Elemental FUN

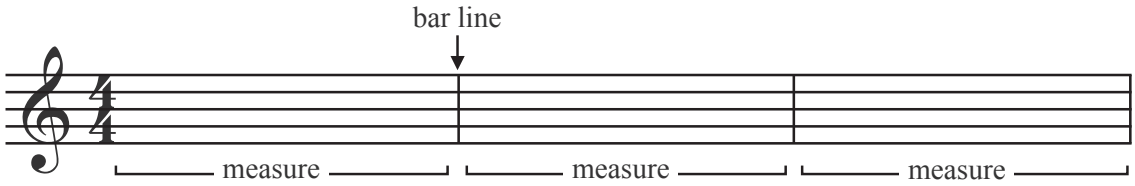
# contents

DATE: _____

# Time for Time Signatures

NAME: _____

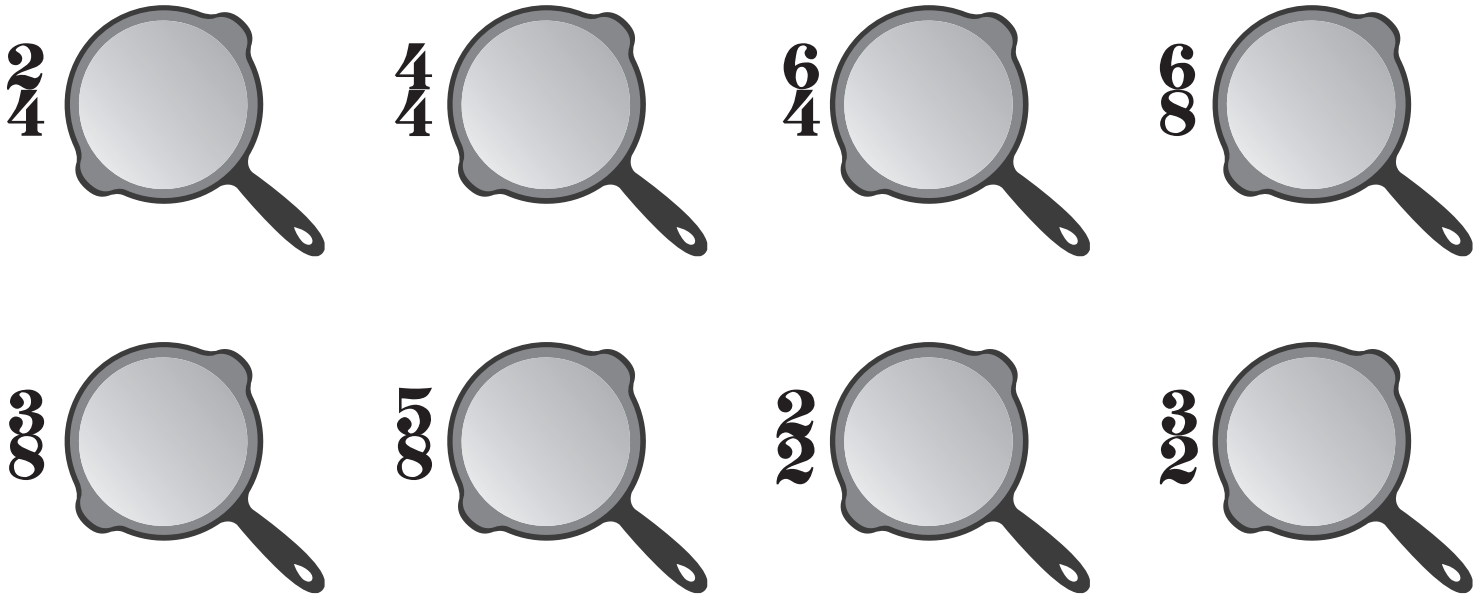
A lot of kids think that time signatures are really tricky, but here's what you need to know! A time signature has two parts, just like a fraction. In a time signature, the top number tells you how many beats go in each measure. What's a measure? A measure is just a unit of space on a staff. Measures are created using bar lines, like this:




Now, back to the time signature. The top number tells you how many beats can fit in one measure. So in $\frac{4}{4}$, four beats can fit in one measure. In $\frac{2}{4}$, two beats fit in one measure. In $\frac{6}{8}$, six beats fit in one measure. That's not so hard!

The tricky part is the bottom number, which tells you the type of note that equals one beat. Believe it or not, the duration of a note can change with time signatures! Huh? Yes, let's look closer. In $\frac{4}{4}$ time, the bottom four represents a quarter note (think of it like a fraction: four quarters). So in this case, a quarter note equals one beat. But in $\frac{6}{8}$, an eighth note equals one beat. It's easiest if you think about the time signature similar to how you would say a fraction out loud, especially if you do any cooking. If a chef saw a recipe calling for ¾ cup of flour, he or she would say out loud, "I need three-quarters of a cup of flour." If he or she saw a recipe calling for $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of sugar, he or she would say, "I need three-eighths of a cup of sugar." So, if you are having trouble trying to figure out a time signature, try saying it out loud like a chef! Use your best chef voice and accent, too!

Cook up some great music with these time signatures! Fill each pot with the correct number of beats to show the time signature. Use half notes, quarter notes, and eighth notes. The first example is done for you. **Hint**: To get the correct number of beats and type of note, say the time signature like a chef. For $\frac{3}{4}$ time, you might say, "I need three quarter notes."

