

READING MUSIC - FOR PARENTS

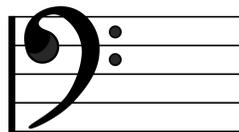
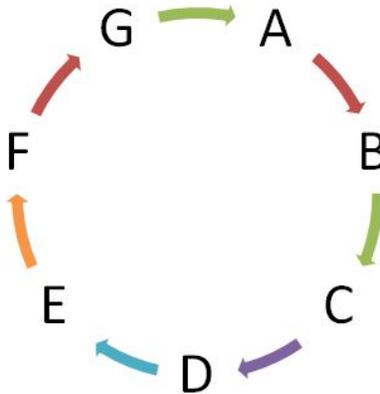
This is a guide for parents to quickly learn the basics of music reading to help their student and themselves progress. Comfort in reading musical notes is the equivalent of learning how letters combine to create words and sentences. Is that an oversimplification? Yes, I'm great at those, but the point still stands! Let's begin.

The Musical Alphabet

A B C D E F G

The musical alphabet consists of these 7 base notes (yes, base). But what about sharps (#) and flats (b)? Great question! Those are not relevant to basic note reading and will be introduced in a later chapter.

But what comes after G? Think of the musical alphabet like a never-ending circle (below). There are multiple A's, B's, C's, etc.



Bass Clef

"F" Clef
Piano Left Hand (generally)
Bass Guitar
Cello



Treble Clef

"G" Clef
Most Common Clef
Piano Right Hand (generally)
Guitar & Many Others

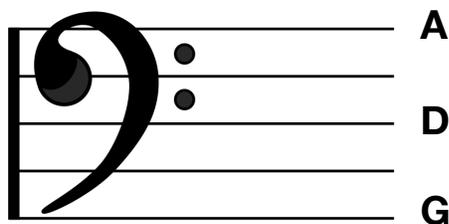
Putting together the treble and bass clef staves looks like this:



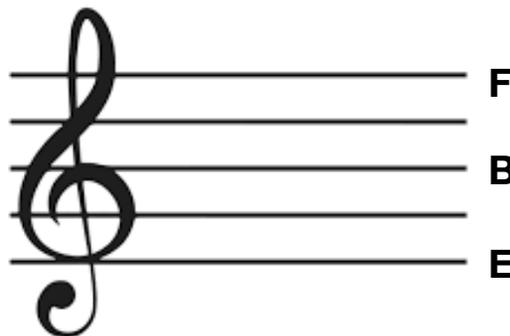
Note for guitar vs piano students: this is the piano grand staff. Guitar students will not need to be concerned with the bass clef. It will not even be on most of their music

Every line and every space is a note! Notes do not change.
E.g.: the first line in treble clef is “E”. It lives there. It will always be “E”. Types of notes (eighth, half, quarter etc) do not matter either, if it’s on the first line treble clef it is “E”.

Notice each clef has 5 lines. We’ll be using what I call “lifelines” and the alphabet to help guide us to figuring out note names. Most people remember the “every good boy does fine” acronym. I like to stay away from that, as it becomes a “crutch” in learning very quickly and easily.
In each clef we will learn the 1st (bottom) line, the 3rd (middle) and the 5th (top).

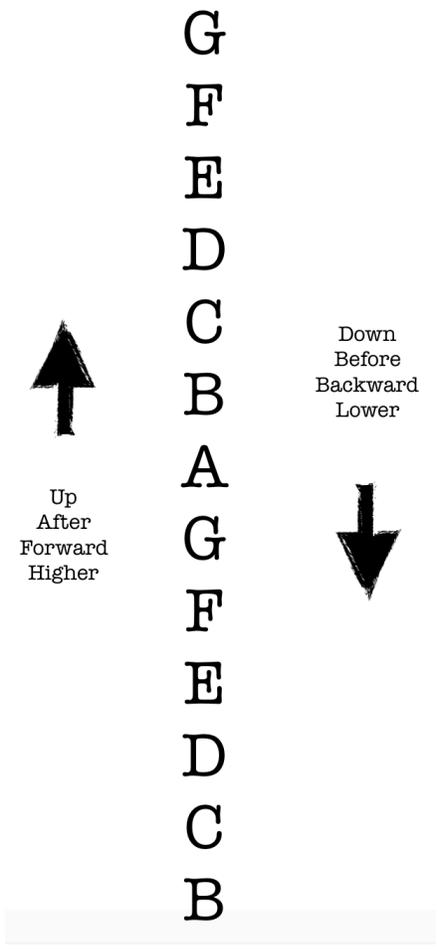


For the bass clef we have G, D, and A. Let’s come up with an acronym to help us remember! The most popular is “grandma does acrobatics”. Whatever makes you laugh will make you remember!



