

Bandojo Song Sheet Help

Meter and Time Signatures

Music tends to have a repetitive time structure and the notation reflects this structure. *Meter* is a measure of time. Vertical bar lines mark these measures. As we will see, the duration between bar lines is indicated by a Time Signature.

Time signatures are indicated with two numbers placed one above the other.



Thus, a 2 on the bottom refers to a 1/2-note, a 4 refers to a 1/4-note, and an 8 refers to an 1/8-note. The top number indicates how many of these are crammed into one measure. 4/4 literally means that there are the equivalent of four 1/4-notes in a measure. 6/8 indicates that each measure contains the the combined duration of six 1/8-notes.

It is important to point out that the actual notes within one measure will, in combination, have a total duration as indicated by the time signature. In 4/4, a whole note alone takes up the entire measure, as do two half notes, four quarter-notes, or any combination that has a combined duration equal to four quarter notes.

In the examples below, ignore the numbers inside note heads and the color; they refer to their pitch.

The examples show musical notation for various time signatures. The first row shows 3/2, 2/2, and 2/4. The second row shows 3/2, 2/2, and 2/4. The third row shows 3/4 and 4/4. Note heads contain numbers 1-5 and are colored (red, orange, green, blue). Vertical bar lines separate measures.