DATE: _____

# Heads and Tails

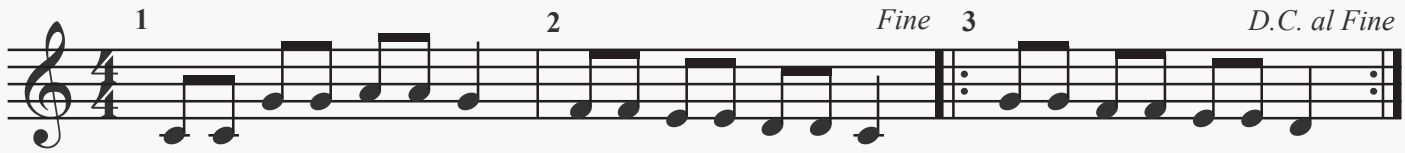
NAME: _____

By now, you've probably realized that many music terms are in Italian. *Capo* means "head" and *coda* means "tail." These two terms are often used when discussing form or when looking at a score. The most common use of *capo* is in the abbreviation *D.C. al fine*, which would be written out as *da capo al fine*. This phrase means to play "from the head to the end." What do you think the "head" of a piece of music might be? If you thought "the beginning," you are correct!

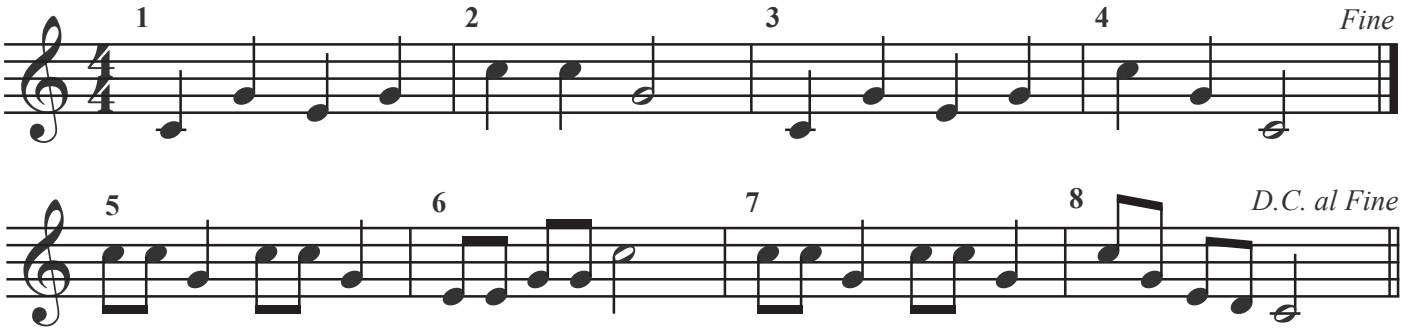
A *coda* is represented with this symbol: 𝄌. What do you think the "tail" of a piece music would be? If you guessed the end, you are correct.

Another symbol frequently used in music is *dal segno* or "the sign." The phrase *D.S. al coda* tells a musician to go back to the sign ( 𝄋 ) and play until he or she reaches the *coda* symbol, at which point the musician should go to the section of music marked as the *coda*.

Look at the pieces of music below and on the next page. Then write the steps you would take to play each piece, using measure numbers to guide the process. Here's an example to get you started:




1. Play measures 1–2.
2. Play measure 3 two times.
3. Play measures 1–2.

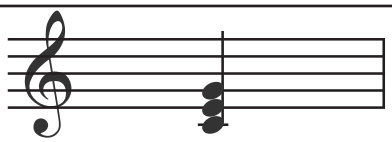


DATE: _____

# Happenin' Harmony

NAME: _____

Let's keep it simple: harmony is when two or more musical pitches sound at the same time. If you are looking at a piece of music, you will see the noteheads stacked, as in the example to the right.



When you listen to a piece of music, it is usually pretty easy to hear harmony, since you will hear two or more pitches at the same time. These sounds might be made by an instrument that has a lot of different keys or strings (like a piano or guitar) or they may be made by lots of different instruments or voices each playing their own melodies. There are many different ways to create harmonies, including playing rounds, performing partner songs, playing chords, and performing an *ostinato*. A melody by itself can be very beautiful, but harmony adds another layer of sound to the melody and creates more excitement or interest.

A round is a simple way to make harmony by using one melody. Instead of all starting the melody at the same time, the musicians begin at different times. A simple example is singing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Have some people start, and when they get to the "gently down the stream" part, have the next group start singing "Row, row, row your boat," and then continue that way with the rest of the groups. You'll hear the notes of melody combine to create harmony.

Partner songs are another way to make harmony. Partner songs are two separate melodies that are either composed to sound good together or just happen to sound good when performed simultaneously.

A chord is a collection of two or more notes played at the same time to accompany a melody. You can easily make a chord on a piano by pressing down more than one key. But if you press down too many keys, or choose keys right next to each other, you will end up with a rather unpleasant sound!

An *ostinato* is a short, repeated pattern used to accompany a melody. If you have ever played instruments in your music class, chances are pretty good that you have played an *ostinato*.

You can also describe harmony using the word *texture*. When referring to a piece of music, the texture describes how the harmonies interact and relate to the melody. A thin texture might have just two parts: the melody and the harmony. A thick texture would have many instruments playing different parts at the same time.

## Show What You Know!

Write the definitions of the following terms in your own words. Use the back of this page or another sheet of paper, if needed.

**Chord:**

**Harmony:**

**Ostinato:**

**Partner Songs:**

**Round:**

**Texture:**