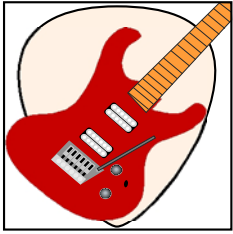


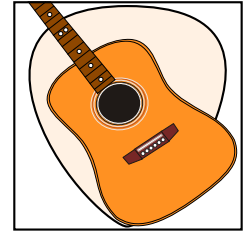


time signatures



How to play fingerstyle

lesson sixteen A



time signatures

A time signature tells you how the rhythm should be counted. The time signature looks like a fraction at the start of a tune with 2 numbers on top of each other. Time signatures have been mentioned several times during this course and every tune and exercise you learn has got a time signature.

This is a four four time signature



Common time which is also 4/4 time

How to read a time signature

The **TOP** number represents the number of beats in the bar.

The **BOTTOM** number represents the value of beats in the bar.

For example, we've used 4/4 time in many of the tunes you've learned, and 4/4 time is in the example above. The top 4 means that there are 4 beats in the bar, the bottom 4 tells us that the beat value is a quarter of a measure or a crotchet. So 4/4 time means that there are 4 crotchets per bar. Here's a list of the bottom numbers and what they mean.

List of note values			
	1	=	1 semibreve
	1/2	=	2 minim
	1/4	=	4 crotchet
	1/8	=	8 quaver
	1/16	=	16 semiquaver
	1/32	=	32 demisemiquaver

example time signatures

$\frac{4}{4}$	Four crotchets in a bar	$\frac{6}{8}$	Six quavers in a bar
$\frac{3}{4}$	Three crotchets in a bar	$\frac{2}{2}$	Two minims in a bar
$\frac{2}{4}$	Two crotchets in a bar	$\frac{6}{16}$	Six semiquavers in a bar

knowing how fast a tune should be

Commonly with modern, commercial scores the speed of the tune is shown at the top of the page in Beats Per Minute, which is shown as BPM. This method of showing the speed of the beats is also used on metronomes, drum machines, recording software and basically anywhere you might need to show the speed of beats.

The speed shown in Beats Per Minute or BPM looks like this.



The type of beat shown (crotchet, quaver etc.) will depend on the bottom number in the time signature.

Classical music gives names to various bands of speeds.

Larghissimo	very, very slow (24 bpm and under)
Adagissimo	very slowly
Grave	very slow (25–45 bpm)
Largo	broadly (40–60 bpm)
Lento	slowly (45–60 bpm)
Larghetto	rather broadly (60–66 bpm)
Adagio	slowly with great expression (66–76 bpm)
Adagietto	slower than andante or slightly faster than adagio (70–80 bpm)
Andante	at a walking pace (76–108 bpm)
Andantino	slightly faster than andante (but with overlap) (80–108 bpm)
Marcia moderato	moderately, in the manner of a march [9][10] (83–85 bpm)
Andante moderato	between andante and moderato (thus the name) (92–112 bpm)
Moderato	at a moderate speed (108–120 bpm)
Allegretto	by the mid 19th century, moderately fast (112–120 bpm);
Allegro moderato	close to, but not quite allegro (116–120 bpm)
Allegro	fast, quickly, and bright (120–156 bpm)
Molto allegro	slightly faster than allegro, but always in its range (120–160 bpm)
Vivace	lively and fast (156–176 bpm)
Vivacissimo	very fast and lively (172–176 bpm)
Allegrissimo	very fast (172–176 bpm)
Allegro vivace	the same as Allegrissimo (172–176 bpm)
Presto	very, very fast (168–200 bpm)
Prestissimo	even faster than presto (200 bpm and over)

If you're trying to find a fingerpicking pattern to fit with a particular tune, it's important to know the time signature as the fingerpicking pattern must fit in with the time signature or the tune will sound wrong. If you're playing a continuous beat then the fingerpicking pattern is usually a multiple of the number of beats in the bar.

For example. $4/4 = 4, 8$ or 12 notes. $3/4 = 3, 6$ or 9 notes

But if you play a broken rhythm then the rule of multiples doesn't apply.

Here are some examples of typical fingerpicking patterns but many, many more patterns exist for each time signature.

example/exercise 1 - 3/4 time

P I M
 C C Am Am
 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 .

Em Em Am Am
 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 .

example/exercise 1a - 3/4 time

P I M A
 C C Am Am
 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 .

Em Em Am Am
 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 1 . 2 . 3 .

example/exercise 2 - 4/4 time

P I M A M I M A

C Am Em

1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .

Am

1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .

example/exercise 2a - 4/4 time

P I M A M I

C Am Em

1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .

Am

1 . 2 . 3 . 4 .

example/exercise 3, 6/8 time

P I M A M I

C Am Em

1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6

Am

1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6

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