

MUSIC · Y3-Y6

# Notation & Rhythm

Knowledge Organiser — KS2 Music

## Key vocabulary

1

**Notation**

How we write down music using symbols on paper.

2

**Stave / Staff**

The five lines and four spaces that music is written on.

3

**Treble clef**

The curly symbol at the start of a stave for higher notes.

4

**Bass clef**

The symbol for lower notes (often used for bass instruments).

5

**Note**

A single musical sound. Each has a pitch (how high/low) and a length.

6

**Rest**

A silence. Has a length, just like a note.

7

**Time signature**

Two numbers at the start showing how many beats are in each bar (e.g. 4/4).

8

**Bar**

A small section of music between two vertical lines on the stave.



9

**Rhythm**

The pattern of long and short sounds and silences.

10

**Pulse / Beat**

The steady underlying tick of the music. Like a heartbeat.

11

**Tempo**

How fast the music goes.

12

**Dynamics**

How loud or quiet the music is.

## Note values

How long each note lasts

- SEMIBREVE (whole note) ■ — 4 beats
- MINIM (half note) ■ — 2 beats
- CROTCHET (quarter note) ■ — 1 beat
- QUAVER (eighth note) ■ — 1/2 a beat
- SEMIQUAVER (sixteenth note) — 1/4 of a beat
- Each one is HALF the length of the one before.
- Each note has a matching REST that lasts the same time.

## — how loud and quiet

Italian terms used in all mu

- pp (pianissimo) — very quiet
- p (piano) — quiet
- mp (mezzo piano) — medium quiet
- mf (mezzo forte) — medium loud



- f (forte) — loud
- ff (fortissimo) — very loud
- crescendo (cresc.) — gradually getting louder
- diminuendo (dim.) — gradually getting quieter
- Italian is used because most music vocabulary was set down in Italy in the 1600s.

## Tempo — how fast

From slow to fast

- Largo — very slow
- Adagio — slow
- Andante — walking pace
- Moderato — moderate pace
- Allegro — fast and lively
- Vivace — very fast
- Presto — very, very fast
- Tempos are measured in BPM (beats per minute). 60 BPM = 1 beat per second.
- Most pop songs are 90-130 BPM.

## Time signatures

How beats are grouped

- 4/4 (FOUR-FOUR) — four beats in each bar. Most common. Almost all pop, rock, hip-hop.
- 3/4 — three beats per bar. Used for waltzes, lullabies.
- 2/4 — two beats per bar. Marches.
- 6/8 — feels like a swinging 'dum-de-de, dum-de-de.' Used in lots of Irish jigs and lullabies.



- Top number = how many beats. Bottom number = what kind of beat (4 = crotchet, 8 = quaver).
- Try clapping along to a song — count 1-2-3-4 or 1-2-3 — that's how you find the time signature.

