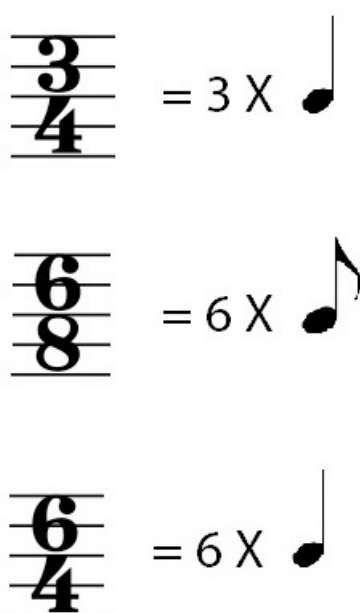


Time Signatures: 3/4, 6/4, and 6/8

Up until now, you've been mostly working with, and playing in the time signature of 4/4, also known as 'common time'. To better understand time signatures, let's take a look at how they work and what the numbers mean.

In a time signature symbol, the **top** number indicates the number of **notes per bar**, whereas the **bottom** number indicates the **subdivision** (i.e. quarter notes, 8th notes, etc.) For example, in the time signature of 3/4, where the 3 is on top and the 4 is at the bottom, there will only be 3 quarter notes per bar. See the illustration below:



After looking at the illustration above, you might wonder what the difference between 3/4 and 6/8 is, seeing as they are both equal to six 8th notes and/or four quarter notes. There is only really one difference on paper – **note groupings**.

Notes are grouped according something called the '**invisible bar line**'. Memorising where the invisible bar line is placed for each time signature is crucial in order to understand time signature groupings. What it means is that wherever the invisible bar line/s is placed in a bar, there can't be any notes grouped over that space. There can also not be a single note sustaining over that space (2 tied notes are used instead). Please see the example below:



Another way to memorise note groupings is as follows:

3/4 – 2;2;2

6/8 – 3;3

6/4 – 6;6

These are indicative of the amount of 8th notes per bar, and how they are grouped. E.g. 3/4 is group in 3 pairs of 2 8th notes, or 6/8 is grouped in 2 pairs of 3 8th notes, etc.

Be sure to memorise how these 3 time signatures' notes are grouped, as you'll need it for the exercise that is to follow.

Time Signature Exercise:

Using the amount of notes per bar, and the note groupings given, assign the correct time signature to the appropriate stave:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Answers:

1. $\frac{3}{4}$

2. $\frac{6}{4}$

3. $\frac{3}{4}$

4. $\frac{6}{8}$

5. $\frac{6}{8}$