

PERCUSSION COURSE

STUDENT WORKBOOK



↑ LEVEL 1 ↓



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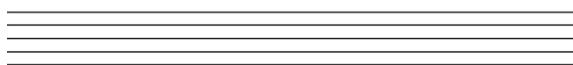
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Introduction – Staff, Clefs, Note Names

Before you start learning how to play percussion, there are a few basic concepts we need to review. You may have learned this before so it will be a good review. If this is new, take your time and read through each explanation.

Staff

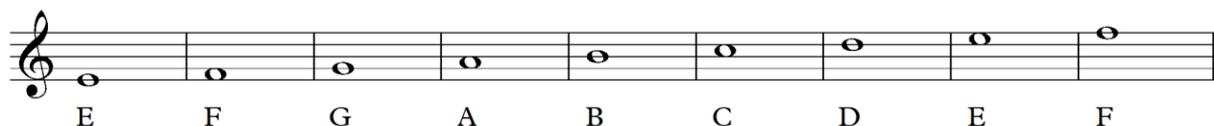
Musical notes are written on a staff of five lines and four spaces. Notes can be written on the lines or in the spaces.



Treble Clef

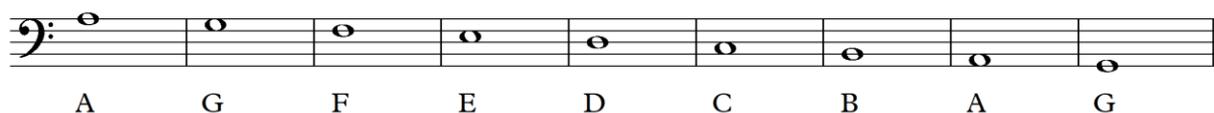
All music has a symbol at the start of every staff. These are called clefs. They are used to indicate the pitch of the notes written on the staff.

This symbol is called the **Treble Clef**.



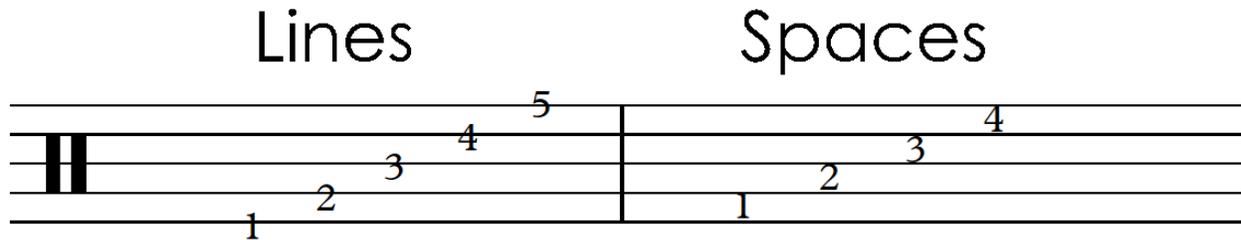
Bass Clef

The **Bass Clef** is another clef that is used in music. The Treble Clef is used for high notes and the Bass Clef is used for low notes.

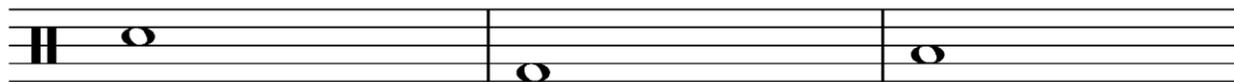


Percussion (Natural) Clef

The Percussion Clef **||** is another clef that is used in music. This is what is used to assign certain percussion instruments to a line or space. We don't use alphabet letters for the percussion clef, but instead they are numbered.



Here are some basic notes for percussion instruments that you should learn. When you see a note on the third space, you should play snare drum. The first space is bass drum, and the second space is the suspended cymbal.



Snare Drum



Bass Drum



Cymbal



The snare drum, bass drum and cymbal are all unpitched instruments. Later on, you will learn about pitched percussion instruments that use treble and bass clef, with changing notes.

Lesson 1.1 – Note Values

Notes can be played for different amounts of time. Some notes are played for a short time, some are played longer.

