

Rests and 'beams' and/or 'tails'


The image shows two musical staves. The first staff illustrates rests: a whole note followed by a whole note rest, and a half note followed by a half note rest. The second staff illustrates rests of various durations: a 1/4 note followed by a 1/4 note rest, a 1/8 note followed by a 1/8 note rest, a 1/16 note followed by a 1/16 note rest, a 1/32 note followed by a 1/32 note rest, and a 1/64 note followed by a 1/64 note rest.

And we can combine notes and rests. Please note that we 'beam' notes together according to the nature of the time signature.

Example...

The example shows a musical staff with a sequence of notes and rests. A quarter note is followed by an eighth rest, then an eighth note. The next two eighth notes are beamed together. This is followed by a quarter note, an eighth rest, and another eighth note. The final two eighth notes are beamed together. The staff ends with a quarter rest and a quarter note.

Beams are important, because they can better help us visualise the grouping of notes as they relate to a bar.

Using notes with 'tails' - i.e. like this  - can be useful or essential if we want to 'isolate' a note or if it is on its own.

But rules are always there to be broken, so 'beaming' can be a matter of choice.

Like this...

The example shows a musical staff with a sequence of notes. The first note is a quarter note with a tail. The next four notes are eighth notes beamed together. This is followed by a quarter note with a tail, another eighth note, and a quarter note with a tail. The next two eighth notes are beamed together. The final eighth note is followed by a quarter rest.

But please do make things simple and as clear as possible. Musicians don't want to have to work harder than they already do, and for needless reasons.

We can also write notes to make them look as if they are getting faster.

Like this...

The example shows a musical staff with a sequence of notes. The notes are quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with the spacing between notes decreasing as the staff progresses, indicating an increasing tempo. The staff ends with a quarter rest.

And getting slower.

Like this...

The example shows a musical staff with a sequence of notes. The notes are quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with the spacing between notes increasing as the staff progresses, indicating a decreasing tempo. The staff ends with a quarter rest.

You can find a lot more information on notating notes, rests and time signatures in many books.

A musical staff with a double bar line at the beginning, indicating the end of a section.