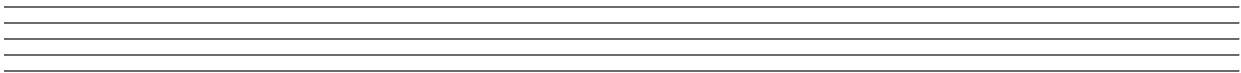


Unit 1 ~ The Staff, Notes, and Clefs

We write music using little dots and other shapes, arranged on a set of lines.

Let's start with the set of lines; it is called a STAFF or STAVE.

The staff always has five lines:



The sounds we make when we play music are called NOTES, and they are written on the staff, either right on a line, or in the space between lines. The higher a note is, the higher it is written on the staff.

Look carefully at these notes and notice how they either go on a line or in-between two lines:



Notes are named after the first seven letters in the alphabet:

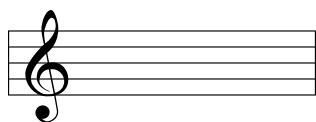
A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.

(There is no note called "H": when you get to G, you start back at A again.)

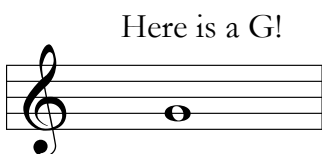
If you try to play the notes in the above example you'll have a hard time because you don't know what notes they are. Is the first note an A? Or a D? There is no way to know. For that, we need a CLEF.

There are many different clef signs, but the two most common are the TREBLE clef and the BASS cleff. These are the clefs that you will see in piano music.

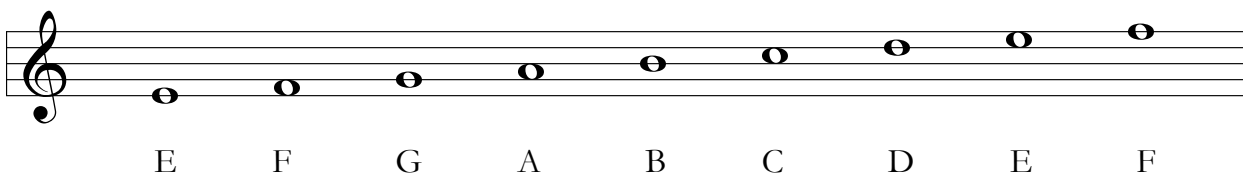
Here's a staff with a treble clef:



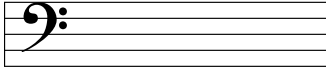
The sign itself is actually a rather elaborate capital letter G (the French call the clef "the G clef") and you'll notice that the circular part of the shape centres on the 2nd line from the bottom. The note that sits on this line is, you guessed it, a G.



And now that we know where G is, we can figure out where all the others go:

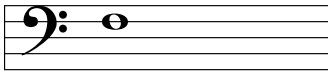


The BASS clef look like this:



The bass clef is actually a rather elaborate capital letter F (yup, the French call it the F clef) and the the two dots sit on either side of the F line:

I'm an F!



Now we know where F goes, we can figure out where the others go:

