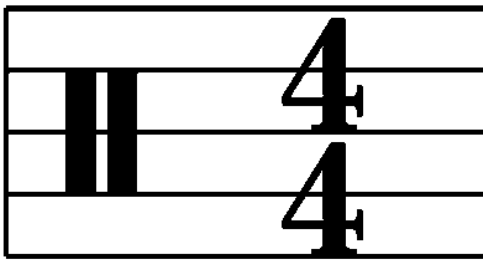
The Music Staff

In this lesson we'll be looking at the music staff where we will place our lessons within. This staff is in the 4/4 time signature, meaning there are four beats to the bar. This is the most common time signature and is found commonly throughout most modern forms of music.

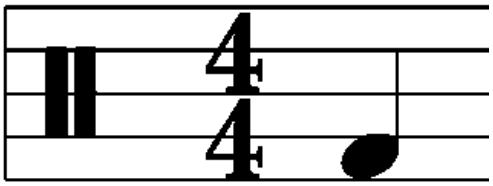
It's common to find in music books a reference to the music staff relative to where the notes will be placed based on the purpose of the lesson. The great thing with drums is that it's interchangeable meaning you could change where the notes are indicated as long as you advise at the beginning of the music to be played.

The Music Staff



The standard Drum Music staff will consist of 5 lines with 4 spaces. 4/4 Indicates there are 4 quarter notes to the bar.

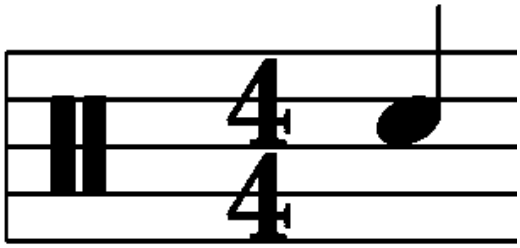
The Bass Drum



The Bass Drum located in the bottom gap on the music staff.

Tip: Referred to as Kick Drum or '*Kick*'

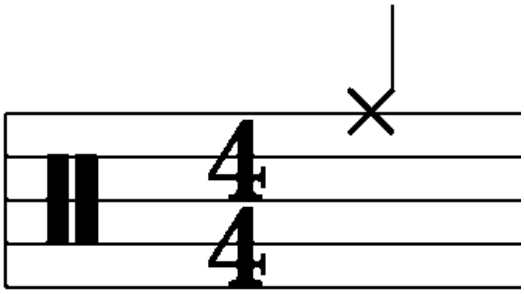
The Snare Drum



The Snare Drum is located in the second gap.

Tip: Referred to simply as '*Snare*'.

The Hi Hat



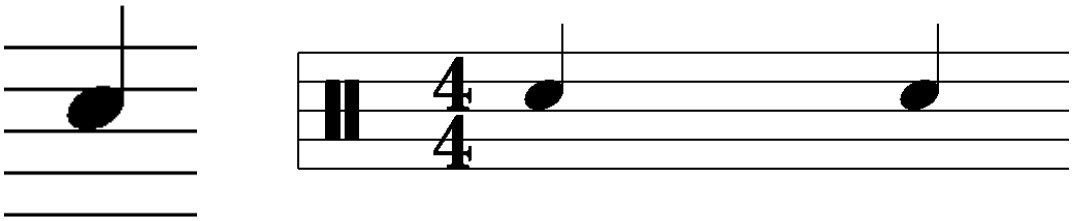
The Hi Hat is located on the top line and appears as a cross.

Tip: Referred to as '*Hats*'.

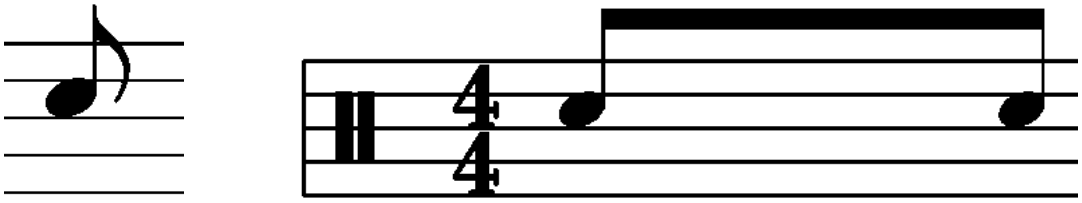
Note Values

Each bar consists of notes with note values.
Note values we will be using for now are Quarters, Eights and Sixteenths.

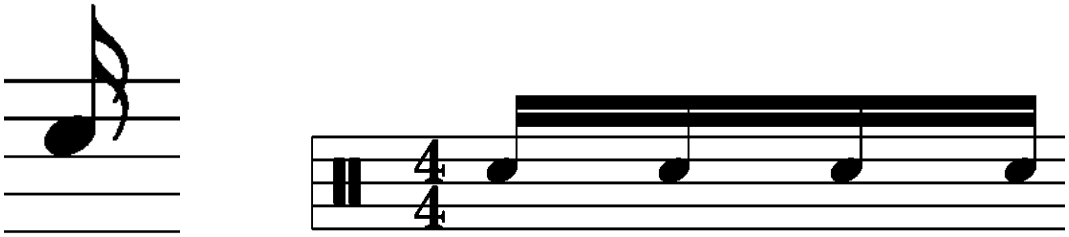
Quarter Note on Snare
Quarter notes have stems without flags, standing individually when there's more than one as there's no flag.



