



Now it's time to talk about the “time signature”, the two numbers immediately following the key signature at the beginning of the song. These numbers relate to the vertical “bar lines” that separate the music into “measures” (or “bars”).

So far, the only time signature that we've seen has been 4/4. The bottom number, almost always a 2, 4, or 8, tells us what kind of note corresponds to the “beat”. You can imagine the beat being like a metronome or a clock ticking. With the 4 on the bottom, each tick represents a quarter note. The number on top (in this case a 4 also) tells us how many of these beats are in a measure. So a time signature of 4/4 tells us that there are 4 quarter-note beats in each measure.

It's good to look at the time signature before you try to sing a new piece of music. You can start to get a feel for the “meter” of the piece by counting: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 before you sing. Different meters (time signatures) have totally different feels to them, so it's good to know what rhythmic feel you're looking for. Keep that pattern in mind as you sing these exercises.

