

Simple Duple (2 beats per measure)

In simple time, each main beat is naturally divisible by two.

Time Signature	Main Beat Unit	Examples / Beaming Logic
2/2 (Cut Time)	Half Note	Used for fast tempos; beams usually group notes into two large half-note pulses.
2/4	Quarter Note	The standard "march" time. Two quarter notes per bar.
2/8	Eighth Note	Uncommon. Often used in complex modern music or folk dances to indicate a very quick, "micro" duple feel.

Simple Triple (3 beats per measure)

Each measure has a "Strong-weak-weak" pulse.

Time Signature	Main Beat Unit	Examples / Beaming Logic
3/2	Half Note	Common in Renaissance music or slow, choral pieces. Three half notes per bar.
3/4	Quarter Note	Classic "Waltz" time. Sub-beats (8th notes) are often beamed in groups of 2 or 6.

3/8	Eighth Note	Often felt "in one" (one big pulse per bar). Common in Baroque dances like the Passepied.
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Simple Quadruple (4 beats per measure)

Also known as "Common Time."

Time Signature	Main Beat Unit	Examples / Beaming Logic
4/2	Half Note	Uncommon. Found in older sacred music. It creates a very spacious feel.
4/4	Quarter Note	The most common signature in modern music. Beams are usually split at the "invisible barline" in the middle of the measure.
4/8	Eighth Note	Uncommon. Similar to 2/4 but implies a much lighter or more detailed rhythmic texture.

Irregular / Asymmetric Time (Odd Meters)

The main difference between a "Simple" and "Compound" signature is at the top number. If the top number is **6, 9, or 12**, it is **Compound**, meaning the main beat is a **dotted note** (divisible by three).

For example: 5/4 or 5/8: grouped as (2+3) or (3+2). 7/4 or 7/8: grouped as (2+2+3), (3+2+2), or (2+3+2), 9/8 or 9/4, 12/8 or 12/4 etc.