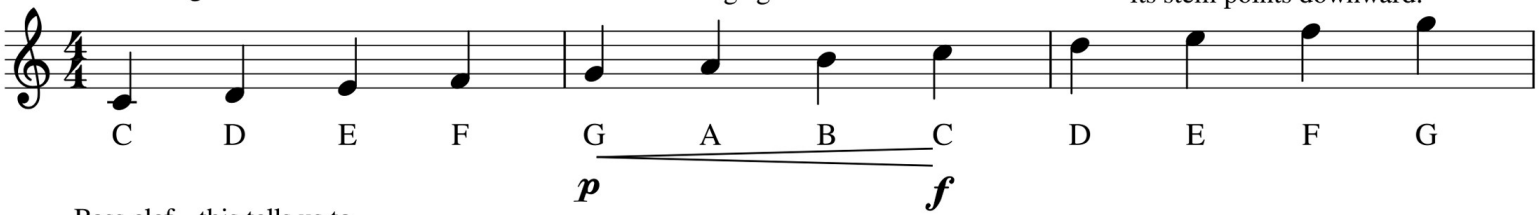
Grade 1 Music Theory Knowledge Organiser

Treble clef - this tells us to use a higher set of notes

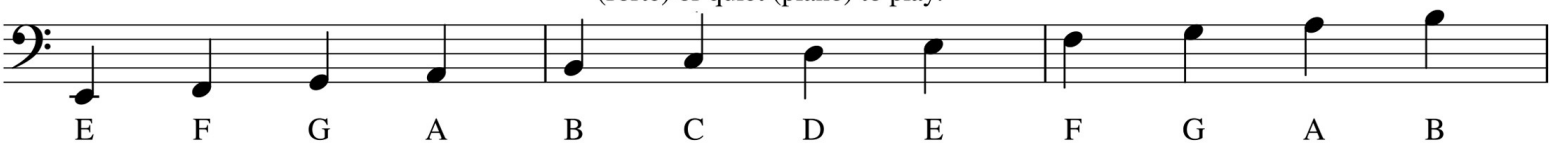
Barlines - these tell us to start counting again from one

When a note is above the middle line, its stem points downward.



Bass clef - this tells us to use a lower set of notes

Dynamic markings tell us how loud (forte) or quiet (piano) to play.



Semibreve: Play for four beats

Semi-breve rest

Minims: Play for two beats

Minim rests

Crotchets: Play for one beat

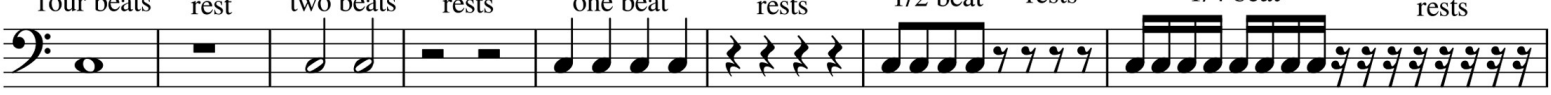
Crotchet rests

Quavers: Play for 1/2 beat

Quaver rests

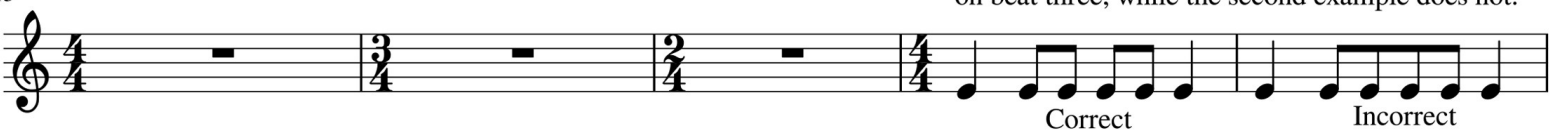
Semiquavers: Play for 1/4 beat

Semiquaver rests

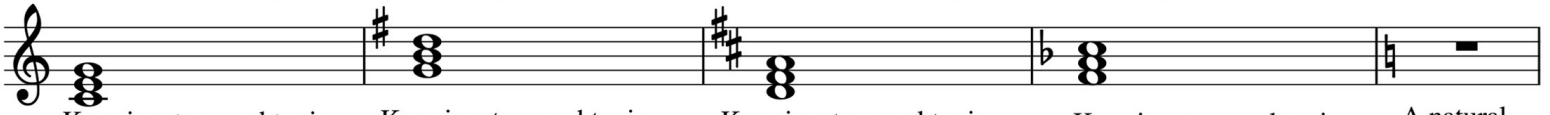


Time Signatures - These show us how many beats per bar to count (top value, or numerator) and what type of beats (bottom value, or denominator). For Grade 1, we need to be able to use 4/4 (4 crotchet beats per bar), 3/4 and 2/4.

Notes are beamed (joined together) in a way that clearly shows the pulse of the music. The first example is correct as it starts a new group of quavers on beat three, while the second example does not.



Key signatures (normally shown next to the clef) show us how many sharps or flats are to be played in that key. For instance, in the key of D major (bar 24), the key signature shows sharp symbols on the notes F and C, so we know that those notes are to be sharpened (moved up) by one semitone. For a flat, we move the given note *down* by one semitone.



Key signature and tonic chord of C major

Key signature and tonic chord of G major

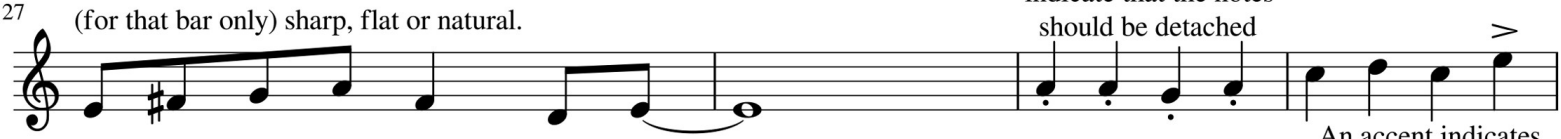
Key signature and tonic chord of D major

Key signature and tonic chord of F major

A natural symbol cancels out a sharp or flat

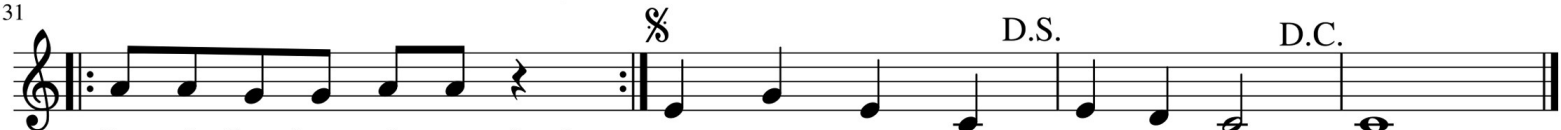
An accidental tells us to use a one-off (for that bar only) sharp, flat or natural.

Staccato symbols indicate that the notes should be detached



A tie tells us to play the two notes tied together as one note. In this example, we have a quaver tied to a semibreve, resulting and in a four-and-a half beat note

An accent indicates that the note should be played slightly harder



Repeat barlines show us the start and end of a phrase that is to be repeated once.

D.S. (Dal Segno) tells us to repeat from the sign

D.C. (Da Capo) means repeat from the start

The end barline tells us that it's the end of the piece