Rests

Rests are symbols indicating durations of pause or silence. Each note value has a corresponding rest.

Quarter Note		Quarter Rest	
Eighth Note		Eighth Rest	
Half Note		Half Rest	
Whole Note		Whole Rest	

A half rest sits on the middle line of the 5-line staff; a whole rest sits just below the fourth line.

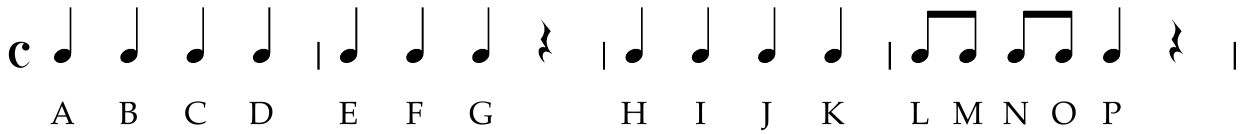
half rest

whole rest

The two are easily confused. You can use the mnemonic that a "whole" rest makes a "hole" below the fourth staff line.

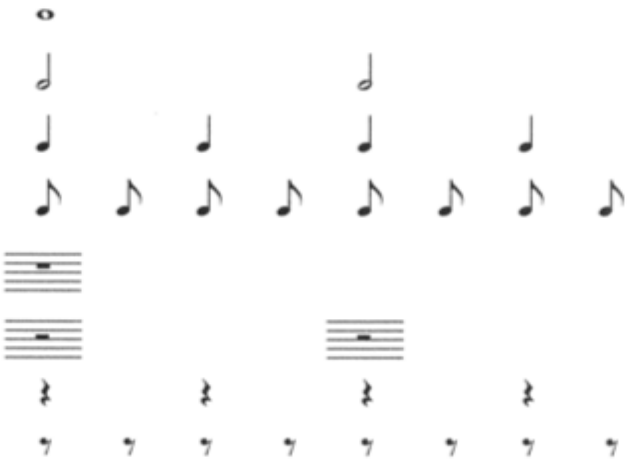
A peculiarity about the whole rest is that it is used to indicate a full measure of rest **in all meters**, even if the value of a measure is not actually equal to four quarters, for example in 2/4 or 3/4. This peculiarity applies to whole **rests**, but not to whole **notes**.

In notating the song below we might use half notes at the words "G" and "P". But the way most people sing and breathe in this tune, it usually goes more like this:



Duration hierarchy

The basic note and rest values in Western notation are based on repeated division by two. Each row in the following chart has the same total duration value (i.e. one whole note).

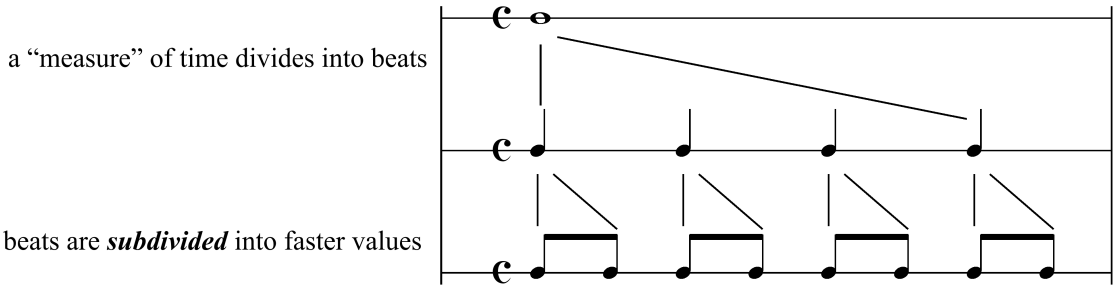


This is convenient for music where the beat divides into two equal faster values. Music like this is said to be in a **simple meter.** Much music (such as "Hickory Dickory Dock" or "Pop Goes the Weasel") instead divides each beat into **three** equal subdivisions rather than two. Music like this is said to be in a **compound meter**; we'll learn how to notate that soon.

