

Note and Rest Values

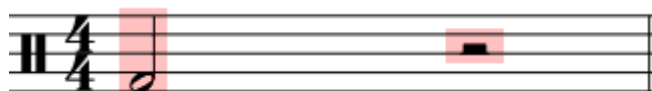
Although the ability to play drums from sheet music is not one of the goals of this course, it is beneficial to at least understand common drum notation. Rests are part of this notation. You may come across situations where you would like to know what real drummers are playing in one of your favorite pieces of music. Be prepared for it.

In this overview, you can see which note symbol belongs to which rest symbol, i.e.: the symbols that have equal value (= duration in subdivisions of the beat). Use this example as a reference point when you stumble upon certain note or rest values.

Whole note and whole rest:



Half note and half rest:



Quarter note and quarter rest:



8th note and 8th rest:



16th note and 16th rest:



32nd note and 32nd rest:



In case you have difficulty memorizing these symbols, it is a good idea to use some memory tricks. The best memory trick is the one that you come up with yourself. Alternatively, here is a visualization that I use:

The whole note has an empty note head. The whole rest is a brick that hangs from the ceiling.

The half note is like the whole note except that it has a neck. The half rest is a brick that is lying on the ground.

The quarter note is like the half note except its head is not empty. The quarter rest is a flash of lightning. This is a unique symbol without a visual link to the other rest symbols.

From there it is quite easy. The 8th note looks like the quarter note except that a flag has been added to the neck. Whenever the note value is halved once more in order to obtain a 16th-, 32nd-, or 64th-note, one more flag is added to the neck. Something very similar happens to the corresponding rest symbols. To me, the 8th note rest looks a bit like a branch with an apple on it. Whenever its value is halved once more in order to obtain a 16th-, 32nd-, or 64th-rest, an apple is added to the branch.

As you recall, we covered the most important drum notation symbols in the "basics" section. In this chapter, it is important to add that the shape of the note heads and their positions on the staff change depending on the respective kit piece.

However, rests *always* look the same and do not change regardless of the respective kit piece, or even instrumentation.