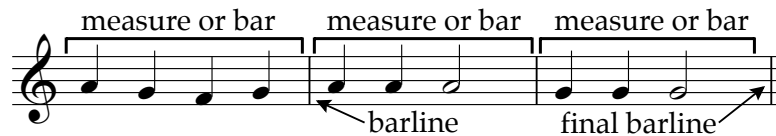


### Section 1.5

## TIME SIGNATURES IN SIMPLE METER

Beat  
Measure  
Bar, Barline  
Final barline

A **beat** is a repeating musical pulse. Listeners sense the beat when they tap their feet or clap their hands in time with the music. Musicians group beats into units called **measures** or **bars**. Every measure ends with a **barline**. A special **final barline** indicates the end of the movement or piece.



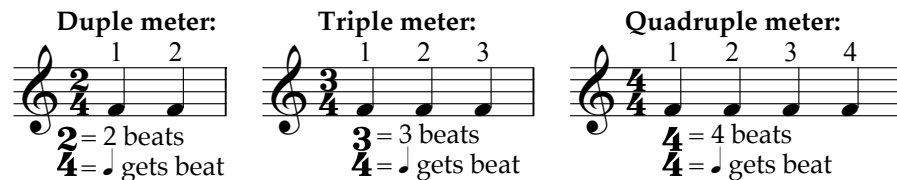
Time signature  
Beat unit, Simple  
time signature

A **time signature** (or **meter signature**) indicates how many beats there are in one measure and what rhythmic value gets one beat (this value is called the **beat unit**). For time signatures in **simple meter**, the top number is the number of beats in each measure, and the bottom number is the beat unit. Time signatures are **not** fractions, so there is no line between the numbers.



Duple, Triple,  
Quadruple

Meters (that is, time signatures) with two beats per measure are **duple**, those with three beats are **triple**, and those with four beats are **quadruple**.



Beat division and  
subdivision

Each beat in simple meter divides into two equal **beat divisions**, or four equal **beat subdivisions**. Below, one quarter note beat equals two eighth notes or four sixteenth notes; see 1.4 Rhythmic Values.



**Other beat units****Cut time****Alla breve****Common time**

The bottom number in a simple time signature indicates the **beat unit**: two means half note, four means quarter, eight means eighth, and so on. The first time signature below is also called **cut time** or **alla breve**. The second time signature is common in Baroque music; sometimes the eighth notes are written with flags instead of beamed together. The last time signature is sometimes called **common time**.

**Anacrusis  
Pickup measure**

An **anacrusis** (or **pickup measure**) is a partial measure that begins some pieces. An anacrusis is often one beat long, but not always. If there is an anacrusis, the final measure will be shortened so that the anacrusis and the final, shortened measure together equal the length of one regular measure.

**Downbeat  
Strong beat  
Weak beat**

The **downbeat** is the first beat of each measure. The downbeat is fundamental and stable (a **strong beat**) because it initiates each new group of beats. The last beat of each measure is unstable (a **weak beat**) because it pulls forward to the following measure. The last beat of a measure often seems to have more energy than the downbeat, because it propels the rhythm forward to the more stable, stronger downbeat.

**Stress patterns**

The following stress patterns for beats are common:

1. **Duple meters:** Meters with **two** beats follow a **STRONG-weak** stress pattern for the two beats.
2. **Triple meters:** Meters with **three** beats follow a **STRONG-weak-weak** stress pattern for the three beats.
3. **Quadruple meters:** Meters with **four** beats follow a **STRONGEST-weak-STRONG-weak** pattern for the four beats.