Let's start learning about **rhythm** by talking about some of these short and long notes: **whole notes, half notes, and quarter notes.**



Whole Note



Half Note



Quarter Note

Most music has a **beat** (or **pulse**).

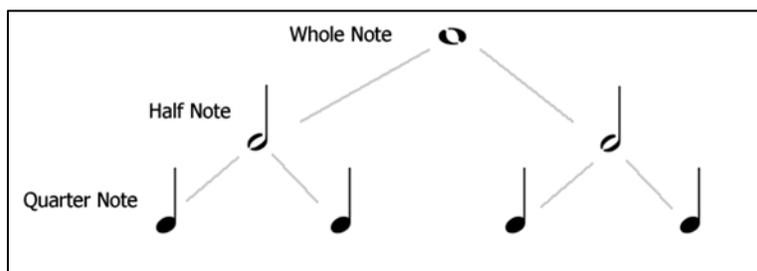
- Sometimes the beat of the music is fast.
- Sometimes the beat of the music is slow.

Each of these notes has a different length. Here's how you count them.

Whole note = 4 beats  = 1 2 3 4

Half note = 2 beats  = 1 2

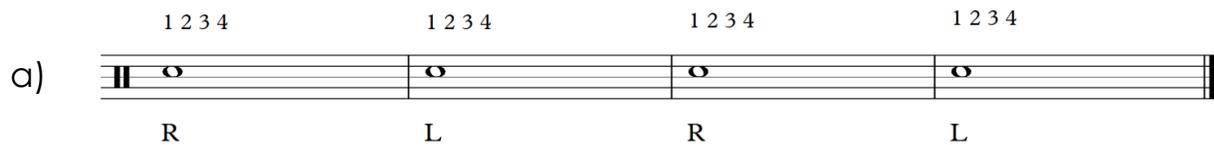
Quarter note = 1 beat  = 1



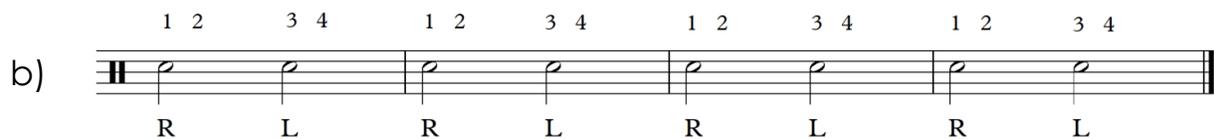
Let's practice

Using your drum sticks, practice playing whole notes on whatever percussion instrument you have. If you don't have sticks, just use your hands on a table or even your lap. Try using your left and right hand at the correct time.

L = Left hand R = Right hand

a) 

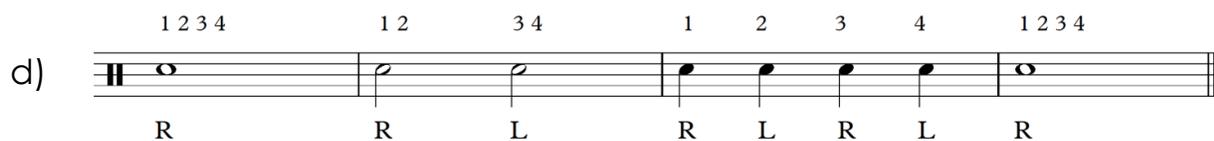
Keep repeating until you can play and count it perfectly. Now try playing half notes. Half notes get 2 counts each.

b) 

Once you have mastered half notes, you can start playing quarter notes. Each quarter note will get 1 count each.

c) 

Now we'll try putting all of these types of notes together.

d) 

e) 

Lesson 1.2 – Rest Values

Rhythm in music does not only include notes. It also includes **rests**.

Like notes, **rests** last for a specific length of time. Rests are silence in music.

There are **whole rests**, **half rests**, **quarter rests** and more that you will learn later.

