



Music is almost always based on a "COUNT" which is a reference that all musicians use to stay together and help the music sound organized. When musicians play together, they are always following a count.

The count is based on something called a "TIME SIGNATURE" (which we'll learn about soon) and is the framework for the entire rhythmic structure of that piece of music. A 4-count is the most common framework for the majority of songs you will encounter.

Quarter Notes

We will be learning about several important musical notes and their respective values as we move forward. These notes apply to all instruments, not only the drums. This allows musicians to have a unified language that everyone understands.

The first note is called a "QUARTER NOTE" and it will become the foundation that will get us started.

4/4 Time = "1, 2, 3, 4"

As we are getting started, for the most part we'll stick to the most popular and common time signature, 4/4 time. The 4/4 tells us is that there are 4 beats in each measure (we'll learn more about that soon), and also that each beat will be a quarter note. Each beat is also going to be our count, so if there are 4 beats per measure, that will be our count: "1, 2, 3, 4."

Quarter Notes



*** In order to better understand and visualize how this all fits together, I'll be using boxes to represent the different notes and how they can be divided into smaller notes ***



Counting Out Loud

One of the first things we must learn is how to properly count along using quarter notes. In the exercises on the following pages, you want to count out loud as you play quarter notes.

Count It Out Loud - Quarter Notes

It is very important that we get comfortable knowing how to count OUT LOUD as a reference for ourselves. The easier you can do this, the more possibilities and ideas will open up to you as you play. Quarter notes are counted:

“one two three four”

Develop Good Timing

Developing accurate and consistent timing is one of the keystones of being a solid drummer. This is the first big hurdle that new drummers struggle to overcome. It can be done, it just takes consistent practice and focus.

The main objective here is to move your hand and strike the note at exactly the same time as the count. If you are playing with a metronome, then you want your note to be exactly at the same time as a “click” of the metronome. This takes a while to develop, so be patient with yourself and don’t get discouraged .

Rests

In the coming exercises, you will notice that some spaces appear to be blank, with nothing written to play. These spaces are called “RESTS” and you don’t play anything there. Rests are common in music.

It is very important to note that while you don’t play anything during a rest, you still need to follow the count normally. **The count must remain constant whether notes are played or not.**