

1. Starting out with rhythm and pitch

Rhythm






When we write a note we give two main pieces of information about it:

- How long it lasts for (its length)
- How high or low it is (its pitch).

We will be looking at pitch later in this chapter. First, we will learn about the lengths of notes.

Note lengths






As a general rule, the more ink you have on a note the shorter its length:

What the note looks like					
Number of units	4	2	1	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{4}$
Name of note	Semibreve	Minim	Crotchet	Quaver	Semiquaver
American name	Whole note	Half note	Quarter note	Eighth note	Sixteenth note

It is helpful to think of a crotchet as lasting for one 'unit', because so much musical counting is done in crotchets. The lengths of other notes are all relative to this. For example, a minim (two units) is twice as long as a crotchet and a crotchet is twice as long as a quaver (half a unit).

Exercise 1

Add up the number of units in the following rhythmic patterns. The first one has been done for you.

	Rhythmic pattern	Number of units
1.		8
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.	