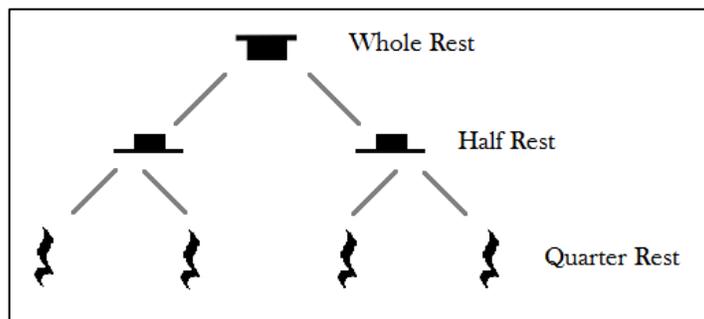


A whole rest has the same value as a whole note – 4 beats. The same is true of the other rests – they have the same value as the note with the same name:

Whole rest = 4 beats  = 1 2 3 4

Half rest = 2 beats  = 1 2

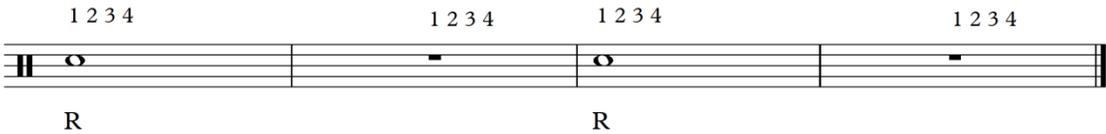
Quarter rest = 1 beat  = 1



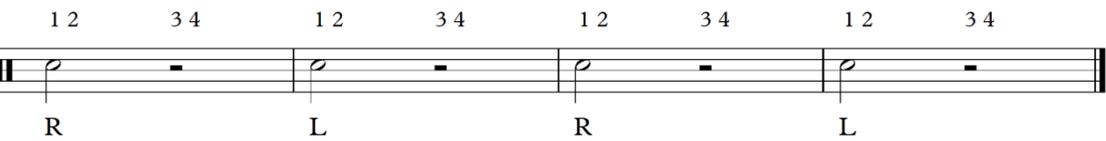
Let's practice

Once again, we'll practice on our percussion instruments. This time, we have to consider the rests. Count them but don't play during them.

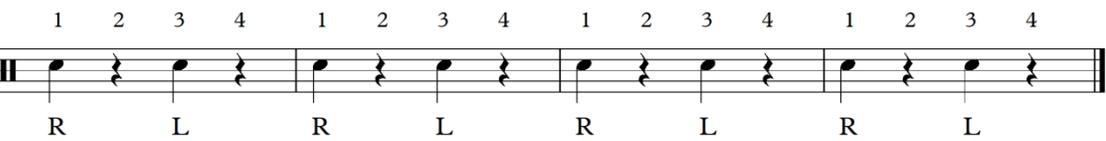
First we'll start with whole notes and whole rests.

a)  Musical notation for exercise a) consists of four measures on a single staff. The first measure contains a whole note with the count '1 2 3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The second measure contains a whole rest with the count '1 2 3 4' above it. The third measure contains a whole note with the count '1 2 3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The fourth measure contains a whole rest with the count '1 2 3 4' above it.

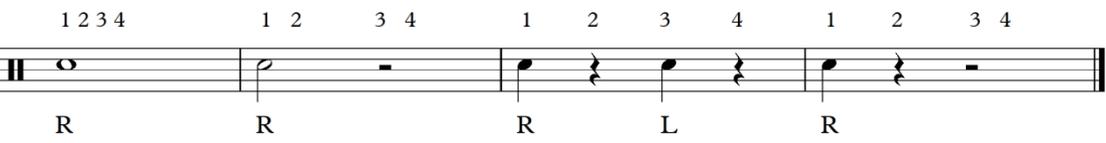
Now let's try doing half notes and rests.

b)  Musical notation for exercise b) consists of four measures on a single staff. The first measure contains a half note with the count '1 2' above it, followed by a half rest with the count '3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The second measure contains a half note with the count '1 2' above it, followed by a half rest with the count '3 4' above it, and the label 'L' below it. The third measure contains a half note with the count '1 2' above it, followed by a half rest with the count '3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The fourth measure contains a half note with the count '1 2' above it, followed by a half rest with the count '3 4' above it, and the label 'L' below it.

And now quarter notes and rests. Count carefully.

c)  Musical notation for exercise c) consists of four measures on a single staff. The first measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The second measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'L' below it. The third measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The fourth measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'L' below it.

It's time to put them all together now.

d)  Musical notation for exercise d) consists of four measures on a single staff. The first measure contains a whole note with the count '1 2 3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The second measure contains a half note with the count '1 2' above it, followed by a half rest with the count '3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The third measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'L' below it. The fourth measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'R' below it.

e)  Musical notation for exercise e) consists of four measures on a single staff. The first measure contains a half note with the count '1 2' above it, followed by a half rest with the count '3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The second measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'L' below it. The third measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The fourth measure contains a half note with the count '1 2 3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it.

f)  Musical notation for exercise f) consists of four measures on a single staff. The first measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'R' below it. The second measure contains a quarter note with the count '1' above it, followed by a quarter rest with the count '2' above it, then another quarter note with the count '3' above it, and a final quarter rest with the count '4' above it, and the label 'L' below it. The third measure contains a whole rest with the count '1 2 3 4' above it. The fourth measure contains a whole note with the count '1 2 3 4' above it, and the label 'R' below it.

Lesson 1.3 – Stick Technique

Now that you've learned how to count different types of notes and rests, let's look at how drum sticks should be held.

Learning to hold the sticks properly is essential for improving technique. Use the photos below as a guide and make sure to memorize the feel of the following guidelines:

- #1 Fulcrum (thumb and first two fingers)
- #2 Finger contact (comfortably wrap all fingers around the stick; not too tight)
- #3 Bead placement (as close together as possible for an even sound) and then striking area (center of the drum head)
- #4 Wrist motion (down position and up position)



#1 Fulcrum



#2 Finger Contact



#3 Bead Placement



#4 Down Position



#4 Up Position

It is important for your grip to feel comfortable and relaxed. It is designed to give you perfect control over the sticks. The power comes from the thumb and forefinger while the other fingers control the bounce off the drum.

In this lesson, we're also going to work on different hand combinations. So far, we've gone back and forth between R and L which is called a **single stroke**. The next step is to feel comfortable using different patterns.

Let's practice

R vs L

a)

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

R R L L R R L L

RRRRLLLL

b)

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

R R R R L L L L R R R R L L L L

RRLL

c)

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L

Watch the rests

d)

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

R R L R R L R L L R L L

e)

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

L R R L R R L R R L R R

f)

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

R L L R L L R L L R L L

Lesson 1.4 – Dynamics and Tempo

Music can be made more meaningful, expressive, and interesting in a number of ways. Some of the ways to achieve this is by adding **Dynamics** and changing the **Tempo**. In this lesson, we will explain and work on these important elements of music making.

Dynamics



In music, **dynamics** refer to the volume – how loud or soft the notes are sung or played.

When the music is to be played **loud**, the music has a marking ***f*** which stands for ***forte***.

When the music is to be played **soft**, the music has a marking ***p***, which stands for ***piano***.

When the music is to be played at a medium dynamic, we say that it is to be played ***mezzo piano*** (medium soft) or ***mezzo forte*** (medium loud). We write these as ***mp*** and ***mf***.

From soft to loud, we have the following **dynamic markings**:

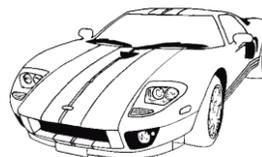


Tempo

Tempo is how fast or slow a piece of music is played.

When the piece is to be played quickly, the **tempo** word is **Allegro**.

Allegro is Italian for “fast.”



When the piece is to be played slowly, the **tempo** word is **Adagio**.



When the piece is to be played at a medium speed, the **tempo** is referred to as **Moderato**.

The tempo is always written at the beginning of the piece and might change somewhere in the middle, so stay alert.

