

Information Sheet

Staff:

In conventional European music notation, we use a staff with five lines. The notes are written on one of these five lines, or in one of the four spaces in between. Notes written on the lower lines or spaces are sung lower, and notes written on higher lines or spaces are sung higher.

Since the staff has as many lines as we have fingers on our hands, we can use our hands to practice the positions of different pitches on the staff.

A variety of fun note games can be played with a staff drawn very big on a board or a poster. For example: the teacher or a student points with the index finger or a thin stick (e.g. pencil) to a line or space, and the group names or sings its corresponding pitch.

Treble Clef:

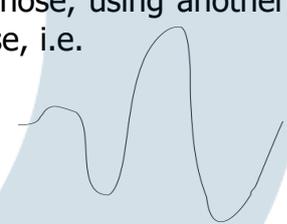
In the beginning of a staff we always find a musical clef, such as the treble clef.

The clef is the key to reading the music and indicates the pitch of the notes that follow in the staff. For example, the treble clef is also called the G-clef, as the beginning marks the placement of the note G (so).

To write a treble clef we begin on the second line, circle the beginning point, make a loop on the top, come straight down, and draw a curve at the end.

The children have probably already seen the treble clef in sheet music, but drawing it is rather difficult. First the children can try to point with their index finger to the beginning point of the treble clef on their information sheet. Then they can follow the line with their finger. This can be repeated a few times with variations (according to age and physical ability), like using the other hand, using other fingers (does it work with the pinkie?), using the nose, using another person's hand. Then the children can try drawing the shape somewhere else, i.e. drawing with a finger on a partner's back, on your leg, etc.

The children can also try to find sounds fitting the movement (as if it were graphic notation). An example can be the glissandi you see here on the right.



Exercise Sheet wm9a

Draw a Treble Clef:

This is a sheet meant only for practice with drawing the treble clef. It is split up into four steps. Always begin on the same starting point on the second line!

1. The children draw the first part, which closely resembles an ear.
2. The second part looks like a nose.
3. Make a loop on the top and draw a straight vertical line.
4. Complete the treble clef with a curve at the bottom end.

On the bottom of the page there is a staff where the students can practice drawing treble clefs. The children can also use different colours to draw the treble clef. Practice makes perfect. The

clefs don't have to look like perfect copies from only filling the exercise sheet. There are more exercise sheets available for them to practice on.

Exercise Sheet wm9b

Write the Rhythm:

Have the children draw barlines to separate the measures.

The time signature is 4/4 time

The rhythm can be clapped, played on a drum, or sung on one pitch with the syllables "da", "da-a," and "da-a-a-a".

In the first empty staff the children should draw a treble clef. Then they should write down the time signature and draw the barlines.

Copy the rhythm from the above line onto the staff. The teacher can tell the children to write the rhythm on the second line, which is the "so". When the group sings it again, the teacher can use their hand to point to the according finger (the ring finger marks the second staff line).

In the second empty staff the children again draw a treble clef, time signature, and barlines. They then write down the same rhythm again, but this time they choose the pitch (different positions of the notes on the staff). The teacher will sing some of the children's melodies to the class.

The children can follow the melody with their hand or body to show higher or lower notes.

A variation for practicing the "so": the teacher can tell the children to start and end their composition with a note on the second line. The teacher will sing the whole melody while the students only sing the notes written on the second line – the "so".

The second half of this exercise sheet uses 2/4 time.

The exercises are the same as before. First, the children should draw the barlines to fit the 2/4 time signature. The rhythm can be clapped, sung, or played on an instrument (e.g. violin) on one note.

In the next empty staff, the children should draw a treble clef, time signature, and the barlines. Copy the rhythm from the above line onto the staff. The teacher can tell the children to write the rhythm on the second line. Again, the group can sing this rhythm with the help of the teacher.

On the third line, after drawing the treble clef, time signature, and barlines, the children can note the rhythms of the pitches of their choice. See above.

Additional Exercise:

Individual students write notes on the board in front of the class. The teacher can sing or play the creation to the class. All the children indicate the notes on the board on their own hand to get a better understanding of using the staff.

Another variation: the children use their hands to show the notes that they have written down on the exercise sheet and point with the index finger of their other hand to the correct finger or space.

Exercise Sheet wm9c

Write the Treble Clef:

This is another exercise sheet to practise drawing the treble clef. In the first staff the children practise the separate steps. Next to the example they copy what they see.

In the second staff the children practise drawing the full treble clef. If a student does not want to fill the whole staff with a number of treble clefs, he/she can add notes of different values (whole note, half note, quarter note) on any line or space in between.

Writing Notes:

The first staff shows the direction of the stems of the notes that are in the spaces between the lines. If a note is between the lines in the first or second space, the stem goes upwards. If the head of the note is in the third or fourth space, the stem goes downwards. The students fill this staff by writing the same notes (pitches) that are seen here, but with half note values. The stems should be drawn in the correct direction.

Then they write a 4/4 time signature behind the treble clef, and fill in the barlines so that there are always four beats per measure. At the end of the staff they should draw a double barline.

In the second staff there are notes on each line. If a note is on the first or second line, the stem goes upwards. If the head of the note is in the third, fourth, or fifth line, then the stem goes downwards. The students fill this staff by writing the same notes (pitches) that are seen here, also with quarter notes. The stems should be drawn in the correct direction. Then they write a 2/4 time signature after the treble clef, and fill in the barlines so that there are always two beats per measure. At the end of the staff the students should draw a double barline.

Exercise Sheet wm9d

Writing Notes:

This exercise sheet gives students the opportunity to practice writing the treble clef and drawing notes into the staff in different ways.

Write a treble clef and notes of different values (whole, half and quarter note, etc.) on any line or space in the staff.

Time signatures, barlines, and double barlines can also be practiced.

Variation 1:

To make this exercise more interesting, the teacher can give a more specific task; ask the students to write a time signature next to the treble clef, e.g. 4/4 time. Then the children can fill the staff with notes on different lines and spaces in between, but always being careful to fill each measure with the correct number of beats. After each measure the students draw a barline and begin counting the beats of the next measure.

Variation 2:

The teacher explains that the first space in a staff is one step higher than the first line in a staff. The second line is one step higher than the first space in between, and so on. The teacher asks the students to put the first note on the first line. The teacher then asks that the next note be one step higher, and so on. This means that the children should draw one note on every line and space in between, ascending from the lowest line to the highest line.

Variation 3:

After drawing the treble clef, the students learn how to alternate drawing high and low notes. The stems of the notes should point in the correct direction. If they only write half and quarter notes, the result are alternating stems pointing upward and downward.

Another Possibility:

The empty staves can also be used as a listening exercise. The teacher thinks of a short rhythm in 2/4 or 4/4 time. The phrase should be kept rather short, so that the children have enough space to write down the notes (e.g. four measures in 2/4 time).

The children write a treble clef and the time signature told to the by the teacher.

Next, the teacher sings the rhythm with the syllables "da-a-a-a, da-a, da," or plays the rhythm on a drum or other instrument. The children write down the rhythm that they hear. If necessary, repeat short parts again until the children can write it down correctly.

Before starting, the teacher can ask the students to write every note of the rhythm onto the second line. Alternatively, the teacher can tell the children to choose any line or space on the staff.