

METRE AND TIME SIGNATURES - EXPLAINED

The following slides are used in my YouTube Tutorial 'Metre and Time Signatures - Explained'.

Beat: a unit of measurement of rhythmic pulse

That's the fancy definition! Put simply, the beat is the underlying pulse of the music. Like your heartbeat, it's regular and steady. It's what you would tap your foot along with when you're enjoying listening to a piece.

Metre: Regular, repeating pattern (also Meter) of strong and weak beats

Strong weak **Strong** weak **Strong** weak

1 2 1 2 1 2

Strong weak weak **Strong** weak weak

1 2 3 1 2 3

Strong weak weak weak **Strong** weak weak weak

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



Strong weak weak Strong weak weak Strong weak weak

Strong weak weak | Strong weak weak | Strong weak weak

Barline

Bar (or Measure)

The diagram shows two rows of musical notation. The top row consists of nine quarter notes, grouped into three measures of three notes each by vertical bar lines. The word "Barline" is written in red below the first bar line. The bottom row also consists of nine quarter notes, grouped into three measures of three notes each. Below the first measure, the numbers "1", "2", and "3" are written. A red bracket spans the first three notes of the second measure, with the text "Bar (or Measure)" written in red below it.

Time Signature

Barline

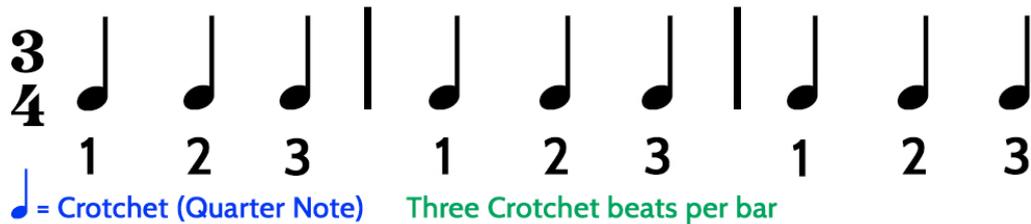
Bar (or Measure)

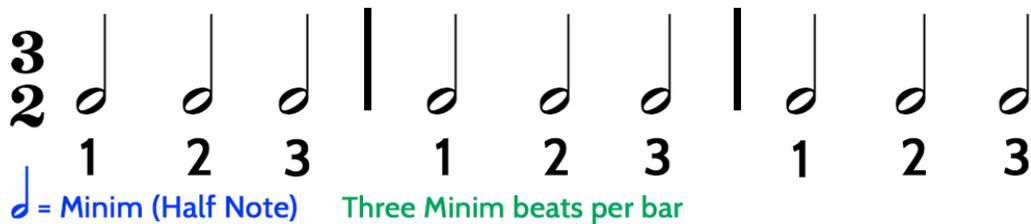
The diagram shows three measures of music in 3/4 time signature. The time signature "3/4" is written on the left. Each measure contains three quarter notes. The first measure is numbered "1", "2", "3" below the notes. The second measure is numbered "1", "2", "3" below the notes. The third measure is numbered "1", "2", "3" below the notes. Vertical bar lines separate the measures. A blue bracket spans the first three notes of the second measure, with the text "Bar (or Measure)" written in blue below it.

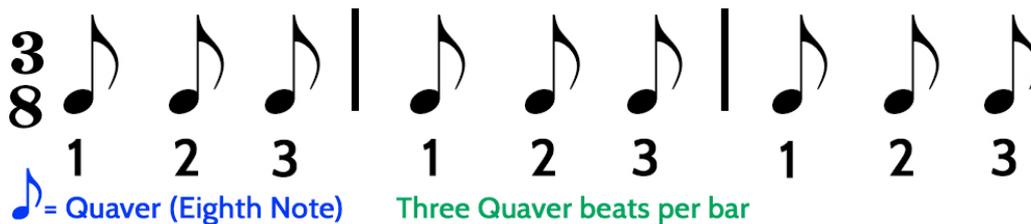
- 3** top number tells you the number of beats per bar
- 4** bottom number tells you the type of beat, i.e. what note value receives one beat

The diagram shows two time signatures. On the left is 4/4, followed by eight quarter notes. On the right is 2/4, followed by four quarter notes.



3/4 
 1 2 3 | 1 2 3 | 1 2 3
 ♪ = Crotchet (Quarter Note) Three Crotchet beats per bar

3/2 
 1 2 3 | 1 2 3 | 1 2 3
 ♪ = Minim (Half Note) Three Minim beats per bar

3/8 
 1 2 3 | 1 2 3 | 1 2 3
 ♪ = Quaver (Eighth Note) Three Quaver beats per bar

Beat

- the regular, underlying pulse of the music

Metre

- the regular and recurring pattern of strong and weak beats represented in the music by the...

Time Signature

- which tells you how many beats there are in a bar, i.e. the number of beats contained within the strong-weak pattern, for example $\frac{4}{4}$ equals 'strong-weak-weak-weak' 1-2-3-4

Rhythm

- the organisation of notes and rests of different lengths

This last slide is actually taken from my companion Tutorial 'Difference between Metre and Beat – and the Rhythm', but I thought it would be helpful to add it in here too. 😊