From slow to fast, we have the following **tempo markings**:



Let's practice

To start off, let's practice playing with dynamics. Before you play all of these exercises, take a look at the rhythms. You'll notice that there are no counts above the notes. It is up to you to count while you play. Try counting out loud, and then work towards counting in your head.

a)

p R L R R L R

f R R L R R L R L R

b)

p R R L R *f* R R L R

p R R L *f* R R L R L R

Next, we will work on the tempo. Remember the different terms for slow, medium and fast.

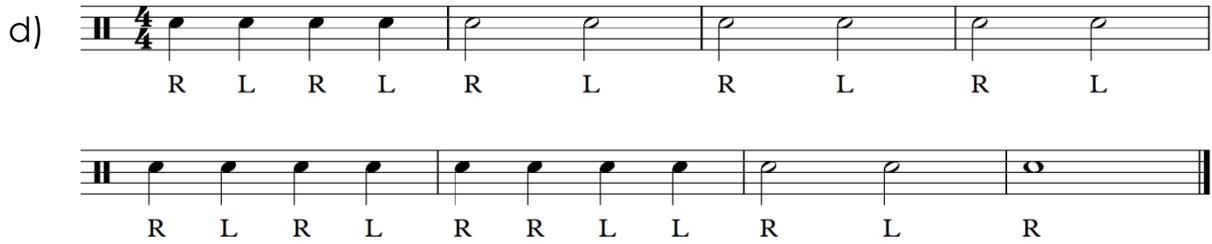
Adagio

c)

R L R R R L R R

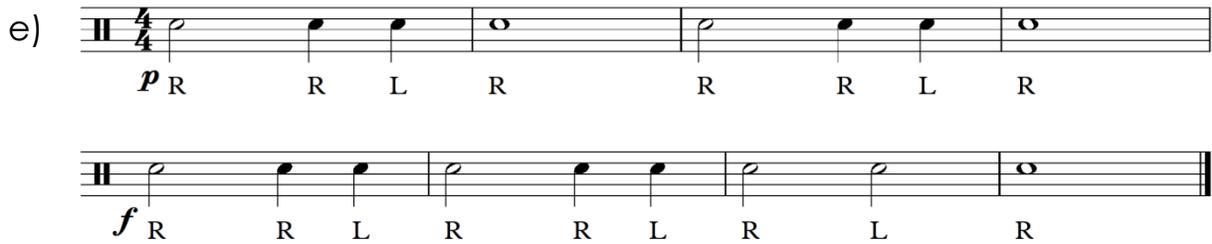
R R L R R L R L R R

Allegro

d) 

Now we will combine both dynamics and tempo together.

Adagio

e) 

Allegro

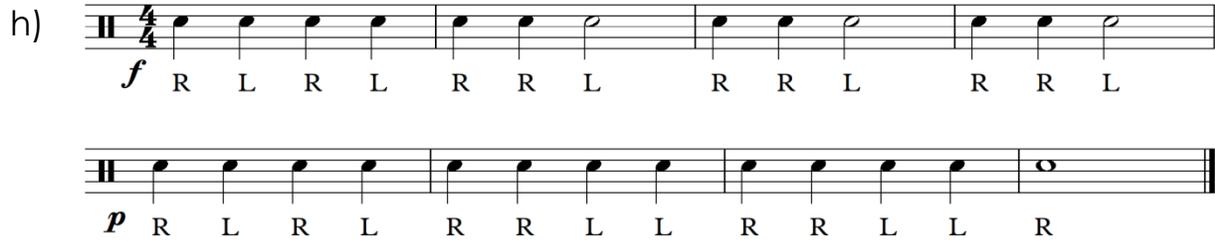
f) 

Did you notice both of those exercises were the same rhythms, but the tempo changed how it sounded? The same will happen for the next two examples. This time, the tempo will only be slightly different but the dynamics will change.

