



ELLEN O'REILLY

ELLEN CONTINUES HER MISSION TO MAKE SIGHT-READING EASY AND FUN

Hello again bass buddies, hope you are all keeping it low! In the last issue we had a look at the musical staff, which was part of my evil scheme to get you all reading music... As discussed in last month's column, the staff is the framework that keeps all the musical information in place. By looking at the staff we have already seen what notes each of the lines and spaces represent, for bass (which is indicated by the *bass clef* at the beginning of the staff) the lines from bottom to top are: G B D F A and the spaces from bottom to top are: A C E G. These notes can be seen as they appear on the staff in **Example 1**.

There is a handy way to learn off by heart all your notes on the staff: use rhymes to remember the order the notes go in. The rhyme for the lines is as follows: **Good Boys Deserve Fruit Always**. The rhyme for the spaces goes like this: **All Cows Eat Grass**. Each capital letter in the rhyme represents a different note on the staff. So, now we know what each note is on the staff but what about the *value* of that note? What I mean by the value is, how long do we hold a note for? How

EXAMPLE 1



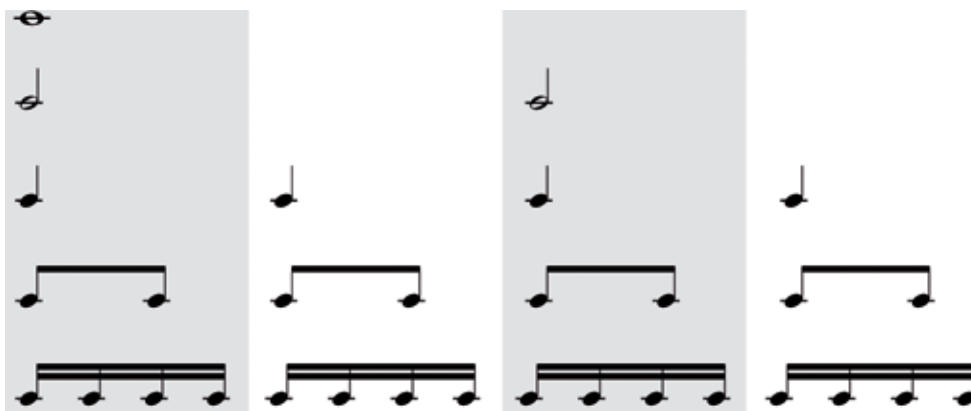
EXAMPLE 2



many beats in a bar is it worth? So let's take a look at how notes are broken up to represent different beats and what they look like.

Take a look over at **Example 2**, this shows four of the many ways note values can be divided up. The note to the left is called a whole note, which lasts for four beats, so play a low E as indicated in the example, and let it ring out for four beats, counting 1 2 3 4. The next note is called a half note and that is written when a note needs to be played for two beats, so play a low E on beats one and three counting to four as you do so. The next four notes in **Example 2** are called quarter notes because they represent each beat, so play a low E on your bass and as you play, count each note: 1 2 3 4. The final bar in **Example 2** shows eight notes: for these, play both the downbeat and upbeat (the downbeat being the number you give the beat and the upbeat being the '&' between the numbers). So play two notes per beat here counting up to four, as 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &.

The following diagram shows exactly how each note is divided, with the whole note at the top. This is divided into half notes, then quarter notes and so on.



**"THE RHYME FOR THE LINES IS AS FOLLOWS:
GOOD BOYS DESERVE FRUIT ALWAYS"**

A good way of counting out the beats as you play these different note values is to tap out each beat with your foot: the downbeat is when your foot hits the floor, the upbeat is when your foot is mid air. Give these exercises a go and you'll be a sight-reading whiz in no time! ■

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