the bassics

How to Read Rhythms: Part I

PREFACE

Hello!

I'd like to start by thanking you for your purchase of this BASS DRUM GROUP lesson book. It's your continued love and support that drives the creation of all of the content I make, and without you, none of this would be possible.

I created BASS DRUM GROUP with the goal of putting together the most comprehensive resource out there for bass drummers, and *The Bassics* are my latest addition to the project. Inside, you'll find 40+ pages of thorough explanations, diagrams, and exercises relevant to the specific Bassics subject you've purchased.

It is my hope that upon reading and applying everything this lesson book has to offer, you'll gain a greater understanding of the topic at hand which will help you progress towards your goals as a performer or instructor.

Thank you again, and happy practicing!

Elliott Duran

C O N T E N T S

MP3 DIRECTORY

QUARTER NOTE TIMING

1-A ONE REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
1-B TWO REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
1-C TWO REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM

EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

2-A ONE BEAT GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-B TWO BEAT GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-C THREE BEAT GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-D ONE REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-E TWO REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-F THREE REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-G PATTERNS 1 & 2 8TH RESTS REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-H PATTERNS 3 8TH RESTS REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-I PATTERNS 4 8TH RESTS REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-J PATTERNS 5 8TH RESTS REST GRID- 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM
2-K PATTERNS 6 & 7 8TH RESTS REST GRID - 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160 BPM

SIXTEENTH NOTE TIMING

1-A ONE REST GRID - 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90 BPM
1-B TWO REST GRID - 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90 BPM
1-C TWO REST GRID - 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90 BPM

ETUDES

E -1 ETUDE 1 - 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100 BPM
E -2 ETUDE 2 - 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100 BPM
E -3 ETUDE 3 - 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100 BPM

A NOTE

When rehearsing, try to make sure that you're not using the mp3 tracks here as a crutch for learning the concepts at hand. I recommend doing your best to read and interpret the music in each exercise before listening to the correct version in the mp3.

A WORD ON RHYTHM

Rhythm is officially defined as *the systematic arrangement of musical sounds, principally according to duration and periodic stress*. There's some fancy terminology going on in that definition but in essence, rhythm is the component of music that tells us when to play, when we should be silent, and how long each instance of playing or silence should be.

We communicate information about rhythm using the **Rhythmic Hierarchies of Note Values and Rests**, and by stringing together different combinations of these "puzzle pieces," we can create endless combinations of rhythms to play.

Reading and understanding the rhythmic component of a piece of music requires the ability to recognize the value of every note you see through its anatomy, as well as having the knowledge of how to piece these notes together based on the math behind the music.

THE RHYTHMIC EQUATION

"The math behind the music" is a phrase I use to describe one of the most important attributes of reading and writing rhythms. It refers to the fact that the total value held by the notes and rests within a measure MUST add up to the value the measure is allowed by its time signature.

Its useful to picture the relationship between a measure's time signature and its contents as a 2-sided equation where its the composer's job to make sure both sides are equally balanced.

Value allowed by Time Signature	=	Total Value occupied by Notes	+	Total Value occupied by Rests

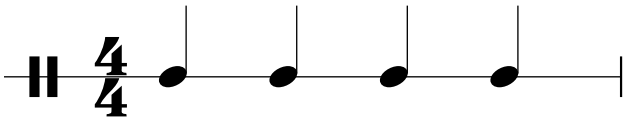
Let's take a look at a few examples so that you understand this relationship before moving on to the counting and performance of different rhythms.

EXAMPLE 1

Again, our goal here is to ensure that the contents of this measure line up with the expectation of counts set forth by the time signature.

The time signature of this bar tells us that we should expect its contents to add up to no more and no less than the value held by 4 beats of quarter notes. The left side of our Rhythmic Equation will therefore be 4.

Let's check out the right side of the equation by adding up the notes and rests to ensure that this measure is balanced. There are 4 quarter notes in this measure which are each one count long and no rests. The total value of the contents in the measure is 4; the equation is therefore balanced and the expectation set by the time signature has been successfully met.



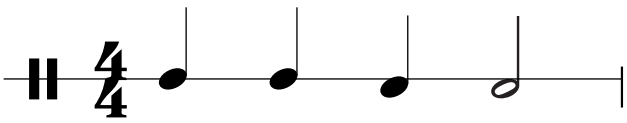
$4 = 4 + 0$

EXAMPLE 2

The time signature in this example is the same, but the contents of the measure have changed slightly. The first 3 notes in the measure are still quarter notes. The last note, however, has changed from a quarter note into a half note.

Our understanding of the rhythmic hierarchy of note values lets us know that a half note occupies the same amount of space that two quarter notes do. By adding this last half note, we've effectively caused this measure to have the equivalent of 5 quarter notes of music in it.

The left side of the equation remains the same due to unchanged time signature, but the right side has gone from 4 to 5 beats. The equation is unbalanced, and therefore this measure is incorrectly written and is not performable.

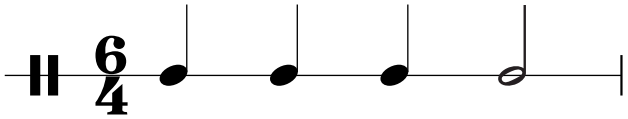


$4 \neq 5 + 0$

EXAMPLE 3

In this measure, we see the exact same arrangement of notes as are contained within the bar in Example 2. The time signature, however, has changed. Instead of remaining in 4/4 time, we are now operating within a time signature of 6/4. This means that we should expect the contents of this measure to add up to 6 beats of music, with each beat holding a quarter note's worth of space.

With only 5 counts of music and no counts of rest, our Rhythmic Equation is out of balance. This time there are too *few* beats of content in comparison to the expectation set by the time signature, but the result is the same. The measure is incorrect and impossible to perform as it is written.

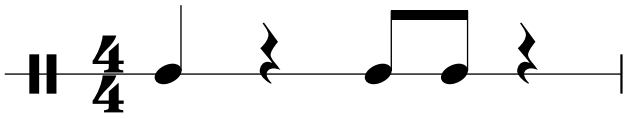


$$6 \neq 5 + 0$$

EXAMPLE 4

There are a couple of new ideas in this final example measure. First of all, we're no longer occupying the entire measure with notes; we've now thrown some rests into the mix. Recall that although rests are indications of silence, they still hold specific amounts of space depending on the type of rest they are. In this case, these quarter note rests occupy the exact same amount of space that a quarter note does: 1 count.

We've also introduced some eighth notes into the picture. We know from our rhythmic hierarchy that each of these eighth notes holds half of the value a quarter note does, or half a count. Adding up a quarter note and 2 eighth notes gives us 2 counts, and adding up the rests gives us 2 more counts. When stacked against the expectation set by the time signature, which is 4 counts, we find that the equation is balanced and the measure works as it should.



$$4 = 2 + 2$$

TRUSTING THE MATH

Although I've shown you some examples of measures that work as well as measures that don't, realize that this was only for the purpose of helping you understand that music is structured in a very mathematical and precise way. In general, a composer will rarely, if ever, make a mistake regarding too many or too few contents in a measure, so you can trust that the music you read works mathematically.

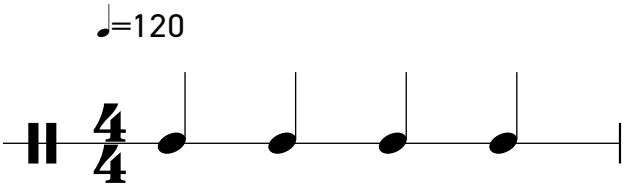
The fact that you can trust the composer writing your music makes it so that we can rely on the same uniform counting system no matter what piece of music you're looking at. This is important because interpreting rhythms correctly will require a deep understanding of how to count your way through different note values and rests, and imagine how difficult this would be if you had to count every piece of music differently depending on the composer.

With all that out of the way, let's finally get into getting accustomed to our method for counting rhythms.

1 2 3 4

THE COUNTING METHOD

I want to introduce the rhythmic counting system we will be utilizing by describing it alongside an analogy. Let's start with the most basic combination of quarter notes possible within a measure of 4/4.



Envision this measure as a length of track, where every beat is represented by a lightpost that is controlled by a switch. Whether the switch is on or off depends on whether there's a quarter note on that beat, in which case its on; or if there's a quarter note rest on that beat, in which case the switch would be off.

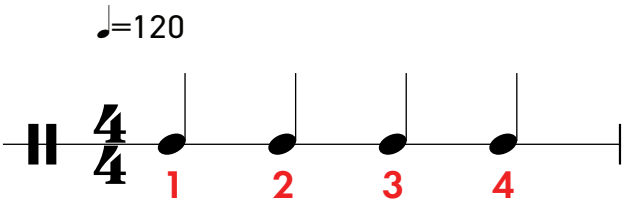
As a musician reads through a rhythm, it's like they're travelling down the track at a given speed decided by the tempo. As they cross the beats/lightposts, they'll play a note if the light is on, or stay silent if the light is off.

The key point of this analogy is that whether the lightpost is on or off, it still exists at a specific point on the track for the musician to check. In the same fashion, whether a beat is occupied by a note or a rest, its still important to acknowledge it for the purpose of counting.

A great way for you to internalize this "underlying skeleton" is by learning to vocalize it.

Let's first make sure we're working at the right speed by pulling out a metronome and setting it to 120 BPM. Since the note value in the tempo marking is a quarter note, every click your metronome gives you corresponds to another quarter note in time.

The time signature of this bar is 4/4, which means that there are four beats in this measure, each of which holds a quarter note's worth of space. We already know that a quarter note is a full count long, so the first component of our counting system will involve identifying each of these counts by assigning numbers to them in order. The first quarter note is count 1, the second quarter note is count 2, and so on.



Count aloud from 1 to 4, counting a new number every-time you hear a new click from your metronome. Once you reach the number 4, return to count 1 for the next click and repeat. Here's what your vocalizations should sound like against the click of the metronome.

"ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR - ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR"

click *click* *click* *click* *click* *click* *click* *click*

These vocals are of the "underlying skeleton," or the lightposts on the track. Your next task is to stop at each beat and check whether its switch is on or off. In this particular case, because all 4 beats carry a quarter note, all the switches are on, which means you should play a note on every number that you're counting.

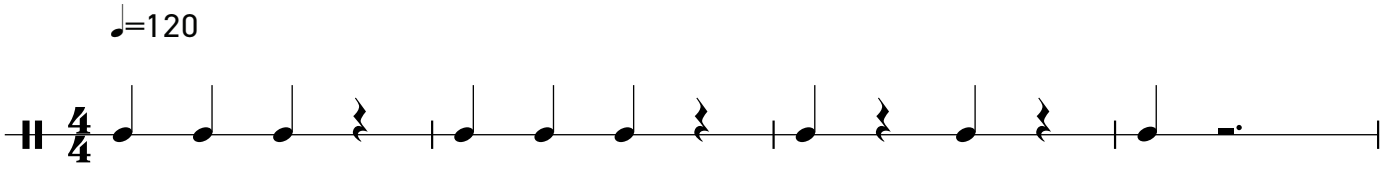
Choose between clapping your hands together or tapping on your leg while sitting down. As you vocalize the skeleton of the 4 beats in a 4/4 measure, clap or tap along to the 4 beats. All together, the click of the metronome, your vocalizations, and your playing should match up like this:

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

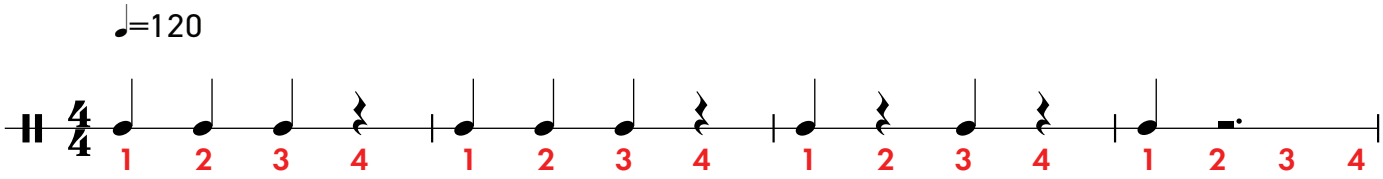
"ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR"

click *click* *click* *click*

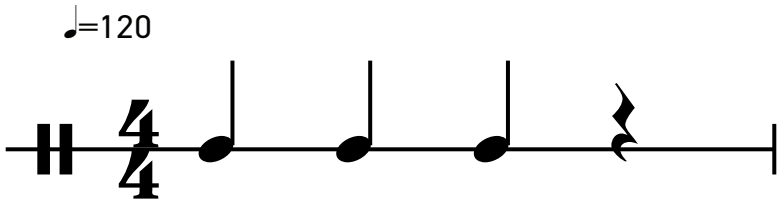
If you can clap your way through this measure then you've successfully played your first rhythm! Of course, there's only one way to play this measure, so let's throw some rests into the mix to check out how they operate within our rhythm counting method. Take a look at this 4 bar chunk.



The thing that will help us out the most here is the fundamental idea behind the Rhythmic Equation. Remember that the contents in a bar must add up to the expectation set forth by the time signature. We know that each measure in this chunk will hold 4 beats, so our only task at this point is to identify where in time we will play notes, and where in time we will rest. Let's do what we did in the previous example and assign counts based on the value we know each of these notes/rests to hold based on their anatomy.



Let's focus in on the first bar of the phrase first and identify which counts hold notes and which counts hold rests.



Counts 1, 2, and 3 all hold notes; count 4 holds a rest. Pull out your metronome and set it to 120 BPM and get it started. Go through the same vocalizations you did before, counting from 1-4 with the click in order to establish the underlying quarter note rhythm.

