats) is a crotchet (1 beat).



A dotted crotchet lasts for 1.5 beats because half of a crotchet (1 beat) is a quaver (half beat).

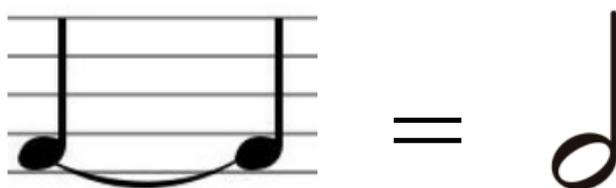


A dotted quaver lasts for three-quarters of a beat because half of a quaver (half beat) is a semiquaver (quarter beat).



Ties

A tie joins notes together notes of the same pitch (this is different to a slur, which is between notes of different pitches). A tie turns them into one sound. You can join multiple notes together in this way, but they must be the same pitch and next to each other in the music.



For example:

Two tied crotchets would sound like a minim.