Moderato

g) 

Adagio

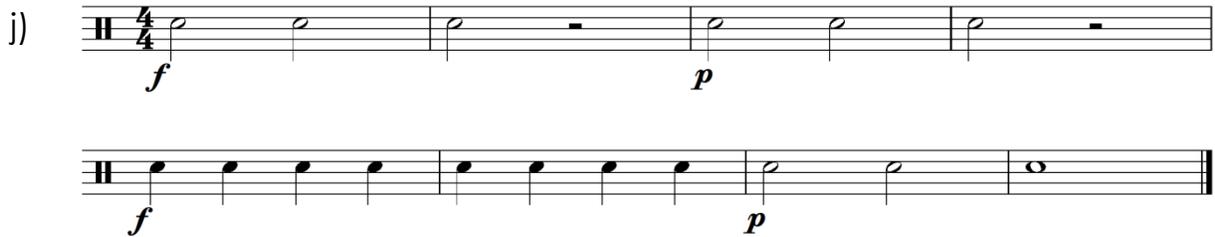
h) 

This next exercise is very slow, and has long notes and rests. Try to keep the same speed for all the counts. You will also have to figure out the stickings for yourself.

Adagio

i) 

Allegro

j) 

Great work! Continue to practice these different dynamics and tempos in all the lessons that follow.

Lesson 1.5 – Playing Duets

Part of the fun in making music is playing songs with lots of people. When we play in a band, there are several different parts that combine together to make the correct sound. In this lesson, we are going to work on reading different parts at the same time.

Most of the time, you'll have your own part on a separate page that you have to read and count without being able to follow the other parts. This takes a lot of concentration and counting.

The image shows two separate musical staves for Percussion 1 and Percussion 2. Both are in 4/4 time, marked 'Moderato' and 'mf'. Percussion 1 has a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Percussion 2 has a melody of quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Both parts are divided into measures 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12.

When playing duets, we want to see our own part and the other part at the same time. This will help us to avoid getting lost, stay together, and be aware of what the other person is playing.

Look below to see the two parts one above the other.

The image shows the two percussion parts from the previous block stacked vertically. The top part is Percussion 1 and the bottom part is Percussion 2. Both are in 4/4 time, marked 'Moderato' and 'mf'. The notation shows the first four measures of each part, with a measure rest in Percussion 1 at the end of the first measure. The parts are aligned so that they can be read together.

Let's practice

Let's split up into groups 1 and 2. Follow and count the staff you're assigned to play.

Moderato

a)

Exercise a) is a 4-measure piece in 4/4 time. It is divided into two groups: Group 1 (labeled '1') and Group 2 (labeled '2'). Group 1 plays the first staff, and Group 2 plays the second staff. The notes are: Group 1 (quarter, quarter, quarter, half), Group 2 (half, quarter, quarter, quarter). The tempo is marked 'Moderato'.

Moderato

b)

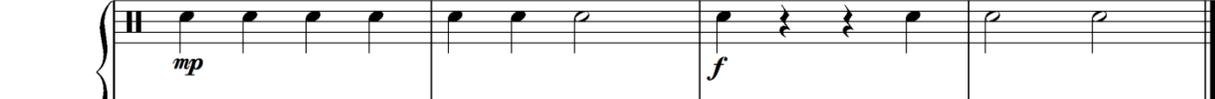
Exercise b) is a 4-measure piece in 4/4 time. It is divided into two groups: Group 1 (labeled '1') and Group 2 (labeled '2'). Group 1 plays the first staff, and Group 2 plays the second staff. The notes are: Group 1 (quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter), Group 2 (quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter). The tempo is marked 'Moderato'.

The next two exercises are going to be slightly more complicated. The rests are just as important as the notes. Remember to look at the dynamics and tempo before starting.

Allegro

c) 1 

2 





Allegro

d) 1 

2 









Level 1 Wrap-up

To finish Level 1, we will take a look at most of the material we have learned throughout this book. We must remember all of the values for notes and rests, how to hold the sticks, and what the written tempo and dynamics are for each exercise. With all of these in mind, you are now ready to play in a band!

a) **Allegro**

p

f

b) **Adagio**

p

mp

mf

f