Your job is now to clap/tap on the counts that have been "switched on" (quarter notes), and stay silent for the counts that have been "switched off" (quarter note rests). All together, the click of the metronome, your vocalizations, and your playing should line up like so:

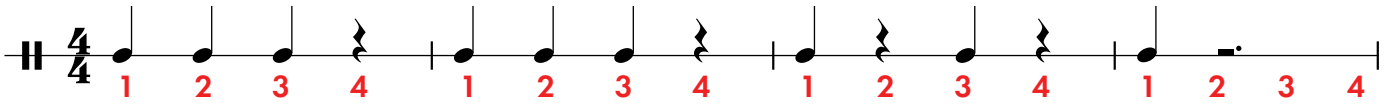
CLAP	CLAP	CLAP	silence
"ONE -	**TWO -**	**THREE -**	**FOUR"**
click	*click*	*click*	*click*

Go through this same process for each measure in the phrase on the previous page *individually* first. Recall that your process is as follows:

- Identify which counts hold notes, and which counts hold rests.
- Vocalize the entire underlying quarter note rhythm to a metronome.
- Play to the counts with notes, stay silent to the counts with rests.

Once you have worked through each bar individually, your next task is to string them together in sequence and play them back to back.

I invite you to try to accomplish this on your own first. If you need help or want to check your work, the full sequence with the correct way the vocalizations, clicks, and playing should line up will be on the next page.



MEASURE 1

CLAP CLAP CLAP silence

"ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR"

click *click* *click* *click*

MEASURE 2

CLAP CLAP CLAP silence

"ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR"

click *click* *click* *click*

MEASURE 3

CLAP silence CLAP silence

"ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR"

click *click* *click* *click*

MEASURE 4

CLAP silence silence silence

"ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR"

click *click* *click* *click*

If you're able to count and play your way through these 4 bars, then you've developed a good understanding for the way quarter note values work within the context of the rhythm counting system we're trying to establish.

You're now ready to apply this knowledge in order to practice the skill of reading and playing more rhythms.

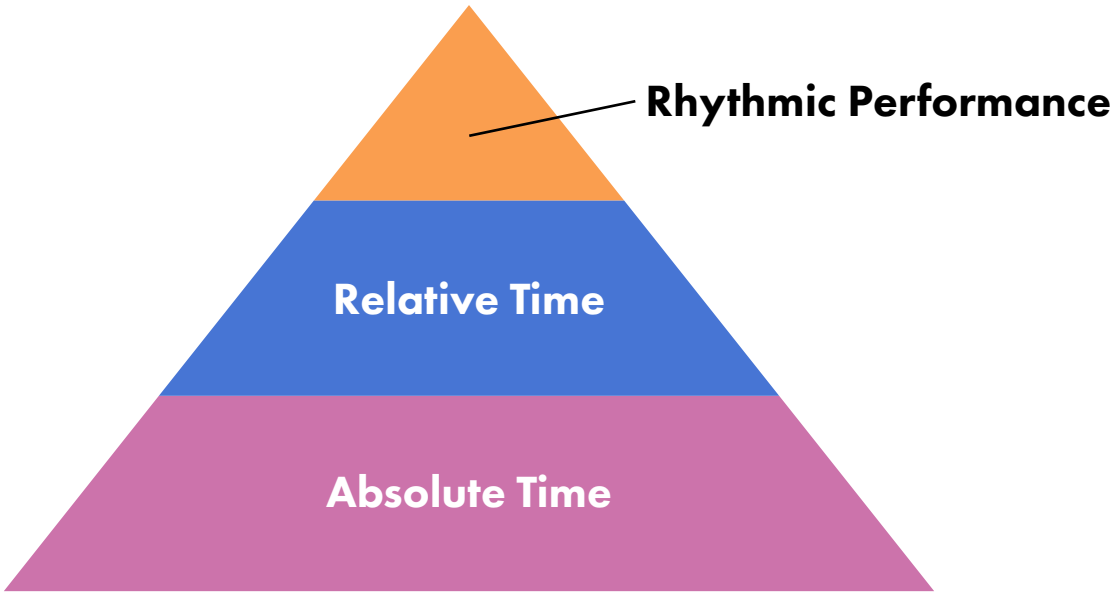
THE PYRAMID OF TIME

At this point, it's worth it to have a discussion about time; more specifically, how to develop a more natural and internal sense of time.

We can agree that the most perfect representation of time we've used thus far in this lesson book is the metronome. Upon entering a tempo, it will immediately give us the exact correct interpretation of that tempo so that we have no excuse to make a mistake regarding the speed of a piece of music.

If metronomes are so perfect, why don't more live musical acts simply have a metronome running in the background to minimize the risk of anyone falling out of time? A likely answer is that no one in a live audience would be particularly fond of the sound of a metronome behind the music they're actually trying to listen to. Beyond that, one could argue that it's simply more impressive to watch a group of musicians "sit in the pocket" flawlessly without the aid of a timekeeping device. The only reason musicians can pull this off, however, is because they've develop a great sense of **internal tempo.**

Internal tempo refers to your ability to perceive tempo in a relatively accurate way without the use of a metronome. The best way to develop this ability is to rehearse with the **Pyramid of Time** in mind.



At the very base of our Pyramid of Time we find **Absolute Time**, or *time coming from a source that can be trusted to be deliver perfect tempo*, like a metronome. Whether it be digital or mechanical, a metronome is a device that we can expect to be right on the money everytime we ask it to mark time for us.

Above Absolute Time lies **Relative Time**, which describes *a person's individual perception of time*, or *internal tempo*. We call it relative because no two people perceive time in exactly the same way. If you were to ask two musicians to clap quarter notes at 145 BPM, for example, it's very unlikely that

a) They'd clap at exactly 145 BPM,
b) They'd both clap at the same speed as each other.

Relative Time is therefore exactly that; relative to the experiences and training a musician has had to play accurate time, which of course varies from person to person.

Lastly, at the very top of the pyramid lies **Rhythmic Performance**, which describes *the accuracy of the rhythmic content a musician plays*. This is where we a musician uses Absolute and/or Relative Time to place their rhythms where they believe them to lie based on either their individual perception of tempo, or on a tempo being given to them by a metronome.

These might all seem like close to the same idea upon your first read, so lets try to gain a better understanding by comparing it to learning math.

When learning math in a classroom, a fundamental concept a teacher will try to get across to their students is that knowing the theory and the proofs behind the arithmetic is vital to understanding the material. It's not enough to simply know how to plug the numbers into a calculator to get the result. This is why many teachers will prohibit the use of calculators come test day; to ensure the student understands the math and isn't simply learning how to press the buttons on a calculator in the right order.

A calculator is very much like the metronome that we trust as a source of Absolute Time in that it's a strong tool that gives us definitive answers as long as we use it correctly. It's my hope however, that when we remove tools like metronomes and calculators, the Relative Time you've developed is strong enough on its own to help you execute a high quality Rhythmic Performance, just like knowing the proof necessary to solve a problem on an algebra test.

The main way in which this analogy fails, however, is that while you don't necessarily need a calculator to build a strong understanding of arithmetic, you do need to spend a lot of time with a metronome to develop a strong sense of internal time. Let's talk about how to most effectively use the Pyramid of Time to your advantage.

The great thing is that if you've been following the process we've been laying out for our Rhythmic Counting System closely, then you've already been developing your affinity for the Pyramid of Time. To understand how, let's take a look at the verbal representation of how you were counting rhythms.

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

"ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR"

click *click* *click* *click*

At the very bottom of this representation is the click of the metronome, which corresponds to the lower third of the Pyramid of Time: Absolute Time. This is the base of our system and serves as the foundation that everything else is built upon. We rely on our metronome to build this foundation so it can be strong.

Above the click are your vocalizations which correspond to the middle of the Pyramid: Relative Time. This is your individual perception of the tempo, and for it to be strong, you must ensure that it lines up as perfectly as possible to the click. Later on, we will introduce other, more subtle ways of developing your internal tempo, but for now, the vocalizations will be great for developing your Relative Time as well as letting you know what count you're on so you can accurately play the rhythms in this book.

Finally, at the very top lie the rhythms you're playing, which correspond to the very top of the Pyramid: Rhythmic Performance.

So the hierarchy should work as follows:

You'll set your metronome to the desired tempo.

You'll line up your internal time exactly to the metronome.

You'll play your rhythms to your internal time.

You might be wondering why you shouldn't just play your rhythms to the metronome, which is obviously the more exact source of time.

My hope is that when it comes time to remove the metronome, the Relative Time you've built upon the foundation of Absolute Time is precise enough that you can still perform your rhythms to that internal time, sort of like prohibiting a calculator on a test but still knowing how to perform the arithmetic necessary to solve an equation.

QUARTER NOTE TIMING

With a reliable system for counting quarter notes and quarter note rests in your pocket, let's finally begin practicing your ability to read through different quarter note-based rhythms.

The sheet music on the following pages is structured in what we call a **4-2-1 Grid**. Primarily, a **grid** is a form of practicing in which you go through every configuration of a specific musical idea possible by cycling the idea through the entire bar. In the first piece, for example, we are going to be gridding one rest, so the first pattern puts the rest on count 1, the second pattern puts the rest on count 2, the third pattern puts the rest on count 3, and so on.

The **4-2-1** refers to amount of bars you rehearse each pattern for before moving on to the next one. In the A section of the pieces, you'll play each pattern for 4 bars. In the B section, you'll only play each pattern for 2 bars each. Lastly, the C section will require you to cycle through the patterns for only 1 bar each.

The point of practicing rhythms in this way is that it allows you to build your affinity for the patterns in two different ways.

- At the very beginning of each exercise, the focus is on repitition. You get four chances to understand each pattern before attempting the next one.
- Towards the end, the focus switches to your ability to read/think ahead as you string different patterns back-to-back as seamlessly as possible.

With that in mind, here are some things to consider as you work through this sheet music:

TAKE YOUR TIME

Although there's a substantial amount of music on each page, there's no obligation for you to play through all of it at once at a fast tempo. Start with a slower BPM and work through one bar at a time. Once you've perfected one bar, move on to the next and go through the same process, then go back and string the 2 together. Try playing through entire lines, then play from letter to letter, and lastly, put the entire page together. At this point, increase the tempo by small amounts and work your way gradually to those faster BPMs.

KEEP COUNTING

You already know that counting plays a big role in reading and understanding rhythms. As you get better at reading, you might feel like taking a break from going through that process. At the beginning of your career, however, it's beneficial to identify the counts and rests, so continue counting even if you think you've got it down! Additionally, I've left space under every bar for you to write in your counts if that's something you feel would help.

STRIVE FOR PERFECTION

Constantly strive to hold yourself to a higher standard in terms of playing perfectly in time. The best musicians in the world hold that title because they chose not to move onto to new concepts until they felt they'd squeezed every last bit of potential out of the one at hand. The more you can embody this early on, the faster your progression will be and you won't have to return to refine these basics later on.

1-A QUARTER NOTE TIMING

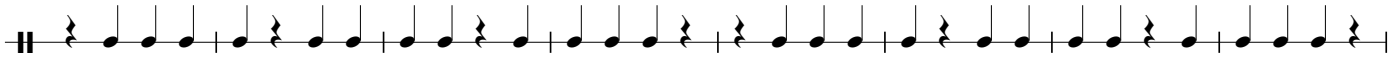
Gridding: One Rest

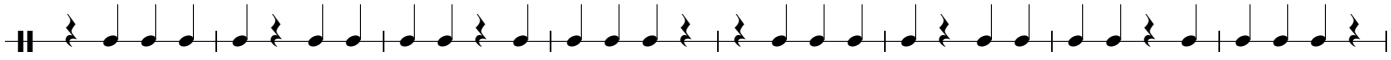
♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A

B

C



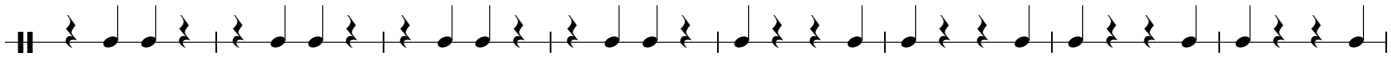


1-B QUARTER NOTE TIMING

Gridding: Two Rest

♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A



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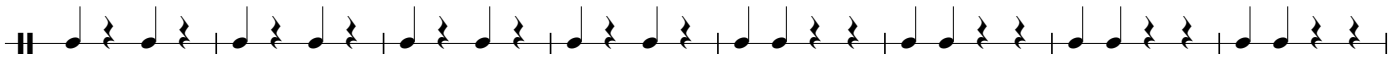
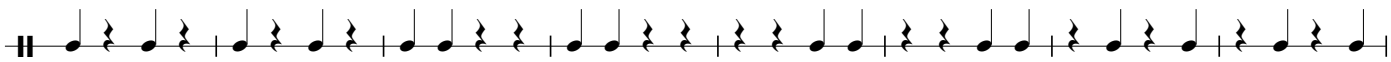


B



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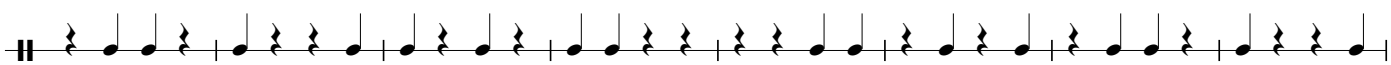
C



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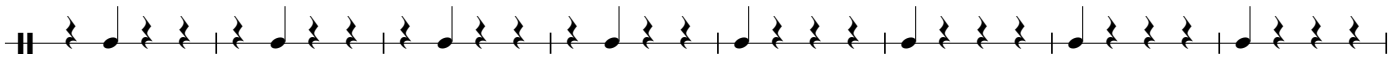
1-C QUARTER NOTE TIMING

