

*I got rhythm, I got music, I got my man
 Who could ask for anything more?
 I've got daisies in green pastures
 I've got my man
 Who could ask for anything more?*

This is the chorus of one of George Gershwin's famous songs. The good news is that although rhythm is normally contagious, you don't need to go and see a doctor about it. It is great to have rhythm!

Let's define it. Rhythm, in the strict sense, is the organisation of time in music using long and short values. There are all kinds of values to investigate and learn - most are in the table below. There are *notes* (played sounds) and corresponding *rests* (silent sounds).

If you put a dot after a note or rest it makes it last half as long again. For example, if you put a dot after a minim, it would last for 3 beats: $2 + (\frac{1}{2} \times 2)$. If you put two dots after a note, it makes it last three quarters as long again (the second dot is worth half the value of the first dot). Thus, a double dotted quaver is worth $\frac{7}{8}$ beat: $\frac{1}{2} + (\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}) + (\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{1}{2})$.

If there are no notes in a bar, you need a whole bar rest. In $\frac{4}{2}$ this is a breve rest. For every other time signature you would use a semibreve rest.

Sometimes a piece may contain an irregular rhythmic group. The most common of these is a *triplet*. It is shown by an italic *3* and sometimes a bracket. This is where a group of three (often equal) notes is played in the time normally taken by two notes of the same kind. For example, a group of three tripletted quavers would be played in the time of one crotchet. Triplets are found in Simple Time. In Compound Time, *duplets* can be used. In this case, a group of two notes would be played in the time of three notes of the same kind. Many other irregular groups, such as seven in the time of four, can be used too.

Note	Rest	Value	Name
		8 beats	Breve
	Not used	6 beats	Dotted Semibreve
		4 beats	Semibreve
		3 beats	Dotted Minim
		2 beats	Minim
	Not used	1 3/4 beats	Double Dotted Crotchet
		1 1/2 beats	Dotted Crotchet
		1 beat	Crotchet
	Not used	7/8 beat	Double Dotted Quaver
		3/4 beat	Dotted Quaver
		1/2 beat	Quaver
		3/8 beat	Dotted Semiquaver
		1/4 beat	Semiquaver
		1/8 beat	Demisemiquaver
		1/16 beat	Hemidemisemiquaver

This table is really useful if a piece you are playing has a crotchet beat. However, if you are playing a jig in $\frac{6}{8}$, then a dotted crotchet is worth one beat. This makes a crotchet worth $\frac{2}{3}$ of a beat. If you are playing a march in $\frac{2}{2}$ then a crotchet would be worth $\frac{1}{2}$ a beat, as a minim is worth one beat.

It might seem that you have to be good at mathematics to understand all of this. It can certainly help! The main thing to remember though, is that all notes and rests are relative in time to each other. There are also various rules to know when grouping notes and rests.

Let me know if there is anything you don't understand here.