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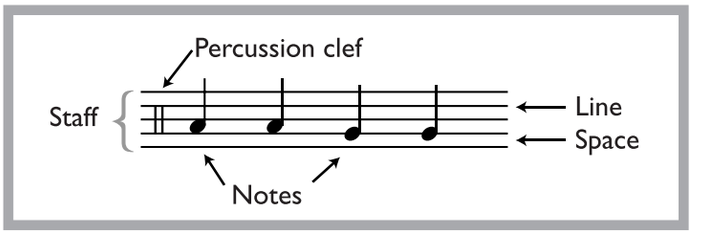
CHAPTER 1

Basic Terminology and Note Values

THE STAFF, MEASURES AND TIME SIGNATURES

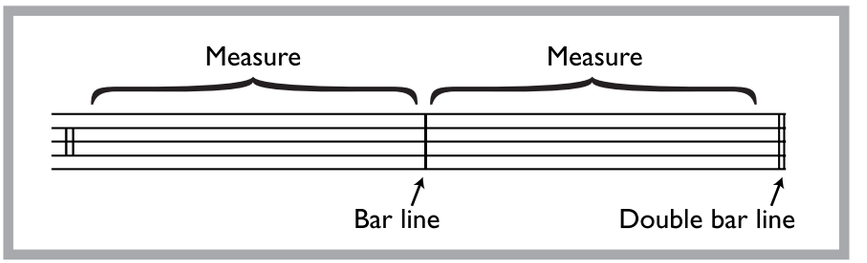
THE STAFF

Music is written by placing *notes* on a *staff* of five lines and four spaces. The symbol at the beginning of the staff, which looks like two vertical lines, is called a *percussion clef*. The percussion clef tells you that the music on the staff is for drums. Each line and space represents a different instrument in the drumset.



MEASURES

Beats, the most basic units of musical time, are grouped into *measures* of equal length—that is, each measure contains the same number of beats. Measures are marked with vertical *bar lines*. Short sections and excerpts end with a *double bar line*.



TIME SIGNATURES

At the beginning of every musical piece there is a *time signature*. A time signature tells you how to count the music. The top number tells you how many beats are in each measure; the bottom number tells you which kind of note (see "Note Values" on page 7) gets one beat. The most common time signature is $\frac{4}{4}$.

$\frac{4}{4}$ = Four beats per measure
$\frac{4}{4}$ = *Quarter note* ♩ gets one beat