

Systems

The normal **system** of music for piano has two **staves**; one in the **treble clef**, usually played with the right hand, and one in the **bass clef**, usually played with the left hand.

The **treble clef** is shaped like a rather fancy letter G, and centres on the second line from the bottom of the staff, where we find the note G.

The **bass clef** is a little bit like the letter F, and is positioned on the bass staff in such a way that the dots, representing the horizontal lines of the letter F fall above and below the line on which the note F is written.

The note on the **ledger line** between the two staves is **middle C**.



If you are writing music for other instruments, your system can have more (or fewer) staves.

For example, most music for solo guitar is written on a single treble clef staff, whereas music for the bass guitar, or double bass would usually be written on a bass clef staff (or staff).


If you want to write a symphony, each "line" of your music might occupy up to 20 or more staves (violin 1, violin 2, viola, cello, double bass, piccolo, flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, trumpet, horn, tuba, various drums and so on... (that's why we don't expect GCSE (or even A Level) students to write symphonies!)


COURSE: GCSE MUSIC	NOTATION 1
UNIT : THEORY	


Time Values:

Semibreves, Minims, Crotchets, Quavers & Semiquavers

Crotchets, Minims and Semibreves


When we tap our feet or clap our hands 'in time' to a piece of music, we are clapping the steady **beats** of the music. At this level, our beats are shown like this:  This sign is called a **crotchet**.


The sign:  is used for a sound which lasts as long as *two (2)* crotchets. It is called a **minim**.

The sign:  is used for a sound which lasts as long as *four (4)* crotchets. It is called a **semibreve**.

A semibreve lasts as long as four crotchets or two minims. We can also say that a semibreve has the same **time value** as four crotchets or two minims. Therefore a *minim* has the same time value as two crotchets and *half* the time value of a semibreve.

Quavers and Semiquavers

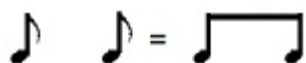
There are also time values that are shorter than crotchets/quarter notes! The **quaver**:  lasts for half the length of a crotchet, i.e. 1/2 of a beat.

The **semiquaver**:  lasts for quarter of the length of a crotchet, i.e. 1/4 of a beat.

Therefore, two quavers last as long as one crotchet; and four semiquavers also last as long as one crotchet.

Note

When two quavers are written together, they can be **beamed** together as below:








When four semiquavers are written together, they can be **beamed** together as below:



The following chart shows the names that we give to each note symbol. The names shown here are the "British" names for the notes. The chart also shows the number of beats each note gets:

Note Values

		
Semibreve 4 beats		Semibreve 4 beats
Minim 2 beats		Minim 2 beats
Crotchet 1 beat		Crotchet 1 beat
Quaver 1/2 beat		Quaver 1/2 beat
Semiquaver 1/4 beat		Semiquaver 1/4 beat


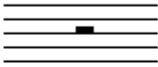
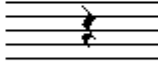
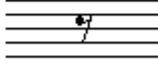
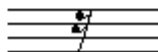
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Playing silence

There are times when any composer wants to tell the performer(s) not to play. (This is especially important for singers, vocalists and players of wind instruments; you have to allow your performer(s) the chance to breathe!)

So, we need a system to let us tell the performer(s) when **not** to play.

We call these things **rests**. Rests come in the same lengths as notes. They look like this:

Name	Note	Rest
Semibreve	◉	
Minim	♪	
Crotchet	♪	
Quaver	♪	
Semi-quaver	♪	

You can try to remember some of these like this:

A **semibreve rest** is suspended from the second line;

A **minim rest** is mounted on the middle line;

A **crotchet rest** is a bit wiggly - like when one of your parents gets in a crotchety mood;

A **quaver rest** is a little like a mis-shaped question mark; and

A **semiquaver rest** is a bit like a double question mark (the value is halved, so the bottom part of the fraction has doubled).

You could also say the quaver and semiquaver rests are a bit like a q and a "double q".

[There's a bit more of this stuff to come, but this is enough for this week!]