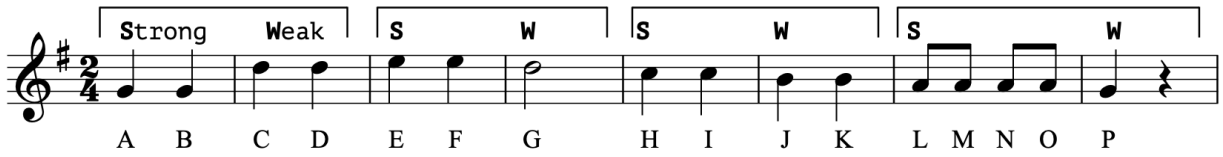
Metric hierarchy and hypermeter

Like duration symbols, the phenomenon of meter is hierarchical.

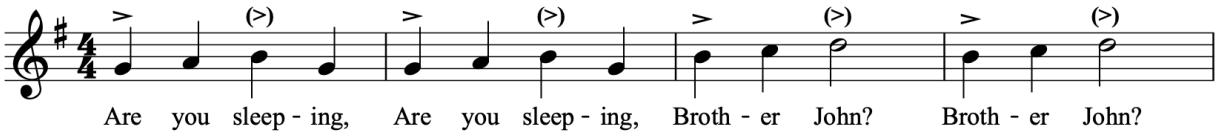
The way a bit splits—into two or into three—is called the **subdivision**. This may seem odd, because we are talking about the first (or primary) division of the beat: how is it a ***sub***division? This reflects a sense that the measure, rather than the beat, is the basic unit of time in music. (After all, it is called a "measure". And in the most common time signature, 4/4, one measure has the duration of a "whole" note, that is, one unit.) So the measure is divided into beats, then time may be further subdivided into faster values.



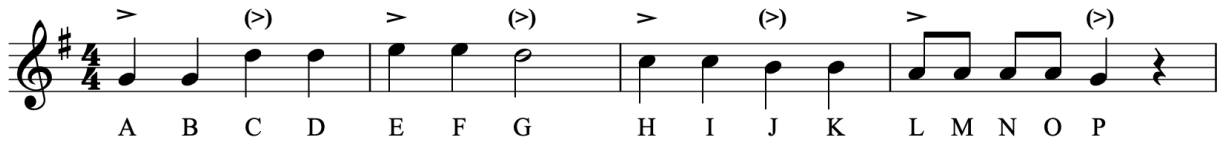
Going the other direction, zooming out to a longer time scales, measures often group into patterns of stressed and relatively unstressed, just like beats. This is called **hypermeter**. Lots of music has a sense of **two-bar** or **duple hypermeter**: "strong" measures alternate with "weak" measures.



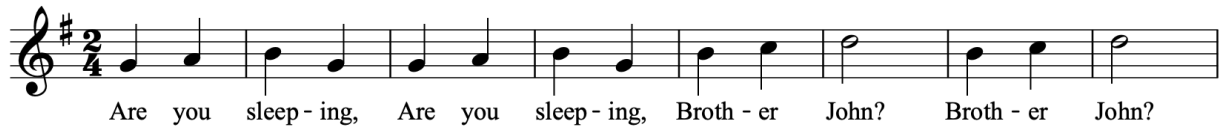
Conversely, in quadruple meter, there is often a sense of a secondary accent halfway through the measure, on beat three.



Because of this hierarchy or nesting of metrical patterns, there is no bright line between duple and quadruple meter. Many tunes can be heard in both ways and notated accordingly. For example, the alphabet song might be heard in four-beat groups rather than two-beat groups, and what we have been calling the second downbeat might instead be understood as a secondary accent on the third beat:



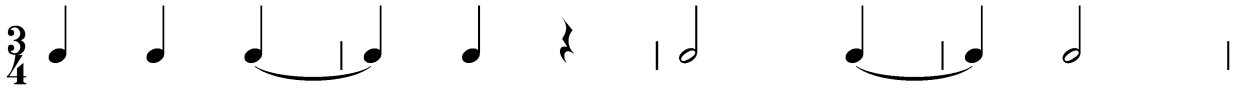
Or the other way around: the secondary accent on the third beat of "Are You Sleeping" might instead be felt as a downbeat, turning this into a duple meter rather than quadruple:



The difference is one of groove or rhythmic feel. Music in duple meter may have a more blocky or choppy, or oom-pah feel, whereas music in quadruple time has more of a sense of flow or sweep through the third beat (secondary accent). As you can tell from these descriptions, this is a somewhat fuzzy and subjective distinction. In this class, we will discuss and consider the difference, but I will never mark your work as incorrect because you write or hear something in duple rather than quadruple meter, or vice-versa.