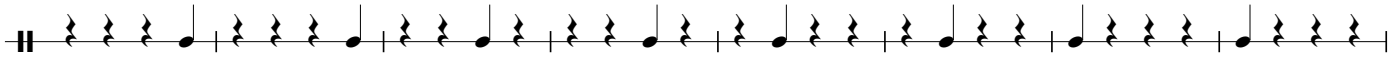
Gridding: Three Rest

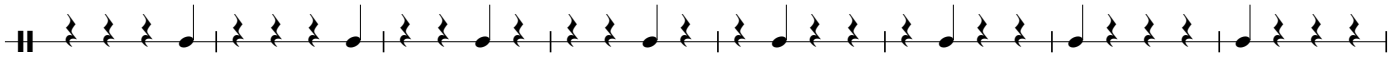
♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A

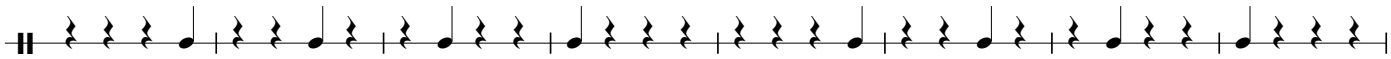


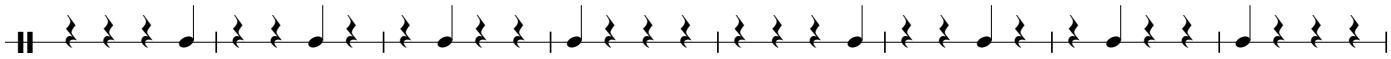
B





C

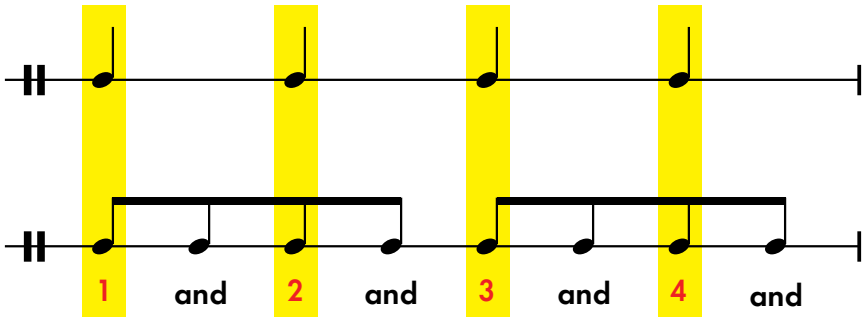




EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

We're now going to move on to the next subdivision in the Rhythmic Hierarchy located under the quarter note: the eighth note. Let's get into how this rhythmic puzzle piece fits into the Rhythmic Counting System we've talked about so far.

We already know that an eighth note holds half the value that a quarter note does, meaning that if we put two eighth notes together, that space is equivalent to the one held by one quarter note, so mathematically, quarter notes and eighth notes line up like this:

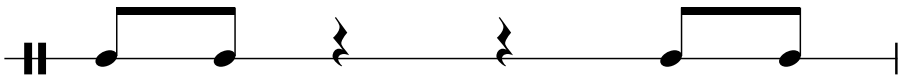


The "and's" in between the 4 main counts that you've hopefully recognized are the ways in which we vocalize **upbeats**. Upbeats are what lie in between **downbeats**, which are all of highlighted beats in the bottom measure, or counts 1, 2, 3, and 4. To put this into the context of our vocalization diagram, we would count this measure along to a metronome like so:

"ONE - and - TWO - and - THREE - and - FOUR - and"

click *click* *click* *click*

When we were working with quarter notes, we introduced some rests in order to create some more creative combinations of rhythms to play around with, so we're going to do the same here and check out how our counting changes once we're not trying to play every single eighth note in a bar. Take a look at the following measure:



At this point, you can do one of two things. You can go ahead and vocalize every count along with every eighth note vocalization, and play along like so:

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

"ONE - and - TWO - and - THREE - and - FOUR - and"

click *click* *click* *click*

Or you can do something a little more simplified, where you only count the downbeats, or counts 1, 2, 3, and 4, and you use the fact that you understand that eighth note upbeats occur exactly in the space between the downbeats to clap at the correct time, like so:

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

"ONE - TWO - THREE - FOUR "

click *click* *click* *click*

Which method you use depends on how comfortable you are with perceiving the space in between all of the counts you're vocalizing. At first, I highly recommend that you go with Method 1, but once you gain a higher affinity for eighth note timing, try removing all of the vocalizations in between and simply negotiating that space with your head so you can still play accurately.

2-A EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

Gridding: One Beat

♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

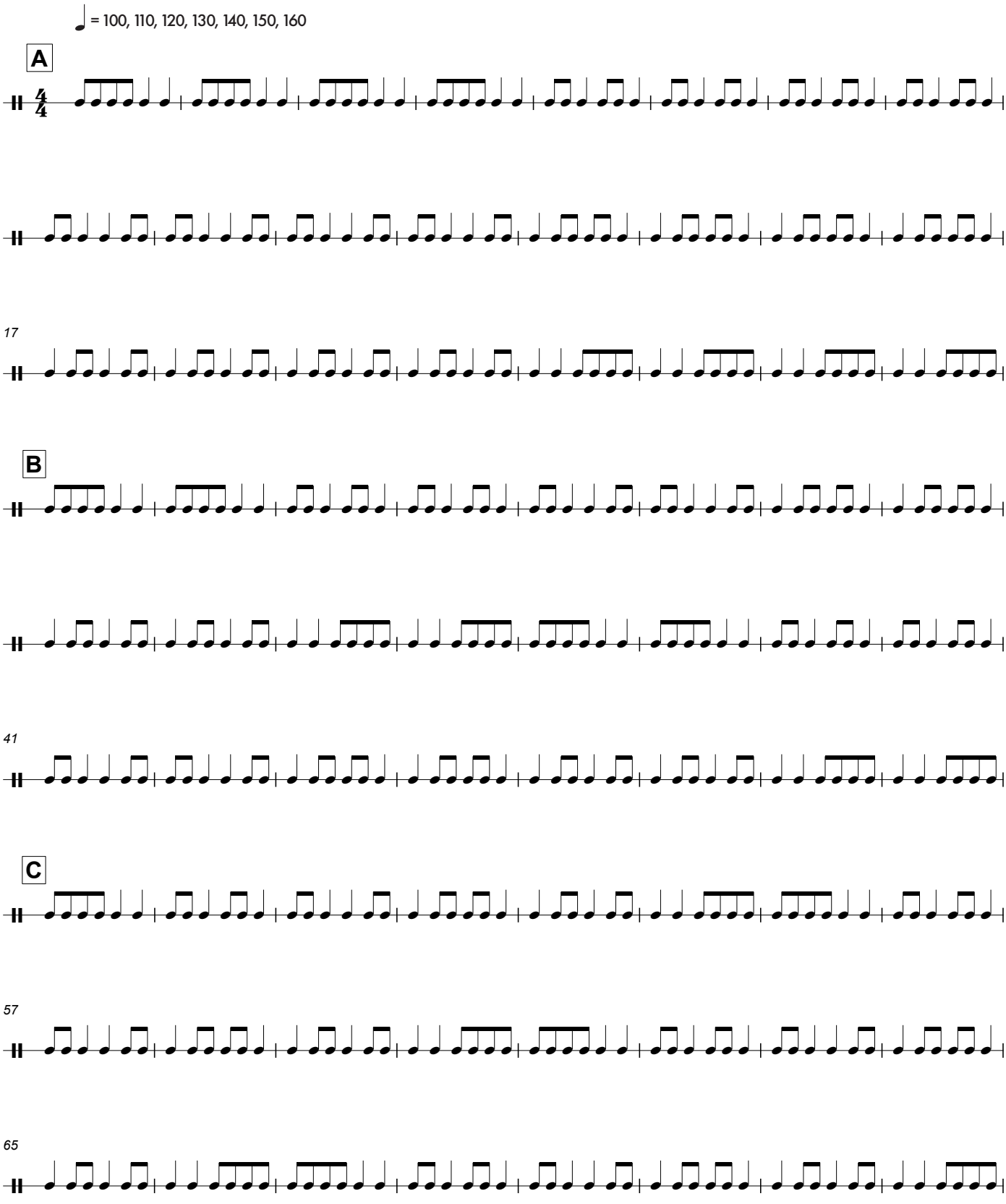
A

B

C

2-B QUARTER NOTE TIMING

Gridding: Two Beat



2-C EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

Gridding: Three Beat

♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A

B

C

2-D EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

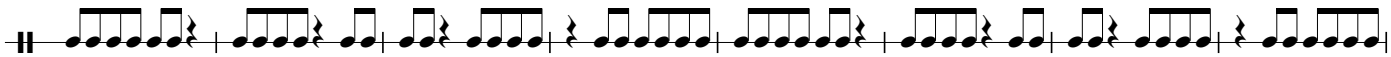
Gridding: One Rest

♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A

B

C



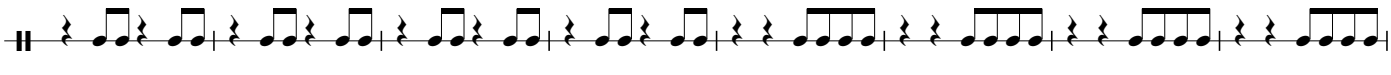
2-E EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

Gridding: Two Rest

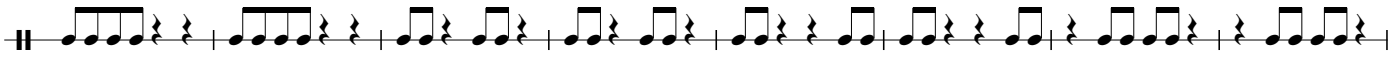
♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

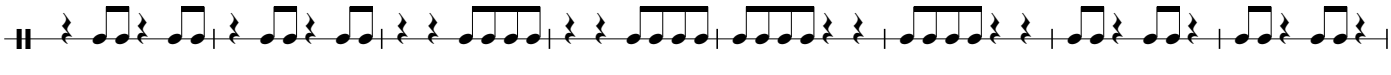
A

17

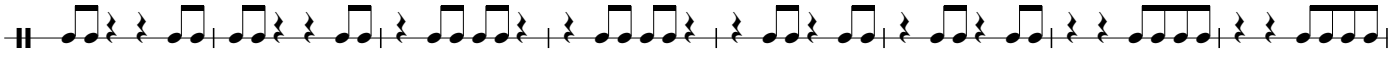


B



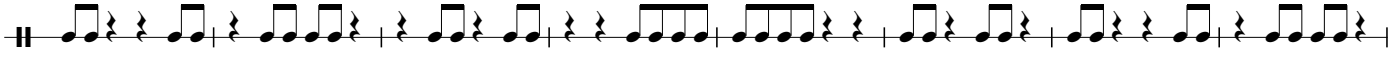


41



C

57



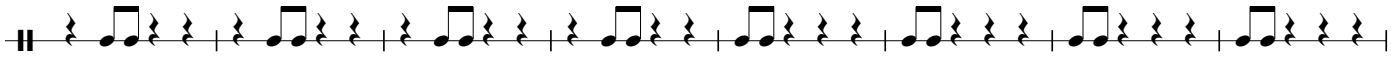
65

2-F EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

Gridding: Three Rest

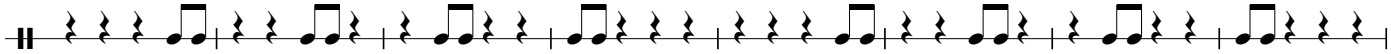
♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

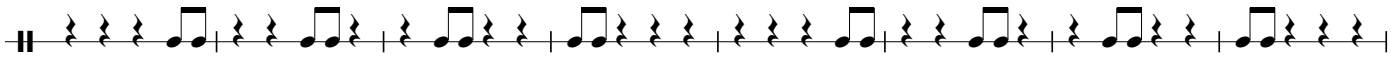
A



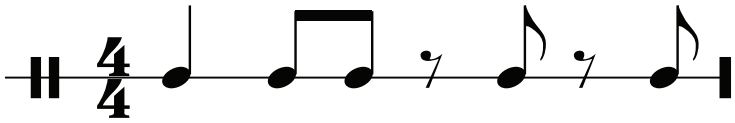
B

C





So far, we've only utilized quarter note rests in order to create different combinations of rhythms, but we're going to mix things up by introducing eighth note rests. Just like quarter note rests, eighth note rests hold the exact same value of time their note counterpart does. Let's look at an example bar and take a look at how this new puzzle piece fits into our counting system.



The first beat is occupied by a quarter note and the next one is occupied by two eighth notes. Beat 3 also holds two eighth note containers with the first being a rest and the second being a note. Lastly, beat 4 is exactly the same as beat 3, eighth note rest on the first container, and a note on the second.

The system works exactly as it did when we were only working with quarter notes, except that now we're working within a finer subdivision of rhythms, sort of like measuring a length of wood using inches instead of feet. Continue to count ALL of the eighth notes in the measure, with the downbeats lined up perfectly to the metronome, then proceed to clap or tap on only the notes that aren't rests, lining each one up to its respective counts, like so:

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

"ONE - and - TWO - and - THREE - and - FOUR - and"

click *click* *click* *click*

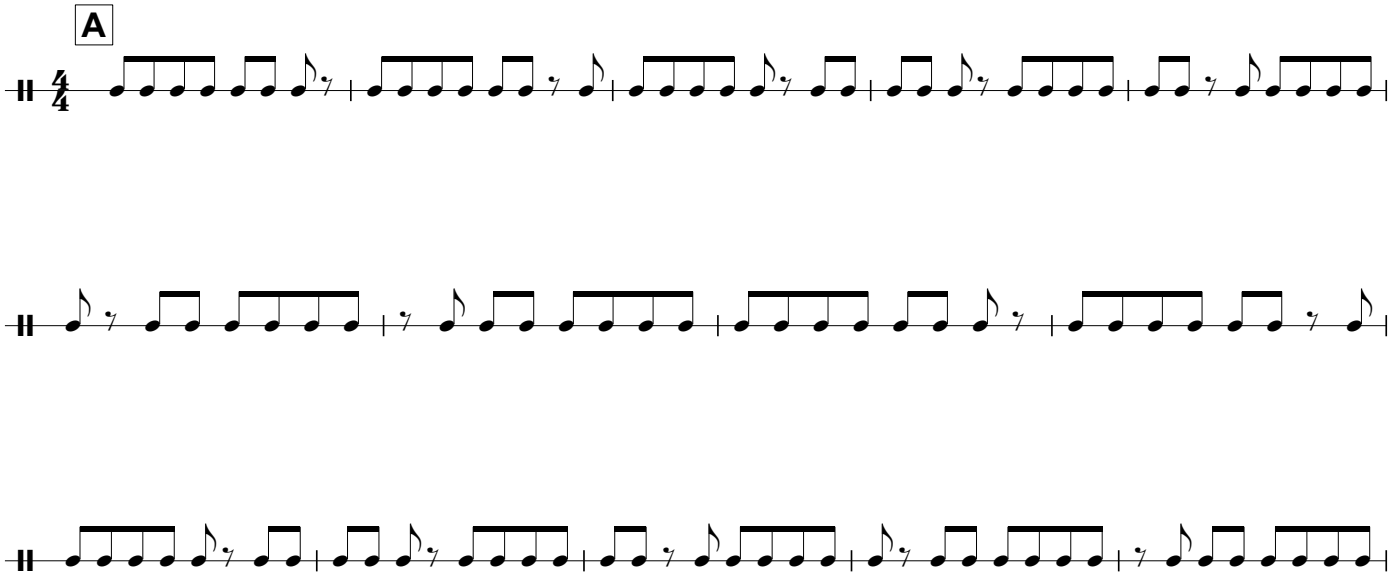
Proceed to read through the next few pages of exercises that introduce the eighth note rest into the mix. Refer back to page 19 in order to recall what your priorities should be as you rehearse.

2-G EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

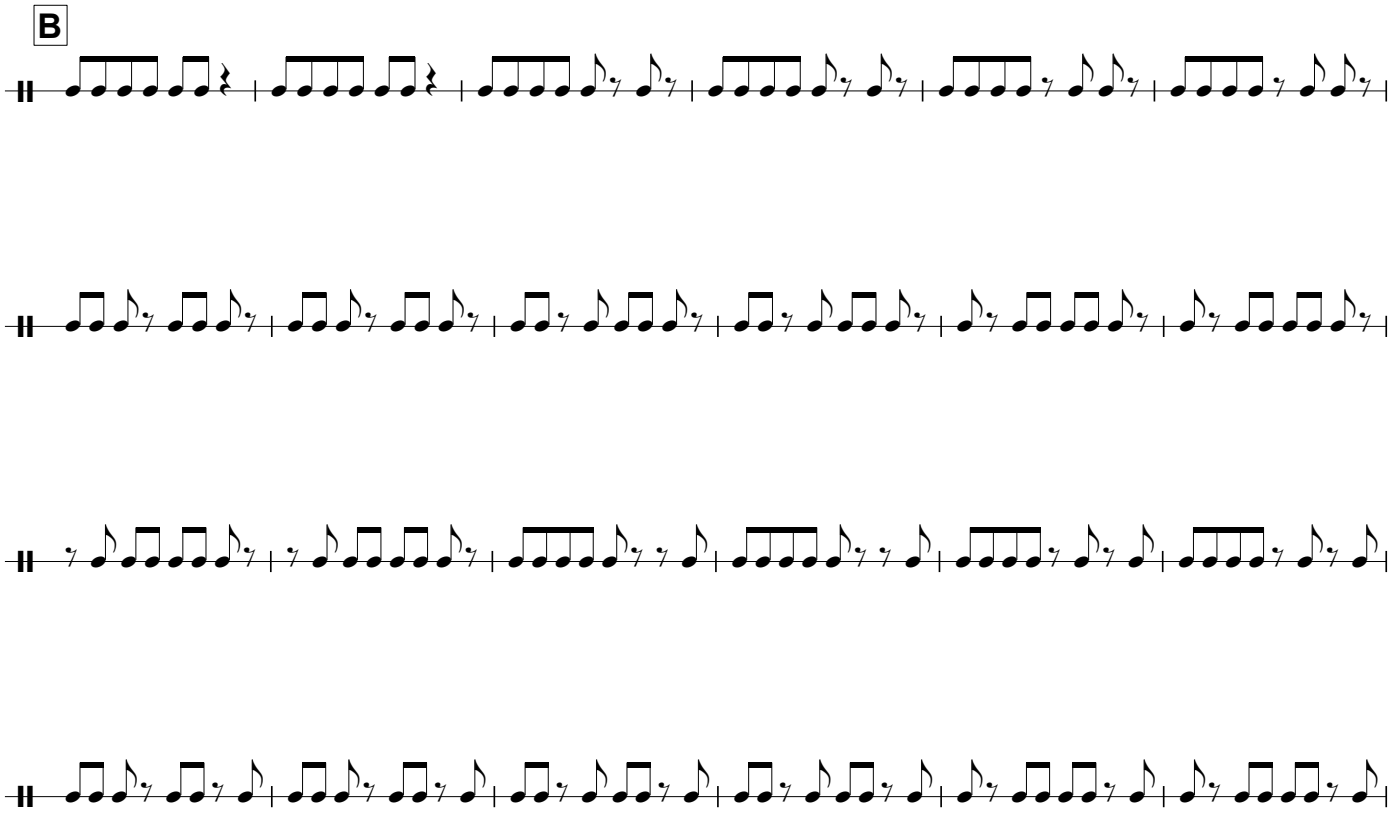
Patterns: 1 & 2 8th Rests

♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A



B



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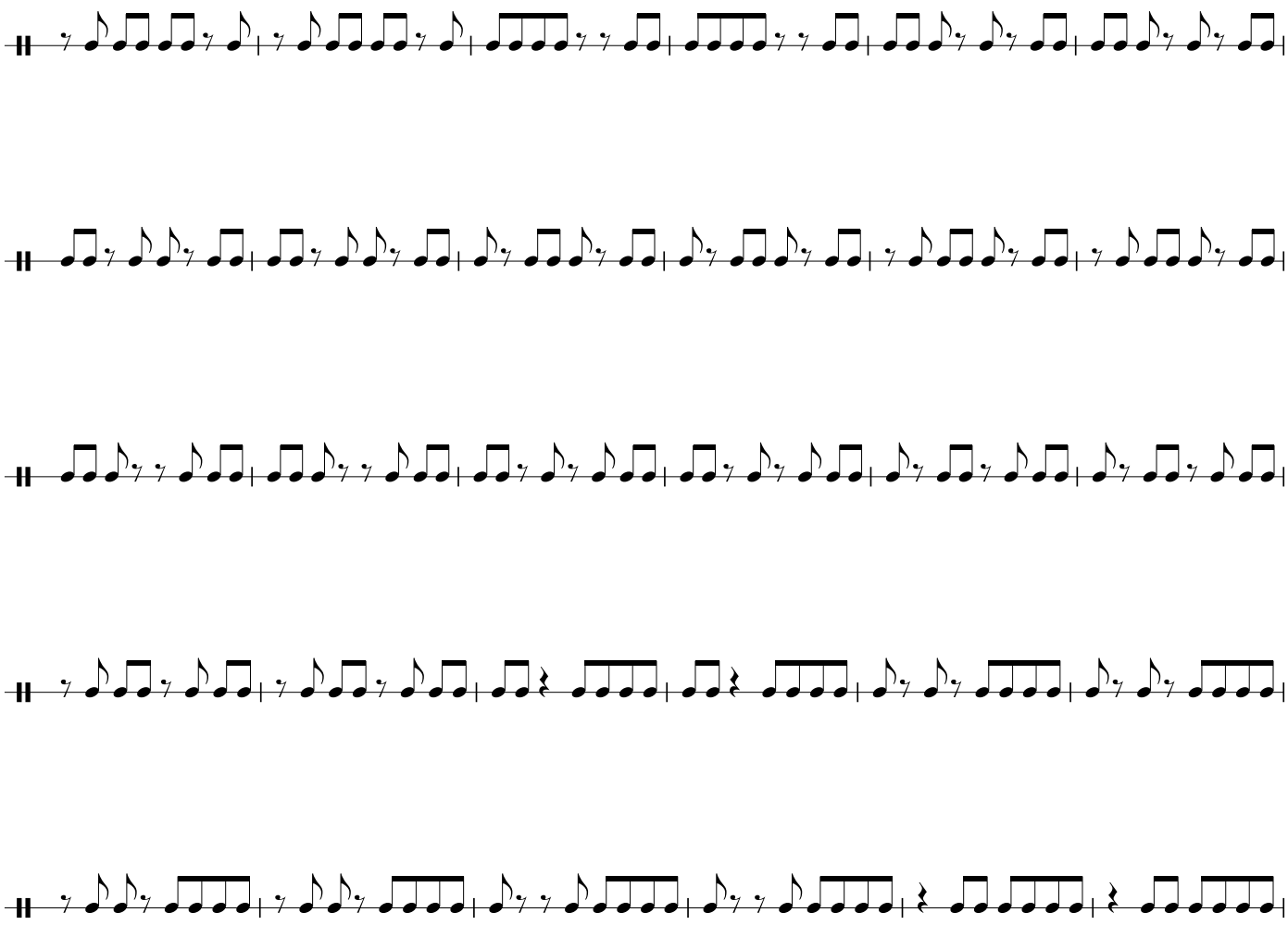
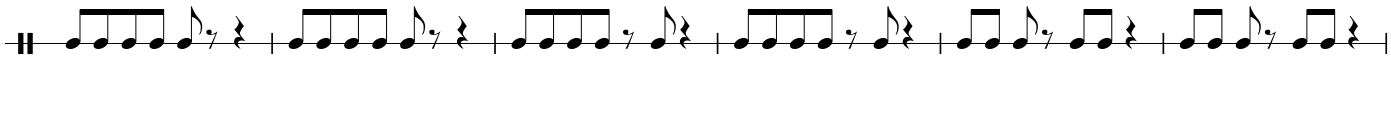


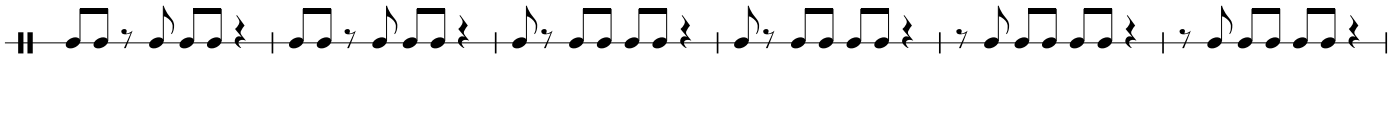
2-H EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

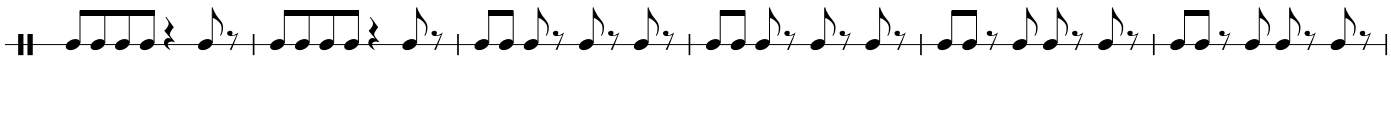
Patterns: 3 8th Rests

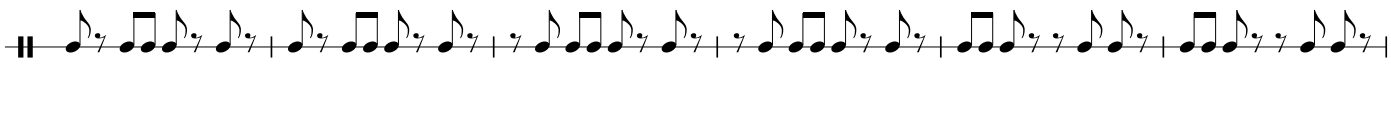
♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A









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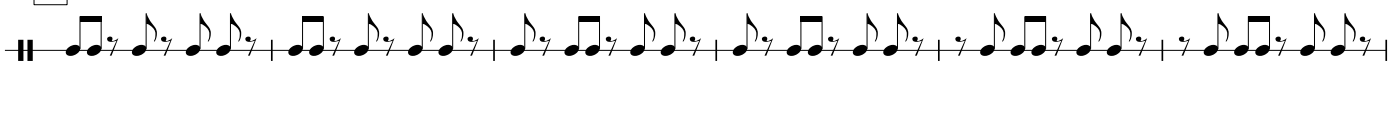

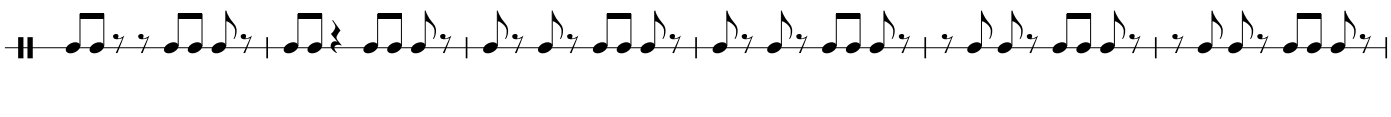

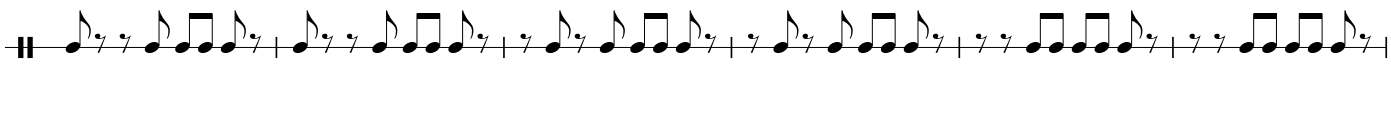

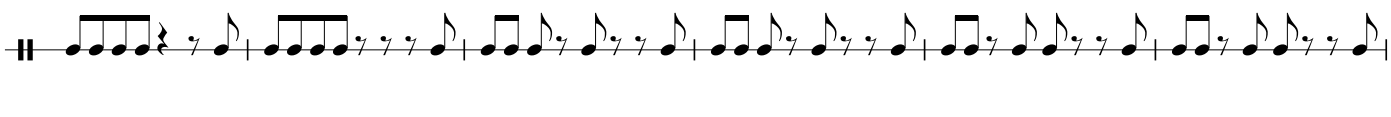

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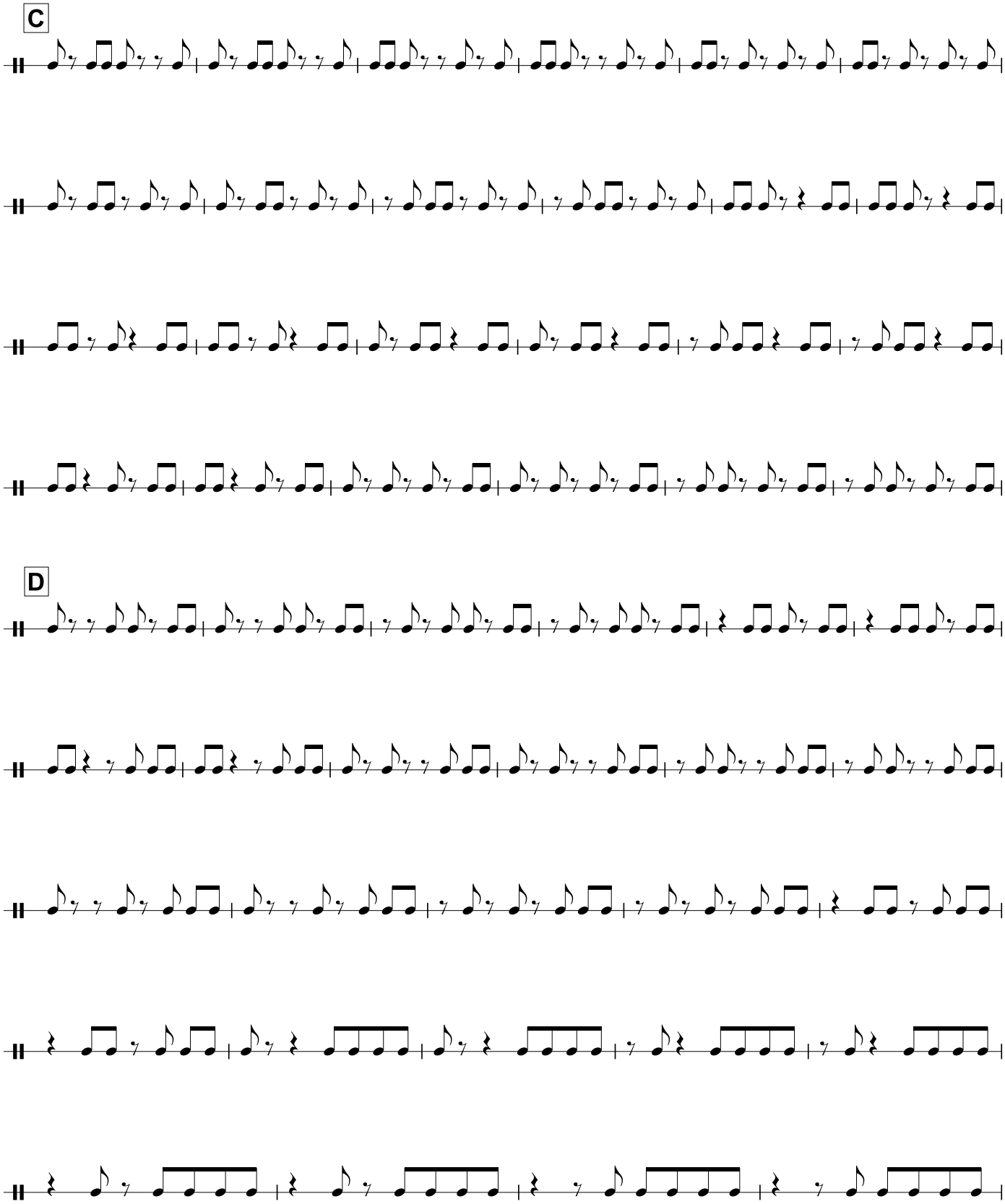
C



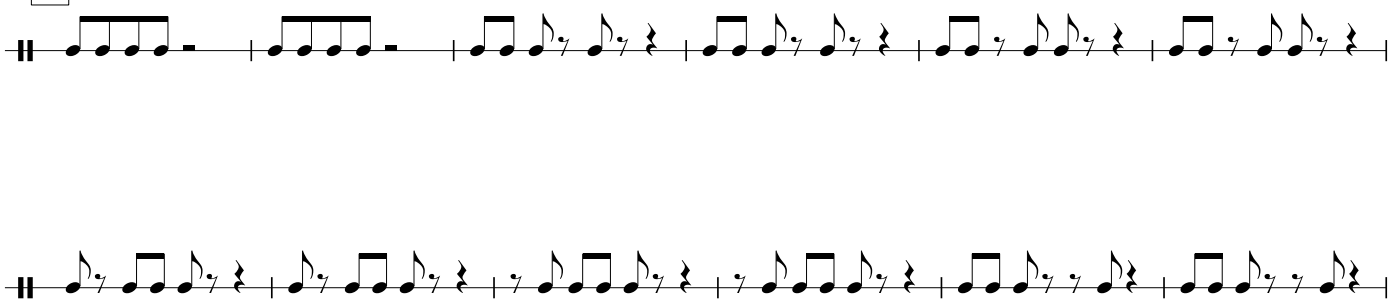
D

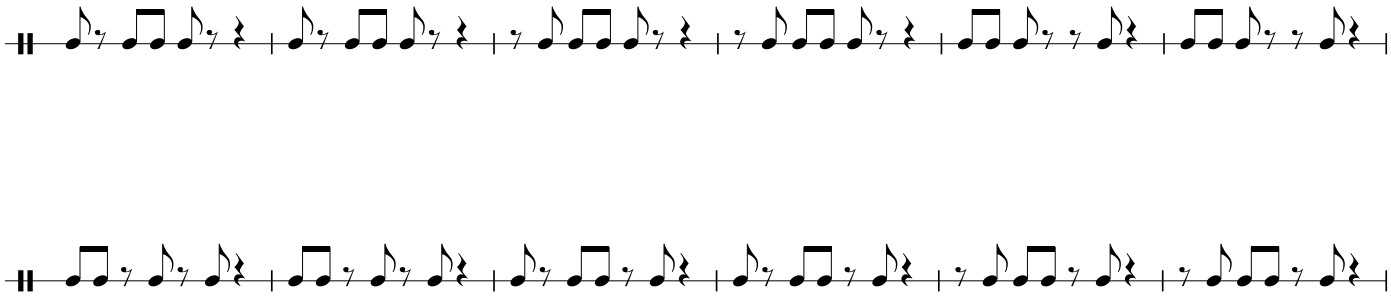
2-I EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

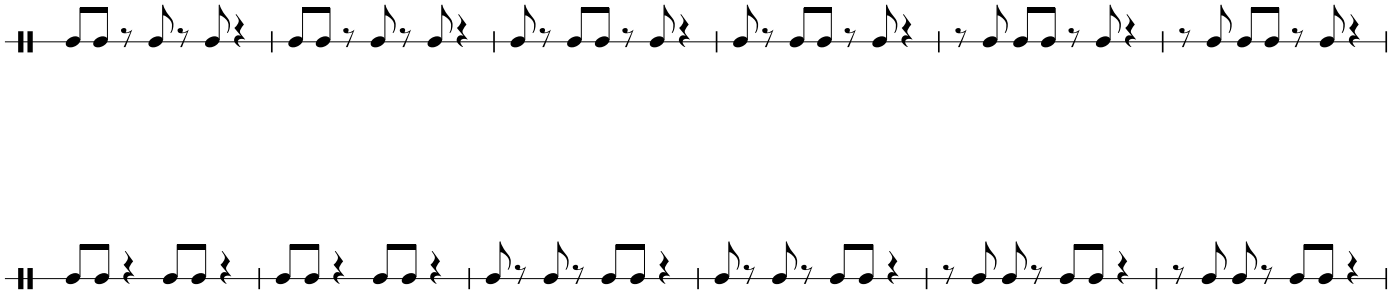
Patterns: 4 8th Rests

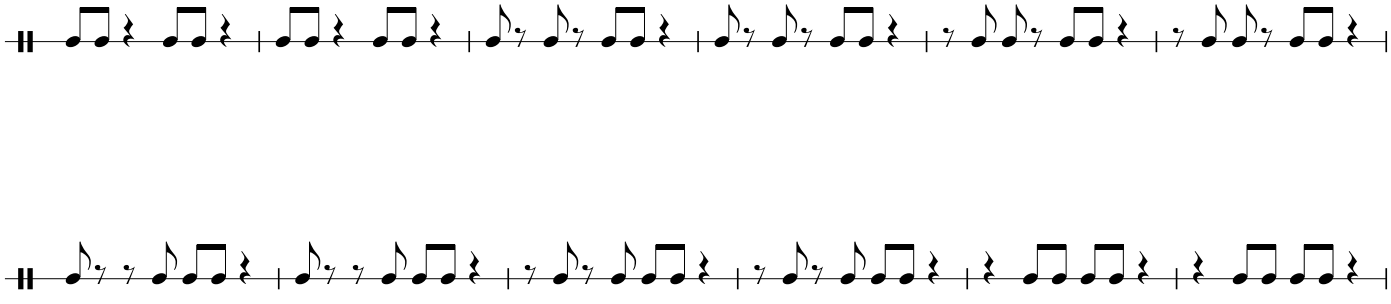
♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

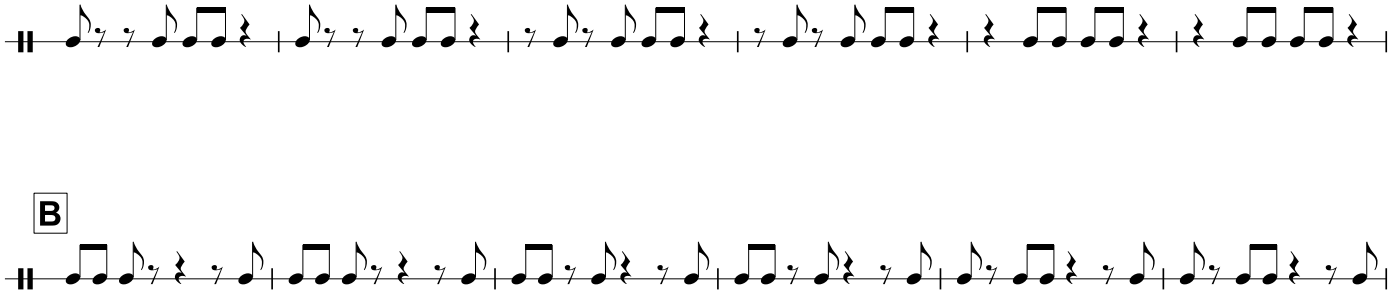
A











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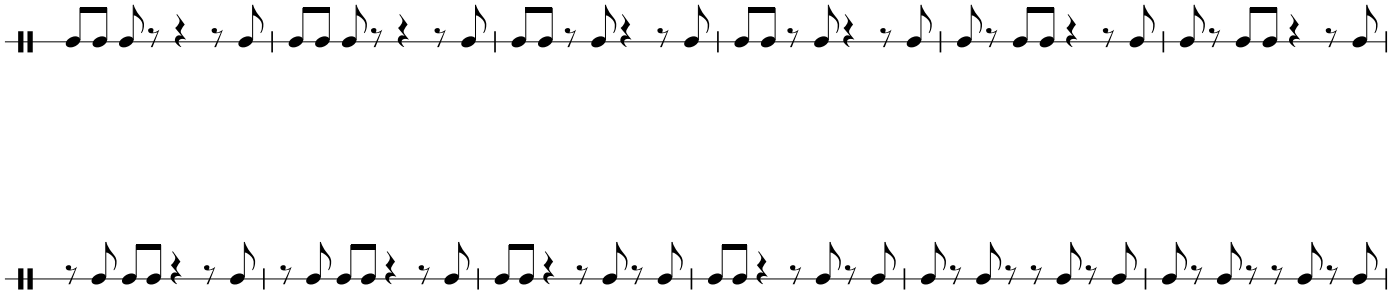

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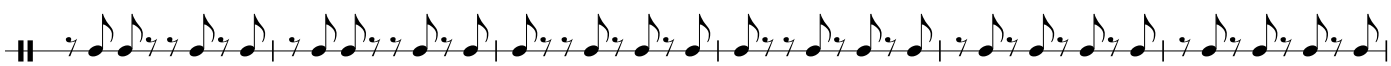
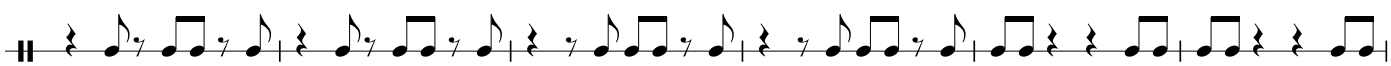
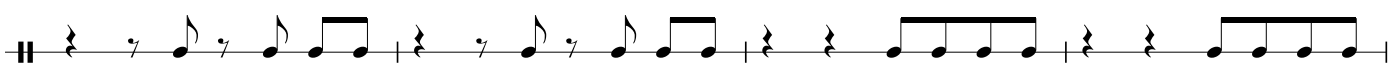




C

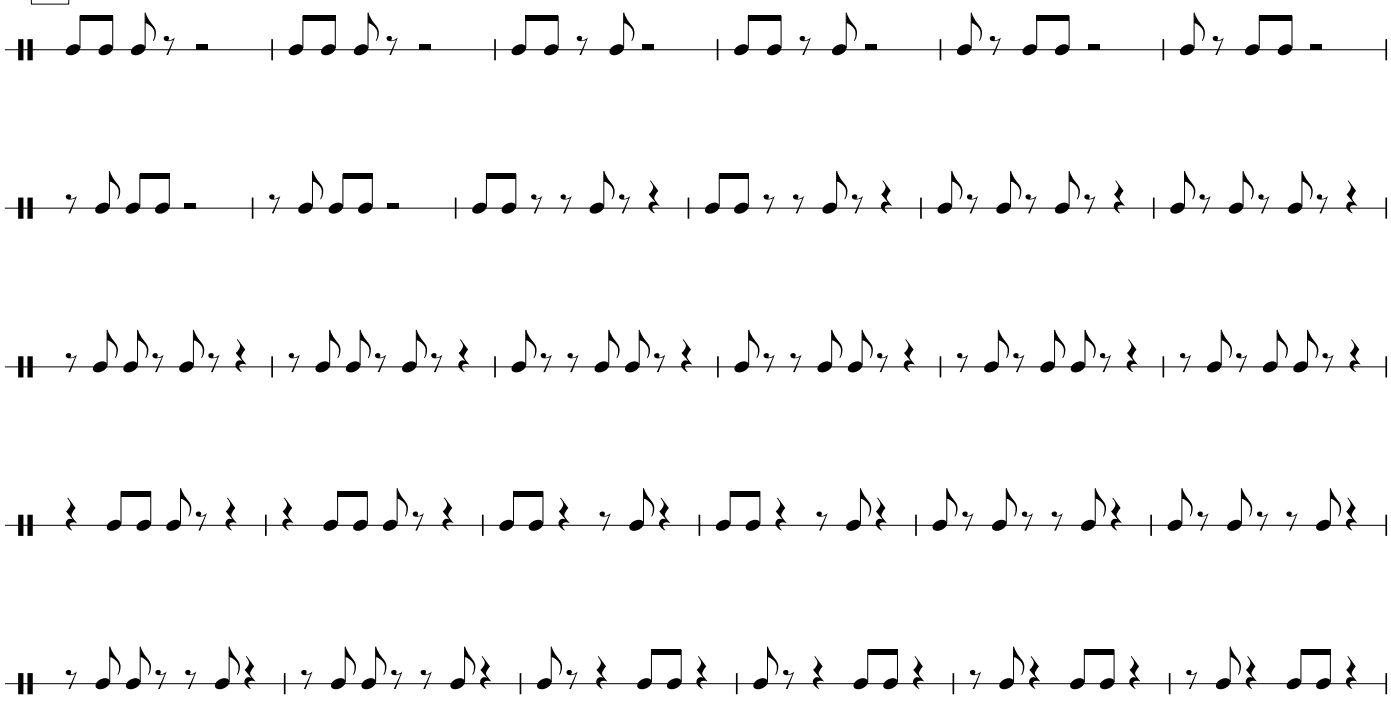


2-J EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

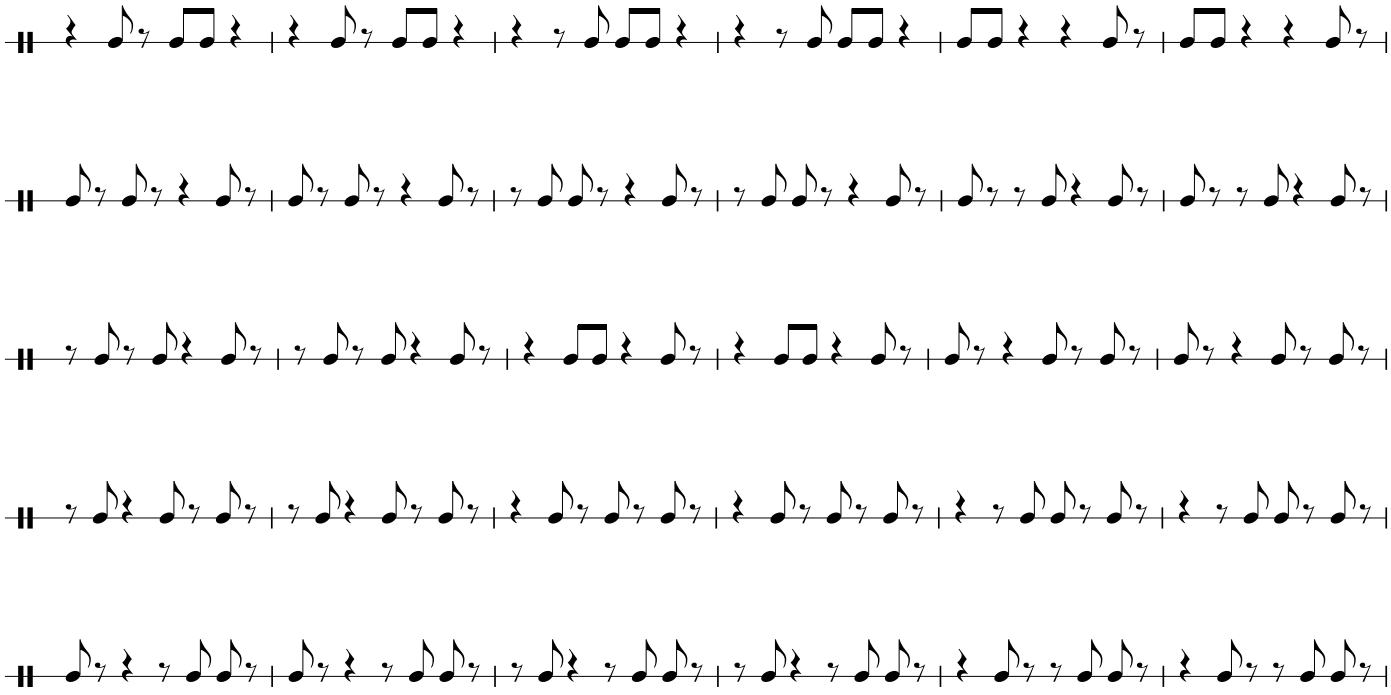
Patterns: 5 8th Rests

♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A



B



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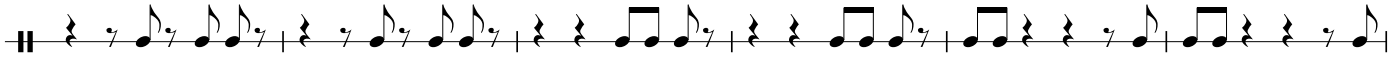
C



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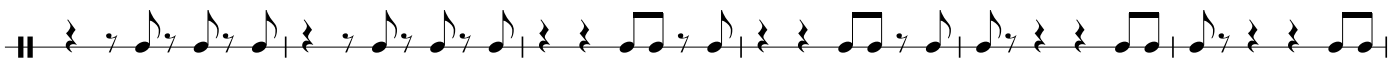
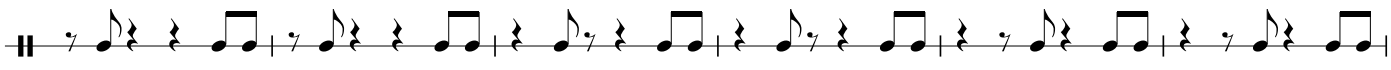


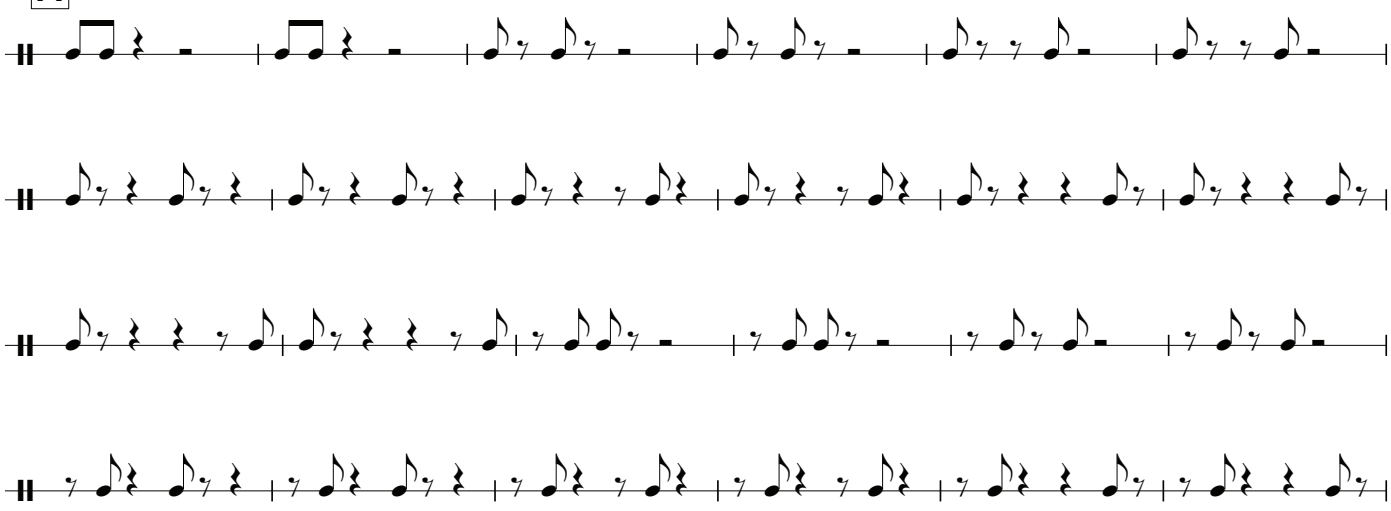


2-K EIGHTH NOTE TIMING

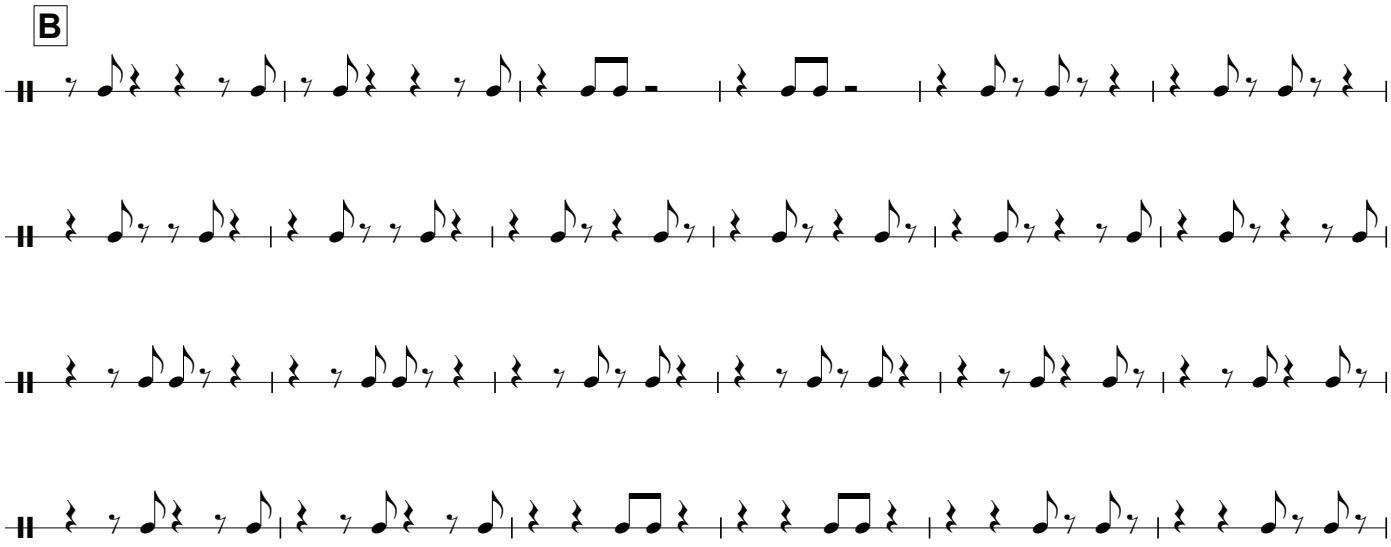
Patterns: 6 & 7 8th Rests

♩ = 100, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160

A



B



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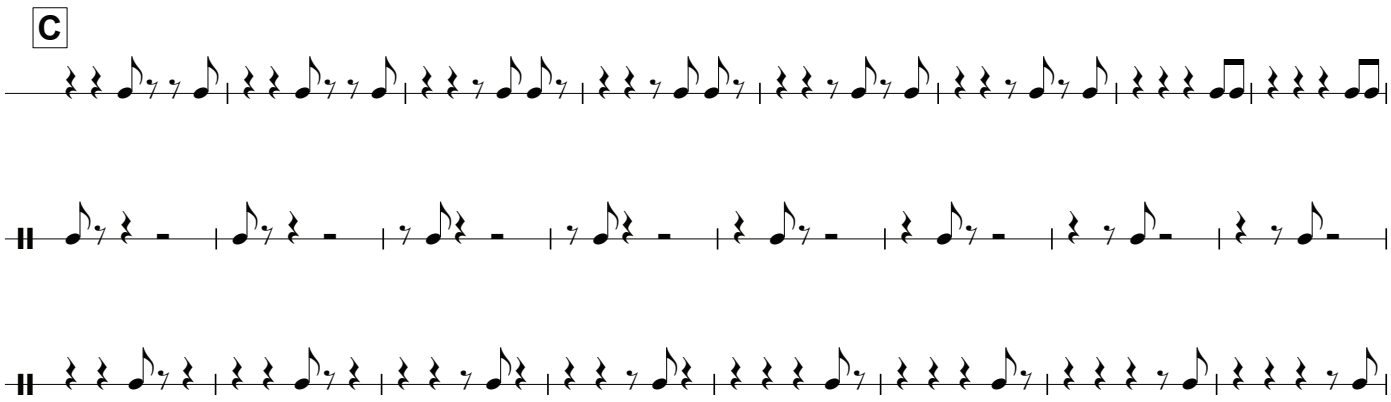
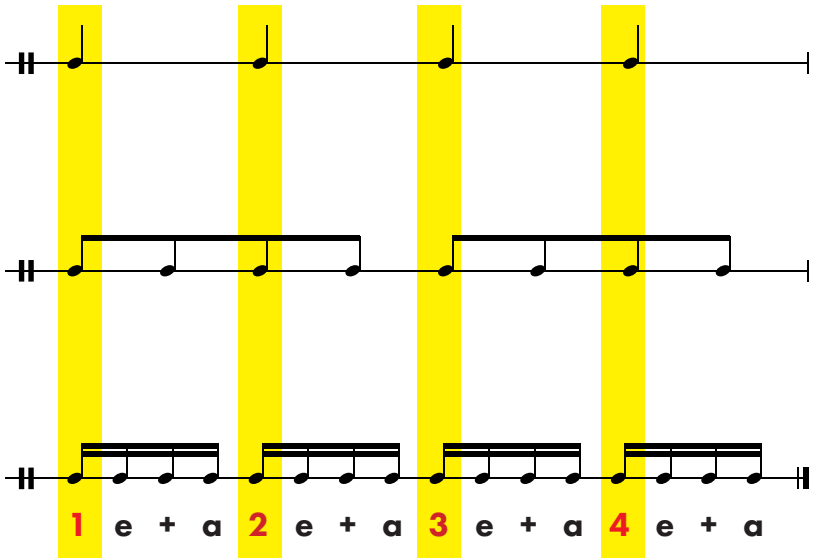


SIXTEENTH NOTE TIMING

Just like two eighth notes fit into the space that one quarter note does, the same type of relationship exists between sixteenth notes and eighth notes. What this tells us is that as we attempt to accurately vocalize 16th note partials, we can use the "checkpoints" we've set up so far (the downbeat and upbeat), and simply insert the new note values between them.



As you can see, we call the sixteenth note between the downbeat of a count and its upbeat the "e," and the note between an upbeat and the next downbeat is referred to as the "a." Just like the vocalizations we've used up until this point, its vital that you space them out evenly, with each downbeat lining up exactly with the click your time-keeping device is giving you, like so:

"ONE - e - and - a - TWO - e - and - a - THREE - e - and - a - FOUR - e - and - a"

click *click* *click* *click*

Every note type we've discussed so far has a rest counterpart that is equivalent in value to that note, and the sixteenth note is no exception. Here are the two placed side by side.

Let's very quickly review our process before we jump into an example bar that you can practice counting with.

- You'll first identify which counts hold notes, and which hold rests.
- You'll vocalize the underlying rhythm to a metronome.
- Lastly, you'll play along to the counts with notes, and stay silent on the counts with rests.

Take a look at the next example bar.

As you've done before, take some time on your own to work through this measure, then proceed to the next page to see a visualization of how the playing, vocalizations, and clicks of the metronome should line up.

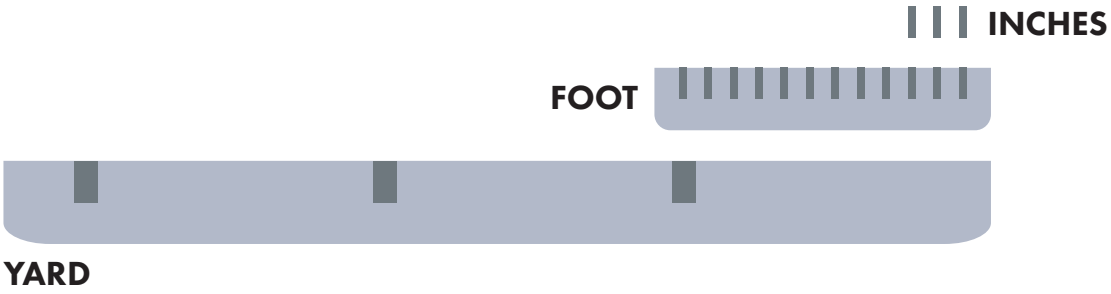
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

"ONE - e - and - a - TWO - e - and - a - THREE - e - and - a - FOUR - e - and - a"

click *click* *click* *click*

As we work with more and more notes, it can be easy to get overwhelmed with the density of a measure of music. In cases like this, its useful to lower the tempo significantly so that you don't struggle as you attempt to gain a good understanding of the rhythm you're working with.

After all, the only thing that's changing as we look at finer subdivisions is that we're looking at smaller and smaller "units of measurement" so to speak. This is comparable to looking at feet within a yard, and then at inches within a foot.



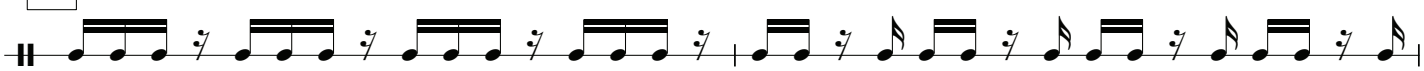
Work with the patterns on the next few pages to work on your affinity for sixteenth note and sixteenth note rest values. Pay attention to the slower range of tempo values you'll be working at. Again, if you need to go even slower than that, please feel free to do so. It is better to have high-quality rehearsal at a slower pace, then to rush through things and not gain a great understanding of the concept you're working on.

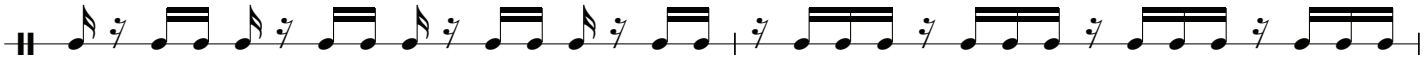
3-A SIXTEENTH NOTE TIMING

Gridding: One Rest

♩ = 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90

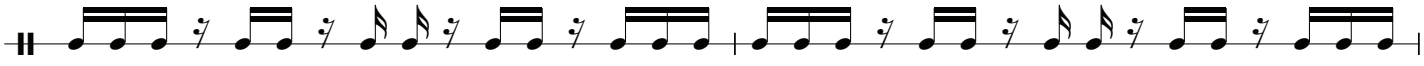
A

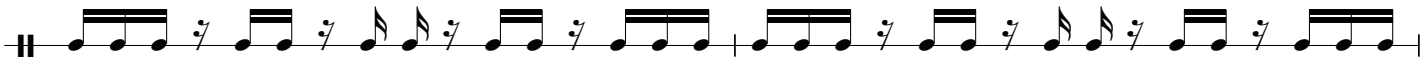




B

C



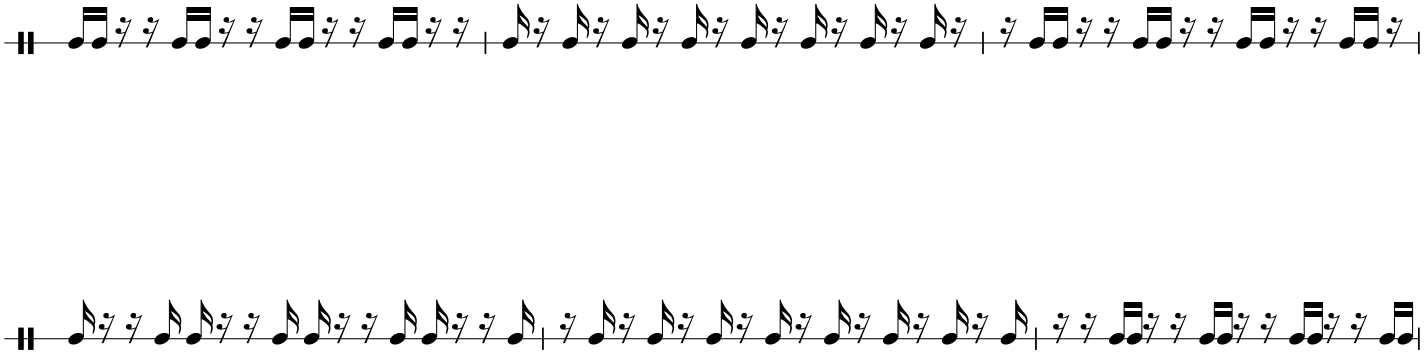


3-B SIXTEENTH NOTE TIMING

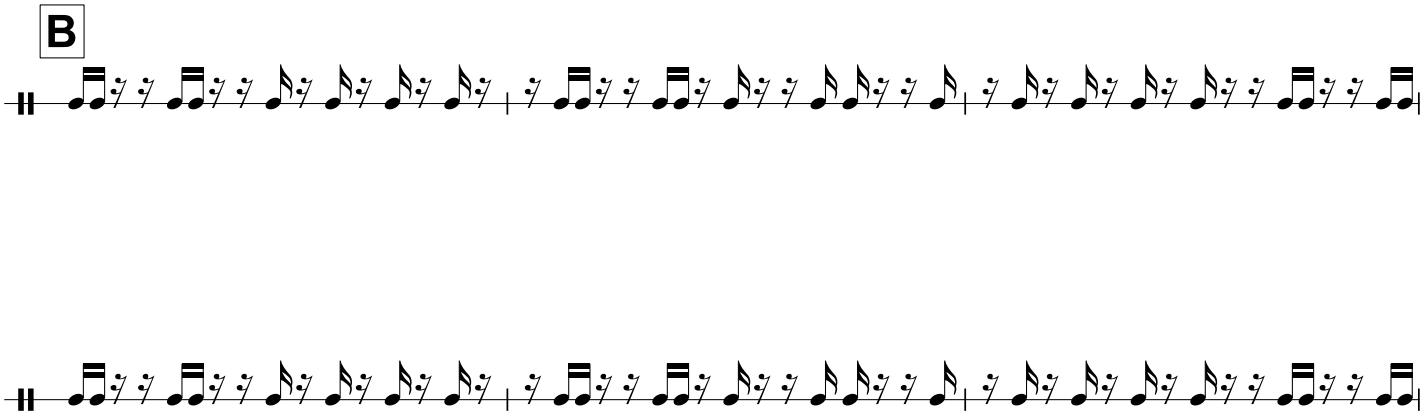
Gridding: Two Rest

♩ = 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90

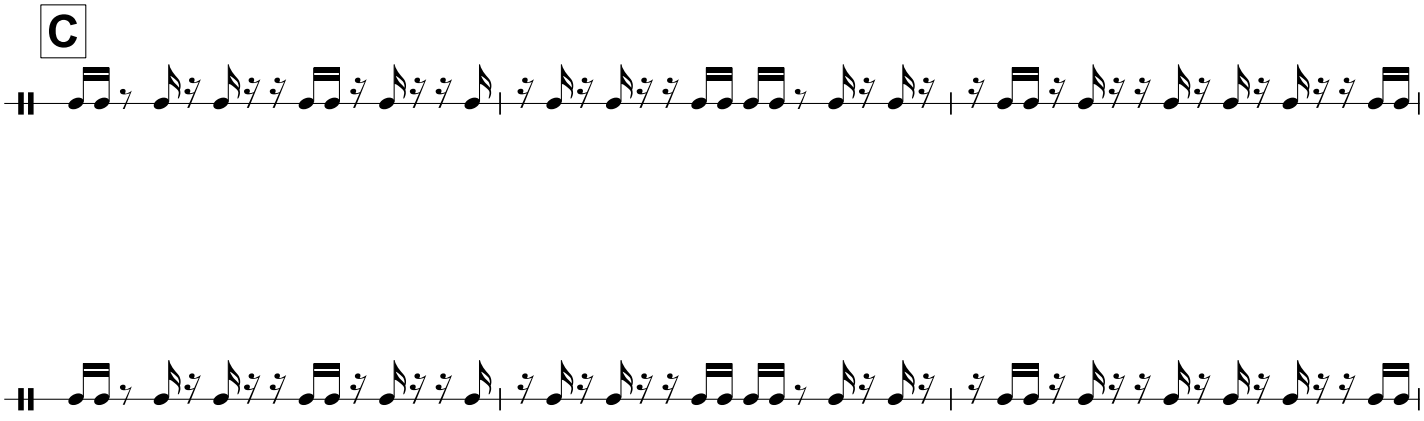
A



B



C

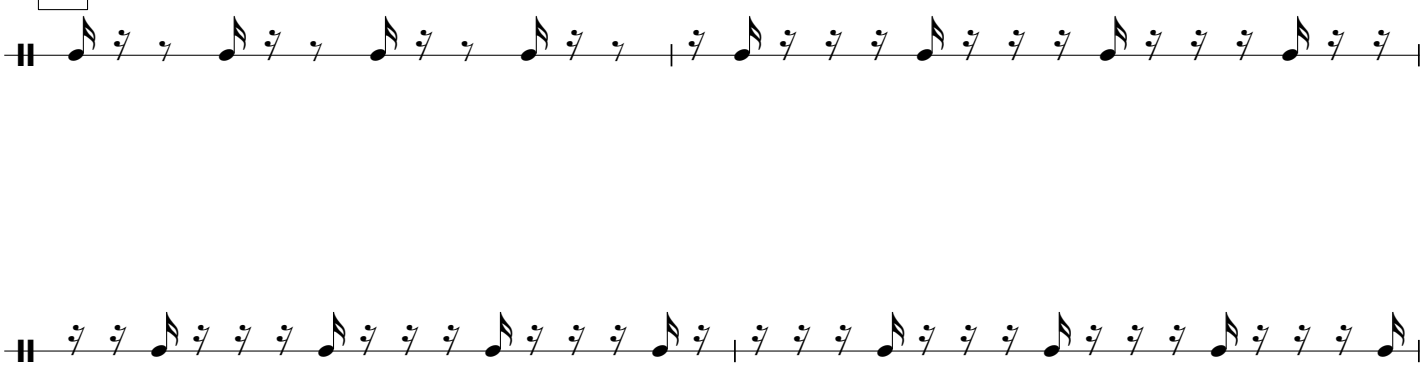


3-C SIXTEENTH NOTE TIMING

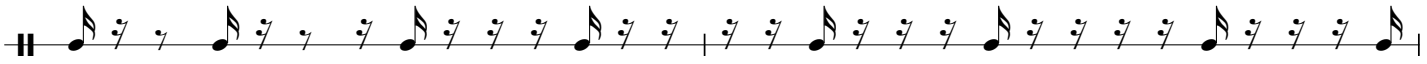
Gridding: Three Rest

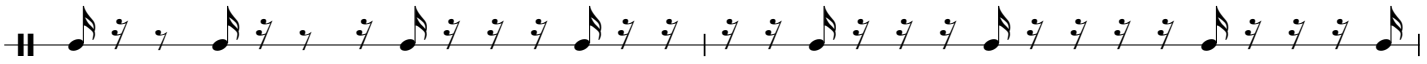
♩ = 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90