Eighth Note on Snare
Eighth notes have stems with one flag and where there are more than one, they are joined.



Sixteenth Note on Snare
Sixteenth notes have stems with two flags and are joined much like the eighth notes above.

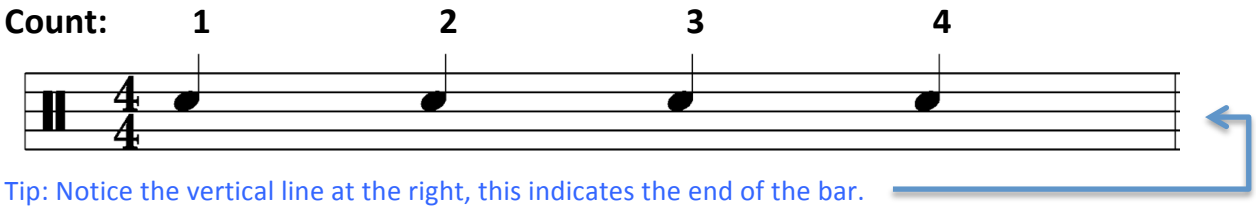


Think of note values as fractions of the whole number in this instance a bar. The abovementioned notes are all using the same amount of the bar that's because 1/4 equals 2/8ths & 4/16ths. They all use 1/4 of the bar.

Refer to it as a mathematical equation:

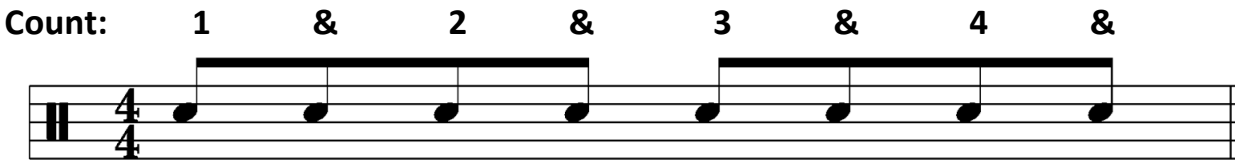
- 4/4 = 1 - Four Quarter notes equals 1 bar
- 8/8 = 1 - Eight Eighth notes equals 1 bar
- 16/16 = 1 - Sixteen Sixteenth notes equals 1 bar
- 1 = 1 bar as per below

Example 1: A Full Bar using Quarter Notes.
4 Quarter (4/4) notes equals 1 bar in 4/4



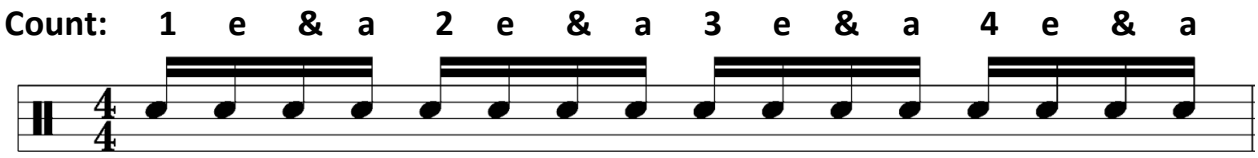
Tip: Notice the vertical line at the right, this indicates the end of the bar.

Example 2: Full Bar using eighth notes.
8 Eighth (8/8) notes equals 1 bar in 4/4



Tip: Initially you will need to count out loud, then in your head so you know where the count is, when you speed up, and you will. It will become more natural to know where the count is.

Example 3: Full Bar using sixteenth notes.
16 Sixteenth (16/16) notes equals 1 bar in 4/4



Tip: Tempo can be referred to as speed or pace indicated as beats per minute (BPM).

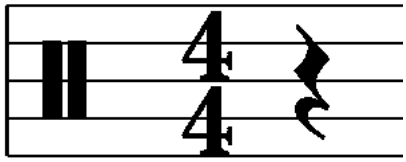
Consider the tempo of 60 BPM (beats per minute) or 1 per second. If you have a metronome set it to 60bpm. Tap quarter notes at this tempo (once per second). Now double the speed of which you are tapping to get eighth notes (two per second). Double it again to get sixteenth notes (four per second). In the above example, the bar lasts for 4 seconds. Therefore the amount of notes you need to fit within the bar must equate to the mathematical equation to add up to 1 per bar. The notes are all fractions of the bar.

As you progress you will incorporate more complex versions of note values, including rests where you play nothing.

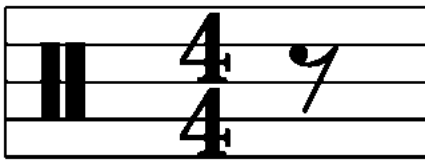
Rest Notes

Rest notes or ‘Rests’ are required where nothing is played in order to complete the mathematical equation of the bar. These are counted much like notes are

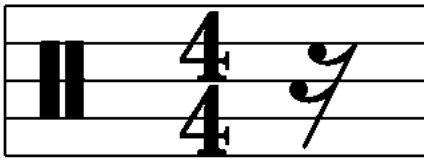
Quarter Rests



Eighth Rest



Sixteenth Rest



This concludes your lesson on theory the music staff and note values. Use this page as a reference to check back on as you progress.

Your Journey to being awesome has just begun.