Ties

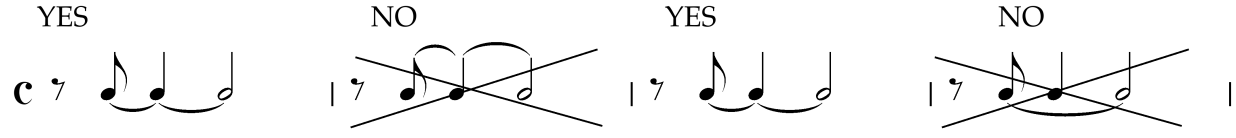
A **tie** is a curved line that joins two successive notes of the same pitch, indicating that the sound is to be sustained through the duration of their combined values. It is used when a note begins in one measure and continues through beyond the barline into the next measure, or when there is no one note symbol that expresses the desired duration.



In the example above, the pairs of tied quarter notes have the same duration as a half note, but since the duration is split across two measures, a tie is necessary.

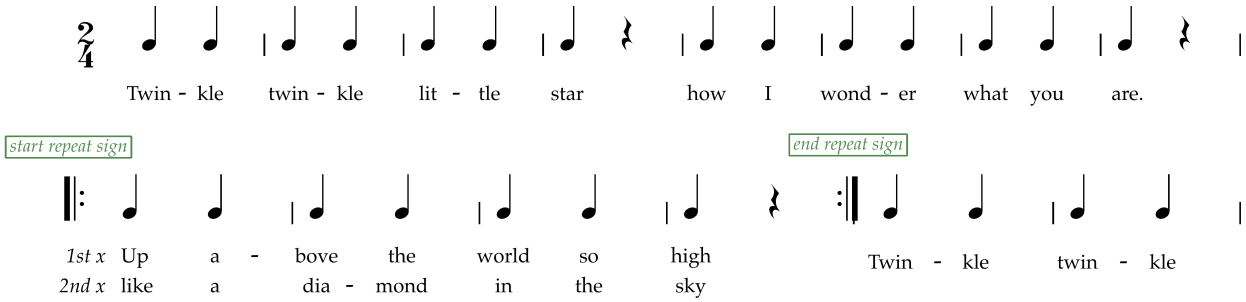
In this example, there is no single symbol that can express the tied durations.

The tie connects the two **noteheads**, not the stems. In a string of three or more tied values, a separate tie must be used for each pair of connected notes.



Repeat signs

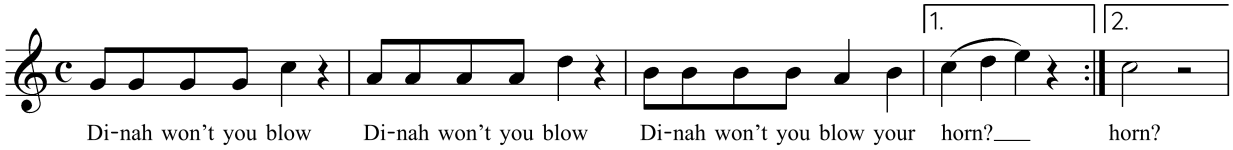
Repeat signs frame a section of music that is to be repeated.



If the repeated section is at the beginning of a piece, the start repeat sign is usually omitted.

First and Second Endings

First and second endings indicate alternative continuations to a repeated section.



This means: sing measures 1-4, then go back and sing the first three measures again, then skip the music under the first ending line or bracket, and jump to the music under the second ending line.

Another repetition indicator is **D.C. al fine** (pronounced "fee-nay") which is short for ***da capo al fine*** (literally "from the head to the end". This means to go back to the beginning of the piece and play until the place marked "Fine".

A similar indication is **D.S. al fine**, short for ***dal segno al fine*** (literally "from the sign to the end". This means to go back to the place marked by a prominent sign (something like 𝄋) and play until the "Fine".