

# METER

There are two basic types of METER, or Time Signatures, used in Classical music before the 20th century.

**SIMPLE METER** - a time signature in which the beat, or basic pulse, is divided into TWO parts. **SIMPLE METERS** will have 2, 3 or 4 as the top number of the Time Signature.

The top number indicates how many beats are in each measure.

The bottom number indicates what note value is used as the beat, or basic pulse.

Here are the commonly used **SIMPLE METERS**:



BEAT = Quarter note

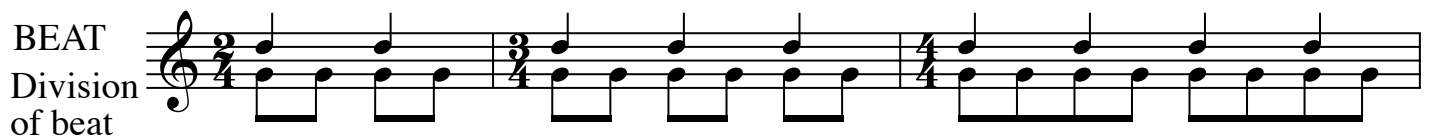


BEAT = Eighth note



BEAT = Half note

In each of these **SIMPLE METERS** the beat can be divided into TWO parts.



Notice that the TWO note DIVISIONS of the BEAT are GROUPED together

COMPOUND METERS are Time Signatures in which the BEAT can be divided into THREE parts. COMPOUND METERS will have 6, 9 or 12 as the top number of the Time Signature. The bottom number of the Time signature DOES NOT indicate which note gets the beat, but indicates what note value will make up the THREE parts of each BEAT. The top number indicates the total number of these divisions in each measure.

	2 dotted quarter note BEATS per measure	3 dotted quarter note BEATS per measure	4 dotted quarter note BEATS per measure
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BEAT =

Division of beat into THREE parts

total of 6 divisions      total of 9 divisions      total of 12 divisions

The note that gets the beat in a COMPOUND METER is a dotted note.

Here are the other commonly used COMPOUND METERS:

	2 dotted eighth note BEATS per measure	3 dotted eighth note BEATS per measure	4 dotted eighth note BEATS per measure
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BEAT =

Division of beat into THREE parts

total of 6 divisions      total of 9 divisions      total of 12 divisions

	2 dotted half note BEATS per measure	3 dotted half note BEATS per measure	4 dotted half note BEATS per measure
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BEAT =

Division of beat into THREE parts

total of 6 divisions      total of 9 divisions      total of 12 divisions

Notice that the THREE note DIVISIONS of the BEAT are GROUPED together.