A



B





C

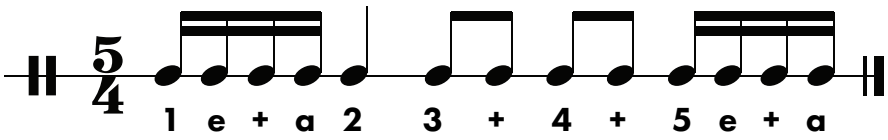
41

6
8

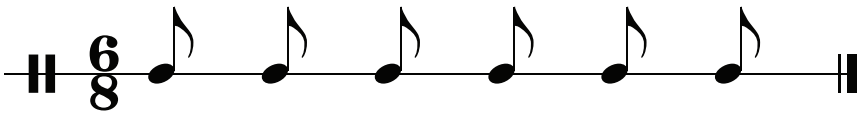
TIME SIGNATURES

Up until this point, we've only been working with measures of music that are written in a time signature of 4/4, but as we discussed in the previous chapter of the Bassics, music won't always be this neat and tidy. If you understand how to count rhythms in 4/4, however, there isn't a significant adjustment to be made when we switch the time signature up.

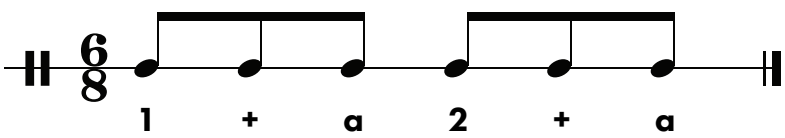
Let's look at a measure of 5/4, for example. The thing I want you to pay attention to is the way the time signature has changed our counting system, or rather, how little it's changed. All that's changed is that we're adding a count, or a metaphorical light-post, and we're counting to 5 instead of to 4. The rhythms on count 5 itself are not counted any differently, we're simply tagging them on to the 4 we've been counting till this point as part of one measure.



What about a more obscure time signature, like 6/8 for example? In this instance we've not only changed the number of beats from 4 to 6, but we've also changed the note value assigned to operate as the beat; an eighth note instead of a quarter note. Let's look at what this means by filling up a bar with 6 8th notes.



Usually, a bar of 6/8 involves grouping 6 eighth notes into 2 sets of 3 notes, with the first and fourth notes serving as the strong beats. This measure would therefore be counted like this.

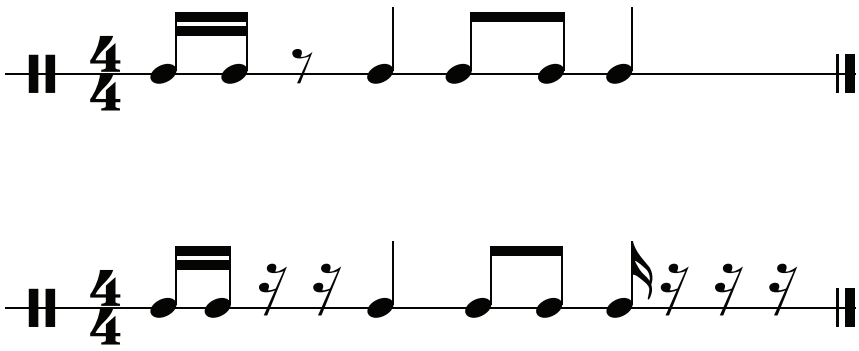


Of course, you can't be faulted for not knowing this, because without **beaming**, it's virtually impossible to tell what the composers' intentions are in terms of note groupings in odd timing signatures, especially if you're seeing them for the first time. You've already seen beaming in action, but just to formally define it, it's the horizontal lines connecting 8th note and finer subdivisions together.

Beyond grouping notes together, beaming also gives us an opportunity to simplify some of the writing we've looked at today.

EQUIVALENCE OF RHYTHMS

Take a look at the next two example measures on this page. Count the music out and see if you can recognize something interesting about these bars.



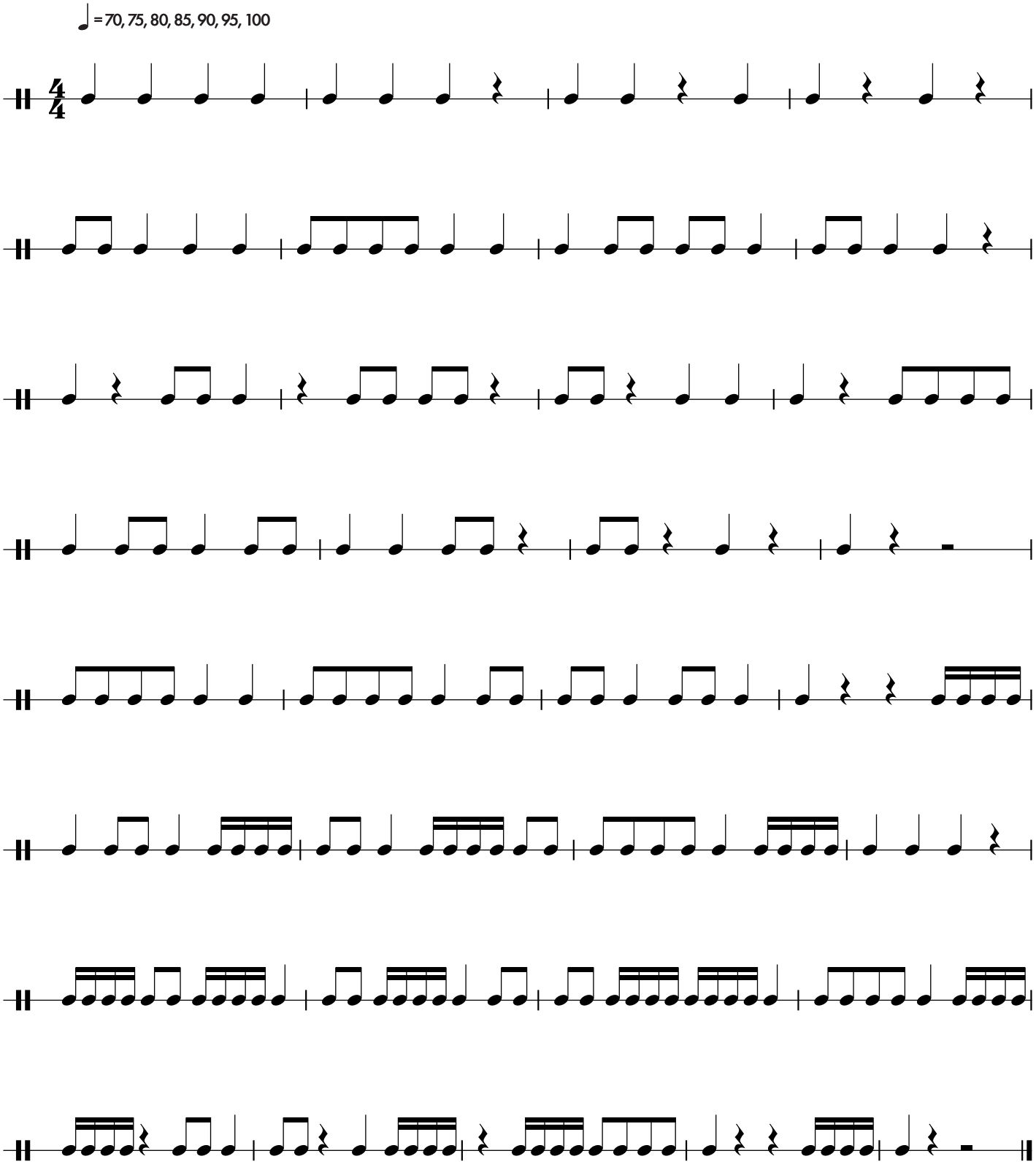
You should've found that although the markings we used for each measure are different, the overall counts of music are the same. If a percussionist were to play through both on a snare drum, the performances would be identical. And herein lies what I call the equivalence of rhythms. The math behind the music allows us to switch between the way we write note and rest values if they're equivalent in terms of the space they hold up. 2 sixteenth note rests can be rewritten into an 8th note rest, 1 sixteenth note followed by three sixteenth note rests can be rewritten as a quarter note, and vice versa. The ability that music has of being compounded and divided up in this way is what makes the combination of rhythms virtually infinite.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

At this point, we've touched a lot of different topics, including timing, how to count a few different note and rest values, as well as how time signatures fit into our counting system. It's now time to bring them together. On the next three pages, you'll find some etudes that insert different note subdivisions into the same measure as well as some time signatures that aren't 4/4. This is the part of the process we're you've learned how each "puzzle piece" works individually, and the time has come to string them together in different combinations to create music. All of the rehearsal techniques we've discussed so far should still apply as you attempt to create these bigger pictures.

E-1 **PRACTICE ETUDES**

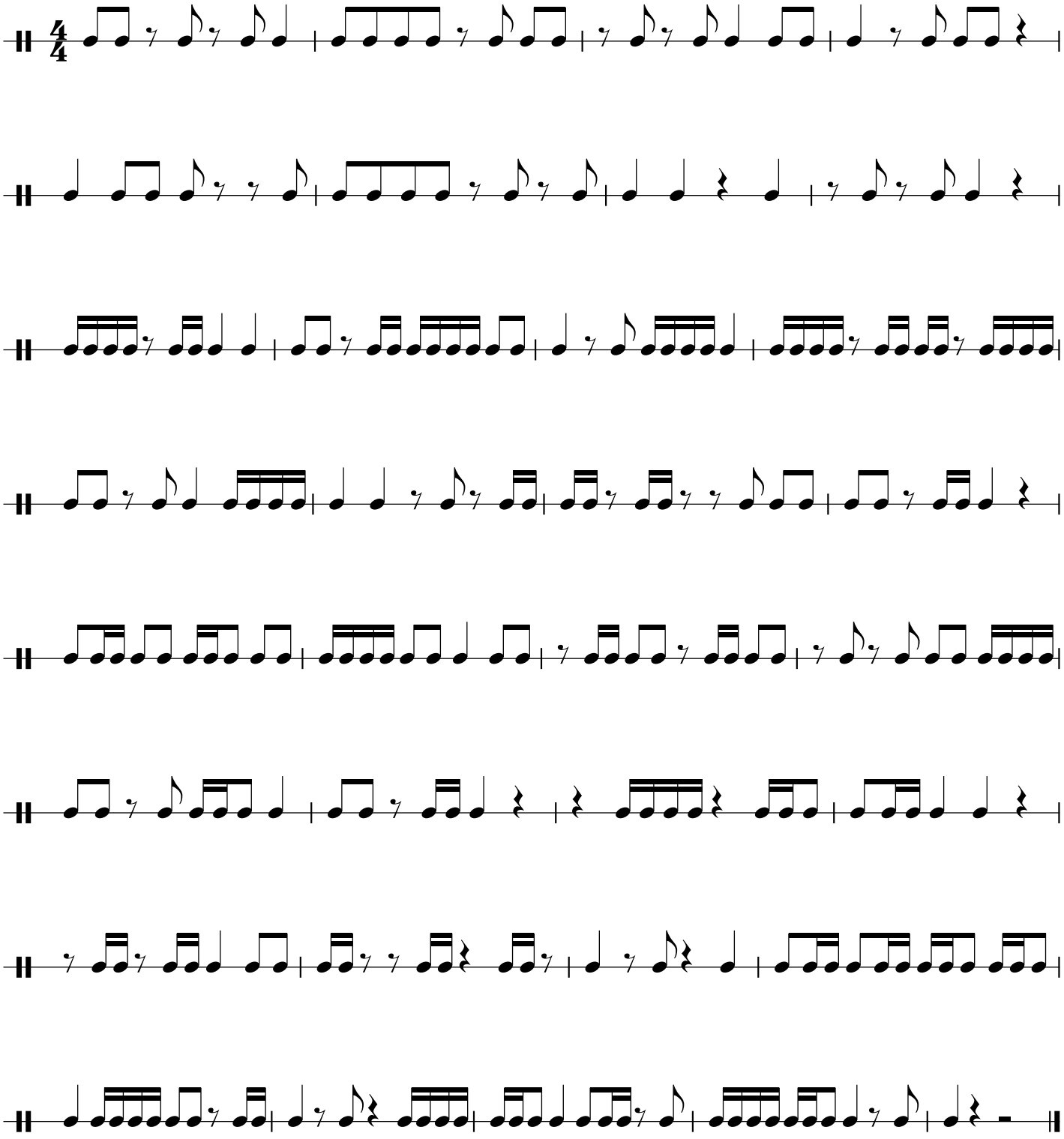
Etude 1



E-2 **PRACTICE ETUDES**

Etude 2

♩ = 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100



E-3 **PRACTICE ETUDES**

Etude 3

♩ = 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100