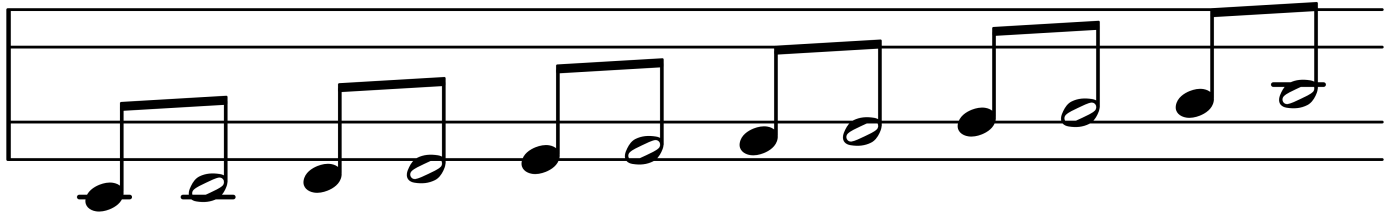


# Clairnote Music Notation



C   C#   D   D#   E   F   F#   G   G#   A   A#   B  
       Db        Eb                Gb                Ab                Bb

## An Alternative Music Notation System

Clairnote is a notation system that makes music easier to read and learn. It gives each of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale its own vertical position on the staff. Unlike on a traditional staff the vertical distance between notes is always proportional to their difference in pitch (their interval). Hollow and solid note heads are also used to indicate pitch (instead of duration, a better use of the most visibly prominent feature of a note).

## Key Signatures and Accidental Signs

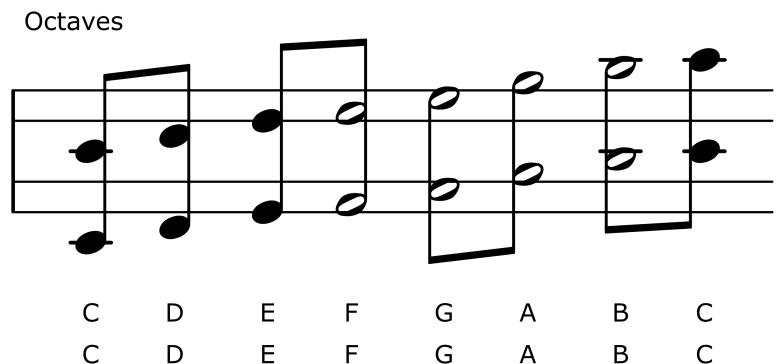
Key signatures and accidental signs are not required. Simply play the notes as you see them on the staff. There are no extra steps, no need to mentally process and modify notes (A) according to one of fifteen different key signatures that you have to memorize and constantly keep in mind as you play, or (B) based on temporary accidental signs: sharps, flats, double sharps, double flats, or natural signs.

(Clairnote has its own version of key signatures and accidental signs that convey all of the same information conveyed by traditional notation, like the different names of enharmonically equivalent notes. However, they are *supplementary* and do not complicate the process of reading music. See the website: [clairnote.org](http://clairnote.org))

## Octaves and Clefs

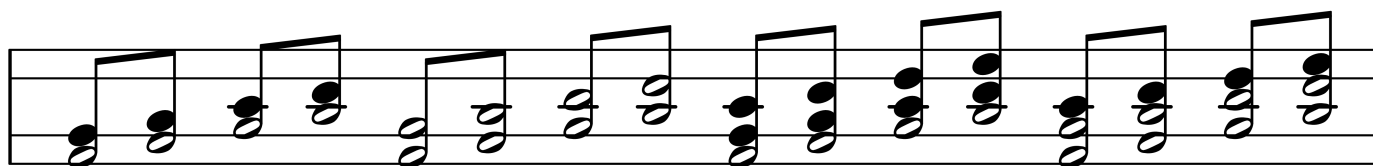
On the staff the pairs of two lines represent the same two notes (E and G-sharp/A-flat). Notes an octave apart always fall on “the same” line or space. Any given note is easy to identify since it looks the same in any octave.

Since every octave on the staff has the same appearance, there is no need to learn to read music in different clefs (i.e. bass and treble). Clef symbols in Clairnote simply indicate the octave register of the staff, and do not affect the position of notes on the staff.



## Intervals, Scales, and Chords

Clairnote represents intervals directly and consistently. Differences between intervals are clearly visible making it easy to see the relationships between notes and understand the basic patterns of music found in scales, chords, keys, etc. Clearly seeing each interval as you play it may also help with learning to improvise and play by ear, skills that typically involve playing by interval (i.e. relative pitch). In the following illustrations you can see the consistent interval patterns that make up major and minor triads and scales.



Minor Thirds

Major Thirds

Minor Triads

Major Triads



C Major Scale

D Major Scale

C Minor Scale

D Minor Scale

## Rhythm Symbols

Clairnote uses all the traditional rhythm notation symbols except that (A) hollow and solid note heads are used to help indicate pitch instead of duration (a better use of this highly visible aspect of a note), and (B) half notes have a double stem to distinguish them from quarter notes. These double stems are shown in the music below.

## Sheet Music and Software

You can download free examples of sheet music from the Clairnote website ([clairnote.org](http://clairnote.org)). These are created with LilyPond – free and open-source music notation software that anyone can use to automatically convert traditional music files into Clairnote. Here is an illustration of a few bars of piano music in Clairnote.

A piano score in 4/4 time, key of B-flat major. The first staff is the treble clef, and the second is the bass clef. The music starts with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The first bar has a quarter note B-flat in the treble and a quarter note B-flat in the bass. The second bar has a quarter note C in the treble and a quarter note C in the bass. The third bar has a quarter note D in the treble and a quarter note D in the bass. The fourth bar has a quarter note E in the treble and a quarter note E in the bass. The fifth bar has a quarter note F in the treble and a quarter note F in the bass. The sixth bar has a quarter note G in the treble and a quarter note G in the bass. The seventh bar has a quarter note A in the treble and a quarter note A in the bass. The eighth bar has a quarter note B-flat in the treble and a quarter note B-flat in the bass. The music ends with a piano (p) dynamic.

## Website: [clairnote.org](http://clairnote.org)

Check out the Clairnote website for further details, illustrations, sheet music, and more.