

Quick Musical Symbol Reference

The example score below shows some of the musical symbols you will find. There are many musical symbols and markings. On the internet, use the search term “musical symbols and their meanings” to find more.

Tempo marking: shows which note gets the beat and at what speed.

Treble Clef

Direction to give the song a “toe-tapping” feel.

$\text{♩} = 100$
Swing

F Chord

Triplet—rhythmically split the notes into three equal parts.

Minor Chord
Gmin

Fall—drop the pitch at the end of the note

Direction to skip to the Coda symbol

To Coda

Pick up notes

Repeat Bar line: play this section again starting here.

Sharp: raise the pitch a half step.

Glissando: quickly run through the scale between the start and stop notes.

Natural: sound the normal pitch without making it sharp or flat. (White key notes on the piano.)

Time Signature: top number indicates how many beats in a measure; bottom number indicates which note gets the beat.

Voltas: Distinct endings to musical phrases; numbers indicate the order of play.

Da Capo al Fine: go back the beginning and play through to the end (Fine).

Fermata: hold the note longer than its value.

End

Coda

D.C. al Fine

Fine

Slur: transition smoothly between these notes; do not articulate them separately.

Quarter note rest

Eighth note rest

Tie: Hold note for the value of all notes tied together.

Section Break: indicates that something changes between the measures on either side of these bar lines; could be time or key signature, tempo, or something else.

End Bar Line: End of the piece.