Time Signature

An indication of how beats are grouped, and an implication of how they're accented (emphasised).

Beats are grouped into **bars**. The number of beats in a bar is the top number in a time signature. The bottom number in a time signature is an indication of the duration of each beat.

Duple time is when there's a multiple of two beats in a bar.

Triple time is when there's a multiple of three beats in a bar.

Simple time is when beats are subdivided into groups of 2, 4, 8 or 16.

Compound time is when "main" beats are subdivided into groups of 3, 6, 12 or 24.

Examples:

$\frac{2}{2}$ is a "simple duple" time signature. Each bar will have **2** beats, and each beat will be a **minim**.

$\frac{2}{4}$ is a "simple duple" time signature. Each bar will have **2** beats, and each beat will be a **crotchet**.

$\frac{4}{4}$ is a "simple duple" time signature. Each bar will have **4** beats, and each beat will be a **crotchet**.

$\frac{3}{4}$ is a "simple triple" time signature. Each bar will have **3** beats, and each beat will be a **crotchet**.

$\frac{9}{8}$ is a "compound triple" time signature. Each bar will have **9** beats, and each beat will be a **quaver**.

$\frac{3}{8}$ is a "compound triple" time signature. Each bar will have **3** beats, and each beat will be a **quaver**.

Interpretation of music by composers, conductors and musicians has an effect on how time signatures are perceived by listeners. For example, $\frac{9}{8}$ is usually performed and heard as having three dotted-crotchet main beats per bar, with each beat subdivided into 3 quavers, and $\frac{6}{8}$ as having two dotted-crotchet beats per bar, again with each subdivided into 3 quavers. As a consequence $\frac{6}{8}$ is considered as a *compound duple* time signature.