For the treble clef we have E, B, and F. The most popular for the girls is “every boy fails”. The most popular for boys is “every boy farts”. Remember! If it makes you laugh (or shake your head) you’ll remember it much better.

What about all the other lines and spaces? It’s as simple as the alphabet!



The chart to the left is a great layout in how to think about the notes! Follow the arrows to know which direction you are moving. All the adjectives are interchangeable (up vs after vs forward vs higher; they all mean the same thing here). Going up in the alphabet is the same as going up (literally) in the bass or treble clef.

Let's go through an example below!

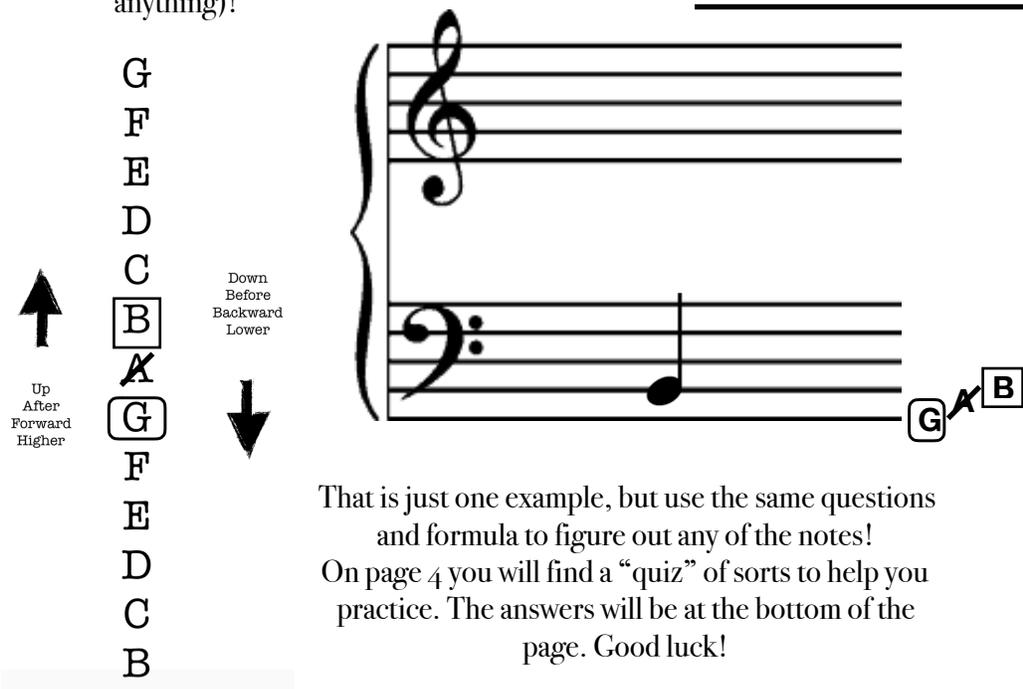


We want to know what note this is. Is it a lifeline? No, so we will have to problem solve. Here we go!

- What clef is it in? _____ Bass.
- Is it in a line or on a space? _____ Line (one goes thru the dot)
- What is our closest lifeline? _____ 1st line "G" for grandma
- Up or down from that lifeline? _____ Up
- How many lines and spaces? _____ 1 space and 1 line to land on the note

Side note: To tell where a note "lives" look at the **circle**, not the stem (the line sticking out from a note does not change anything)!

Find G on your chart to the left. Go up one letter (space above lifeline is A). Go up another letter (landing on the note) gets you to B. Good work!



That is just one example, but use the same questions and formula to figure out any of the notes! On page 4 you will find a "quiz" of sorts to help you practice. The answers will be at the bottom of the page. Good luck!

1A

1B

1C

2A

2B

2C

3A

3B

3C

4A

4B

4C

1A: B
2A: A
3A: D
4A: C

1B: F
2B: G
3B: A
4B: A

1C: C
2C: G
3C: G
4C: F