

Grouping notes together

We normally group notes together according to the layout of the bar.
For instance, in 4/4 we keep notes together to align with each of the quarter notes or half notes:



When we have numbers of notes that can divide into alternative time signatures, we need to consider which overall pulse (beat) they fit with.

There are six 'eighth' notes in both 3/4 and 6/8.

But in 3/4 there are three main beats:



If we want to group the eighth notes into groups of three, creating an overall 'two beats per bar' we use 6/8



Where we have some 'odd numbered' time signatures (i.e. 5/8 and 7/8, etc), we can group according to our choice, but we should be consistent between parts to ensure successful ensemble.

In 5/8 we can group as per a group of three followed by a group of two, or vice versa:



In 7/8, we can opt to group 8th notes as follows: 2+2+3, 2+3+2 or 3+2+2:



But we can also choose to go against barlines if that is important to the musical phrase.

In this example, the upper line makes sense with the time signatures while the lower line goes against this with a simple repeated figure:

