

Introduction to Braille Music Transcription

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Second Edition

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Volume I

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Foreword to the 1974 Edition

The Need for Music Transcribers

Three groups in particular need the services of music transcribers: (1) blind children who attend public schools; (2) blind children who attend residential schools; and (3) blind adult musicians, both professional and nonprofessional.

With thousands of blind children attending regular public schools (some 58 percent) along with the sighted under the integrated program that has been adopted by many states, the need for music transcribers is growing rapidly. For such subjects as English, foreign languages, science, mathematics, etc., there is usually at least one set text. This text may be supplied in press braille through the state, or it may be transcribed or recorded ahead of time by a volunteer. In the music field, however, there is no set text. The individual band, orchestral, or choral part that the blind child may need changes constantly, according to the selections made from time to time by each particular musical director. Without the services of a trained volunteer music transcriber who can turn out this material rapidly, such a child does not have the chance of being able to take his rightful place in the music program that is offered by the school, no matter how talented he may be. Furthermore, he will very likely be unable to study privately with a sighted teacher, if he should so desire, unless the teacher can freely choose the music to be studied. Such freedom can be assured only if a transcriber can be found who is able and willing to provide the scores.

The music transcriber can also serve pupils who attend the residential schools. Although press-braille music is available to them, the choice of material is limited to specific selections that are listed in the music catalogs. In some fields such as keyboard music, the choice is wide; for some instruments the choice is very limited.

The braille music transcriber can also serve blind professional musicians--those who are teaching blind or sighted children or performing professionally in any field of music--by enabling them to broaden their choice of selections and by giving them access to new materials which otherwise might not be available.

In addition to serving the above-mentioned groups directly, the transcriber also can serve them indirectly (and single individuals as well) through the Library of Congress, which tries to provide materials requested by the blind from any place in the United States. This book is designed to train such transcribers, as well as those who wish to work for individuals, so that the national program of providing music for the blind can meet the increasing need.

Preface to the 2005 Edition

In the decades since Mary Turner De Garmo wrote the first edition of this book, the situation concerning the need for music transcribers has both improved and worsened. The demand for music braille has significantly increased. The means for producing it have become faster and easier. Braille transcribing is now recognized as a profession as well as a volunteer service. The number of available qualified transcribers, however, has declined.

Many states have vastly increased the services that they provide to blind children, and in many cases their legislatures have required that whatever materials are available for sighted children must also be available to blind children in appropriate media. Funds are often available for professional production of music materials in braille, in tape recordings, and in large type for children with limited vision.

Use of computers and electronic transfer of computer files has greatly speeded and eased the task of transcribing. Some computer programs have been developed that automatically translate music notation into braille. The advice of trained music braillists is needed by non-braillists who are starting to use the translation programs, to ensure that the result is good music braille. The developers of the programs work closely with certified transcribers to make their programs adaptable for an increasing variety and complexity of music.

The music braille code has been internationally agreed upon. The *New International Manual of Braille Music Notation* contains the assignment of signs and symbols that resulted from the agreement. Many questions of format are deliberately not covered in that manual because among the various countries there are differences of customary usage that do not impinge upon the basic readability of the music braille. *Music Braille Code, 1997*, adopted by the Braille Authority of North America, addresses some of those questions for the countries that BANA represents. This edition adheres to the rules of that code, and it recommends practices that are consistent with those rules in circumstances where no rules are supplied.

At the time of this writing there are fewer than forty certified music transcribers known to be working in the United States. It is fervently hoped that the availability of this new edition of the manual will help attract qualified musicians into learning the transcriber's art, will facilitate the progress of students presently learning, and will serve as a useful reference for active transcribers and all others who are producing music braille by any means.

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We also want to thank John Hanson, Head, Music Section, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress, for producing the Index to this revision and preparing the manuscript for publication.

Special appreciation is extended to the following publishers for permission to use excerpts which serve as examples or exercises in the text:

Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., for Searle Wright's *Carol-Prelude* on "Greensleeves," in Example 28-3.

Hal Leonard Corporation, for use of *Intermediate Method for Clarinet* in Exercise 21-1 and *Encore Folio for Clarinet* in Example 26-5 and 26-6.

Pearson Education, Inc., for two titles from the Music for Living Series; from *Music in Our Country*, in Examples 22-1 and 22-2; from *Music Around the World*, in Exercises 1, 2, and 3 for Chapter 22.

How to Use This Book

As its title indicates, this book is intended to serve as a text for learning to transcribe music notation into braille. If the learner is seeking to become certified by the Library of Congress as a Music Braille Transcriber, it will function as the text for the course. It has been designed so that it can also serve as a self-study manual, although the editors strongly urge that anyone studying music braille transcribing find a qualified tutor or mentor. Music notation is an art more than a science, and it is often desirable to discuss questions of judgment with someone more experienced.

Related Resources

The book is not intended to be used by itself. Since there is a great deal of literary material associated with a typical music score, it is expected that the user is well versed in the literary braille code. If he* is seeking a certificate, he must have achieved literary certification before he enrolls in the music course. The book should be used in conjunction with three other resources: (1) the literary code, *English Braille, American Edition, 1994*, (2) the rule book for the formatting of braille where the music code is not in effect, *Braille Formats: Principles of Print to Braille Transcription, 1997*, and most importantly, of course, (3) the rules for music braille itself, *Music Braille Code, 1997 (MBC-97)*.

Overall Plan

The text is presented in three parts. Part One introduces the basic signs and procedures of music braille and prepares the student to transcribe music that is printed in single lines, or to extract single-line parts from instrumental or vocal scores for the use of individual braille readers. Part Two introduces the braille format for transcribing music that is vertically arranged in a system that consists of two or three connected staves. The student is thus prepared to transcribe music for piano, organ, and other keyboards, including accompaniments of vocal and instrumental solos and ensembles. Part Three introduces some specialized formats and procedures that a music transcriber is fairly certain to find he must employ. The student is then ready to prepare a transcription that will demonstrate that he is qualified for certification.

Each chapter consists of three elements. (1) The topics of the chapter are discussed and illustrated by examples. (2) A set of drills is provided so that the student can put into practice what he has just learned. Correct transcriptions of the drills are located at the back of the volume. (3) A set of exercises is the “test” to be submitted to the instructor.

The drills for each chapter have been designed to be very similar to the exercises. The instructor cannot, of course, answer direct questions about the exercises, but he can freely discuss questions that arise in the preparation of the drills. It is hoped that this methodology will enable the student to complete each lesson having submitted only one or two trials.

The material has been organized so that a learner who has completed Part One may confidently provide help to others who are working in that phase of the course, and so on.

References to MBC-97

Throughout the book, references are included that direct the student’s attention to relevant sections of MBC-97. Those references appear in small type, enclosed between brackets, as, for

instance: [T17, 17.6]. In the references, “T” represents the word “Table,” and the number of the table follows without space. “GT” stands for “General Table.” A number alone indicates a section. Commas within the references are there to separate individual citations. The reference shown above, then, is read, “Table 17 and Section 17.6.”

Using Computer Assistance

Many braille transcribers use computer programs to facilitate production. It is acceptable to use a computer in preparing the work required by this text. However, one should not rely on the translating capabilities of some programs without very carefully checking the braille output. None of the relaxations of rules that are permitted in producing literary braille by computer are allowed in music transcriptions. For instance, in computer-produced literary transcriptions, one need not divide words at the ends of braille lines; this freedom is not provided for in the music code.

There are computer programs that produce music braille from a scanned image of printed music. It is not forbidden to use these programs in preparing drills and exercises. However, the student is held entirely responsible for the quality of the resulting braille. In fact, the student of music braille is encouraged to become familiar with these programs, because he can then be of help to others who are using the programs but who do not have the knowledge required for checking their results.

Taking the Course

To begin the course toward a certificate in music braille transcription, the student should contact the Braille Development Section, NLS (1-800-424-8567) and speak with a Music Braille Advisor. He will be asked to complete an application that will request, along with his qualification in literary braille, a summary of his music education and experience. The advisor might recommend that he undertake a review of some music theory topics as he embarks upon the transcription course. If the student has not already arranged for a particular instructor, the advisor will suggest some who may be contacted.

Accuracy is even more important in music braille than it is in literary braille. If a word is misspelled, the reader may often deduce the correct word from its context. If a note’s pitch, duration, or octave placement is given wrongly, the reader has no way of guessing that fact. For this reason, evaluation of the student’s work is very stringent. An assignment will be considered unacceptable if it contains a combined total of three or more pitch, note name, and/or value errors. The student may have to resubmit all or part of an assignment. He will be provided three opportunities to submit an acceptable transcription of each assignment. If an acceptable standard is not achieved in three attempts, the student will be asked to withdraw from the course. A student who has withdrawn from the course is given one opportunity to reenroll. The student who qualifies to reenroll must wait at least three months before requesting reenrollment in the course.

If the instructor is not a member of the staff of NLS, at some prearranged point the student will switch to the tutelage of a staff member for the remainder of the course. When the student has completed the work of this text, the NLS teacher will assign him a piece of music to be prepared as his certification manuscript.

Editors’ note: Masculine pronouns have been used to avoid the cumbersome “he/she.”

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PART ONE

Basic Procedures and Transcribing Single-Staff Music

Chapter 1

Formation of the Braille Note

To transcribe a note into music braille, one must show two characteristics of that note in a single braille cell:

1. Its correct name (whether it is a C, D, E, etc.)
2. Its correct time value (whether it is a whole, half, quarter, etc.).

How can one show two completely different aspects of a note in only one cell? This objective is accomplished by dividing the cell into an upper and a lower part and by using each part for a particular purpose. The arrangement of dots brailled in the upper two-thirds of the cell (dots 1245) tells the name of the note. The arrangement of dots in the lower one-third of the cell (dots 36), **or their omission**, tells the time value of that note.

• •
Name is shown here.
• •
—
• • Time value is shown here.






Thus, one always considers the upper dots of the note first, then the lower dots. In looking at the printed note to be transcribed, the brailist thinks first: “What is the name?” and second: “What is the time value?” He follows the same order in speaking of the note, thus: “C a quarter, F a sixteenth, G an eighth,” and so forth, always giving the name first, then the time value. He mentally follows the same order in getting ready to transcribe a note, first choosing for the upper part of the cell the correct braille character which shows its name, next deciding how to use the remaining two lower dots in the cell to show the time value of the note, and finally brailing both parts simultaneously.

The student thus realizes that the **upper dots**, which represent each of the seven notes of the music scale, never change; they remain constant, so that they constitute what shall be called hereafter the “basic shape” of the note. For example, any C – whether a whole, a quarter, or a 128th note – will have exactly the same upper dots or “basic shape”; only the lower dots will be different, to show the appropriate time value in each case. In other words, the upper dots of each note in the musical scale are fixed; the lower dots are changeable.

Four things may be done with the **lower dots** to show time value:

1. Both may be omitted.
2. Dot 6 alone may be used.
3. Dot 3 alone may be used.
4. Both dots may be used.

Each procedure shows a different time value according to the following table:

<i>Upper Dots</i>		<i>Lower Dots</i>	=		<i>Time Value</i>
Basic shape	+	None	=		Eighth note
Basic shape	+	6	=		Quarter note
Basic shape	+	3	=		Half note
Basic shape	+	3 and 6	=		Whole note

Naturally, the simplest form of the note will be the one using no lower dots. In music braille, this happens to be the eighth note. Therefore, the student of the music code commences his actual transcription with the seven tones of the musical scale written as eighth notes. (How to express smaller values – the 16th, 32nd, 64th, and 128th – is explained in Chapter 15.)

Throughout this work, as in Music Braille Code, 1997:

Whole note = semibreve

Half note = minim

Quarter note = crotchet

Eighth note = quaver

Sixteenth note = semiquaver

Thirty-second note = demisemiquaver

Sixty-fourth note = hemidemisemiquaver

Chapter 2

Eighth Notes, the Eighth Rest, and Other Basic Signs

The Eighth Note [T1, 1.1]

The eighth note is formed as follows: **Basic shape + 0 =** 

The seven tones of the musical scale written as eighth notes, beginning with C, are:



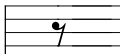
The **name of the note** is shown in the upper dots only. The **time value, eighth**, is shown by the absence of both lower dots.

Looking at the notes of the scale on the staff above, transcribe the correct braille symbols going up the scale, then down, then at random. It may be helpful to sing the names while brailleing: “C an eighth,” “D an eighth,” etc. One should always think of them as musical notes or tones, not as alphabetical letters.

The first five symbols may momentarily cause slight confusion (i.e., the dots for musical C are the same as for literary D, etc.), but any such confusion usually vanishes very quickly. When Louis Braille invented his music code, being French, he did not know that notes were given letter names in some other countries. His names for the notes were “ut, re, mi, fa, so, la, si.” Therefore, it did not trouble him to use the same sign as the letter D for the note ut, and so forth. People in countries where letter names are used for the notes have little difficulty in learning to avoid confusion between the music and literary contexts.

The student should take enough time to learn these seven basic shapes thoroughly, practicing until he can braille them effortlessly and faultlessly, because they undoubtedly are among the most important signs in braille music notation.

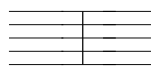
The Eighth Rest [T4]

The eighth rest is designated by dots 1346:  

Other Basic Signs

1. The Measure Bar [GT Note 1],

used to separate measures in print music:

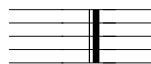


a blank space

This bar is shown in music braille by leaving an empty cell between measures.

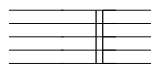
2. The Ending Double Bar [GT, GT Note 2],

shown at the end of a piece or movement:



3. The Sectional Double Bar [GT, GT Note 2],

shown at the end of a section of music:



A double bar is brailled without an intervening space, after the last sign connected with the music preceding it.

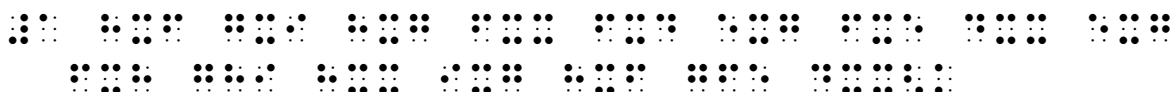
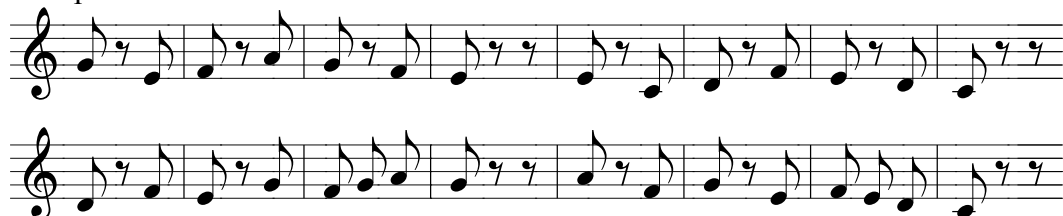
General Procedures [26.25]

Music consisting of a single melodic line is presented in **single-line format**. The standard forty-cell line and twenty-five-line page are used. The number of the first measure, preceded by the number sign, is placed at the margin. In short melodies such as those in the first few chapters of this book, if the first measure is a complete measure, this number will be one; if the melody starts with an incomplete measure, the number zero is given. The music itself follows after a single blank cell. Runover lines begin in cell 3. (Longer melodies, as will be seen in a later chapter, are broken into segments, and the number at the margin then will be the number of the first measure of the segment.)

Examples for Practice

One should work solely from the print while practicing the examples, covering the braille answers until transcription is finished, then checking for mistakes. Each example should be repeated until it can be done without error. One should not waste time trying to rewrite the melodies on staff paper, from the braille. What is wanted here is the ability to glance at the braille note and to recognize it easily, for purposes of proofreading, not to reproduce it again in print.

Example 2-1



Example 2-2

This block contains musical notation for Example 2-2. It features a single staff in bass clef. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with slurs, and a final quarter rest. Below the staff is a two-line Braille transcription corresponding to the notes in the staff.

Example 2-3

This block contains musical notation for Example 2-3. It features two staves in treble clef. The first staff contains a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs. The second staff continues the melody with similar note values and slurs, ending with a quarter rest. Below the staves is a two-line Braille transcription.

Example 2-4

This block contains musical notation for Example 2-4. It features two staves in bass clef. The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, some with slurs, and quarter rests. The second staff continues the piece with similar rhythmic patterns. Below the staves is a two-line Braille transcription.

Example 2-5

This block contains musical notation for Example 2-5. It features a single staff in treble clef. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs, ending with a quarter rest. Below the staff is a two-line Braille transcription.

Example 2-6

Example 2-6 shows two staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff contains four measures of music, and the second staff contains four measures. Below the staves is a Braille transcription consisting of two lines of Braille cells corresponding to the notes on the staves.

Example 2-7

Example 2-7 shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff contains four measures of music, and the second staff contains four measures. Below the staves is a Braille transcription consisting of two lines of Braille cells corresponding to the notes on the staves.

In an actual transcription, the initial note in each braille line of these examples would have been preceded by a sign that would identify its specific location on the staff. Such signs are called octave marks, and they will be explained in detail and fully illustrated in Chapter 7. Because of the order in which material is presented, the octave mark is omitted before the initial note of each braille line in each of the examples, drills, and exercises shown in Chapters 2 through 6.

No key or time signatures will be given until later. Notes are transcribed precisely the same whether shown in treble or bass clef in the print. (Clef signs are rarely included in the braille transcription for the general reader, since they can be of no practical use to him. However, it is recommended that the clef used in the print copy be marked in a braille copy intended for the blind teacher of sighted students. These signs will be presented in Chapter 10.)

Although signatures are not shown in the examples, drills, and exercises through Chapter 7, the musical qualities will express themselves naturally in 6/8 or 3/4 time, 2/4 or 4/8 time, etc.

General Procedures, continued

A **running head** is used, centered between the print page and braille page numbers, on line 1 of each page. The running **braille page** number is placed in the **upper right** corner of the page. There must be at least three blank cells before and after the running head. [GT, 19.3, 19.3.1]

The **print page** number (the actual number of the page on which the print music appears) is in the **upper left** corner, preceded without space by the print pagination sign, dots (5, 25). ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

Drill 2

Drill 2 consists of two staves of music in treble clef. The first staff contains eight measures of music, and the second staff contains six measures. The music features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various rests, including quarter and eighth rests.

Drill 3

Drill 3 consists of two staves of music in treble clef. The first staff contains eight measures of music, and the second staff contains six measures. The music features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various rests, including quarter and eighth rests.

Drill 4

Drill 4 consists of two staves of music in treble clef. The first staff contains eight measures of music, and the second staff contains six measures. The music features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various rests, including quarter and eighth rests.

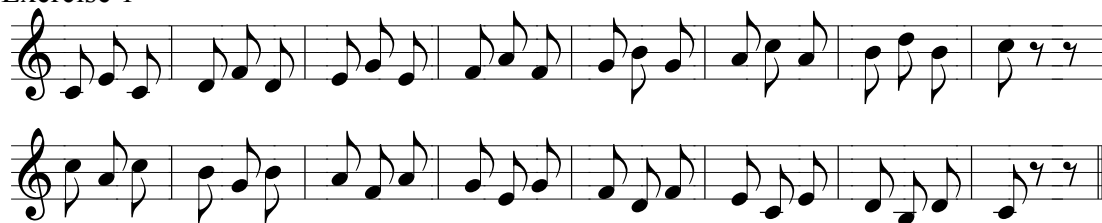
Drill 5

Drill 5 consists of two staves of music in bass clef. The first staff contains eight measures of music, and the second staff contains six measures. The music features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various rests, including quarter and eighth rests.

Exercises for Chapter 2

(Prepare these exercises for submission to your instructor, according to the instructions above, and using the transcriptions of the preceding drills as a model for formatting.)

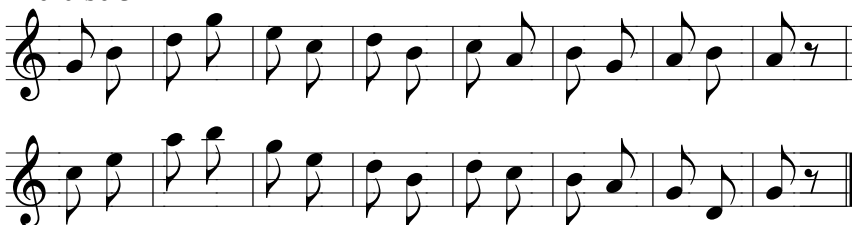
Exercise 1



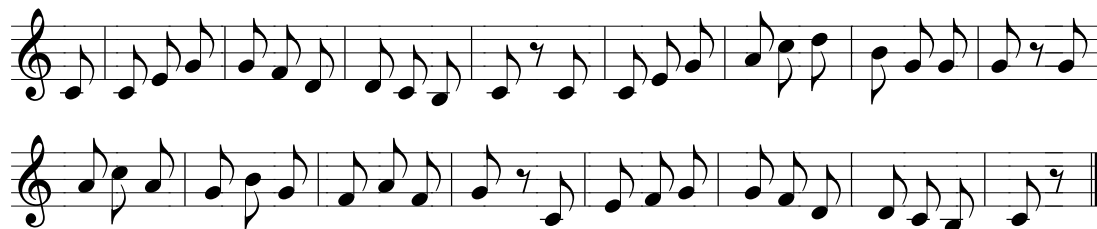
Exercise 2



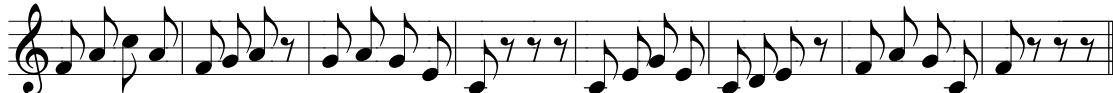
Exercise 3



Exercise 4



Exercise 5



Exercise 6



Exercise 7

Exercise 7 consists of two staves of music. The first staff contains eight measures of music, primarily using eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff contains eight measures, including some beamed sixteenth notes and rests, ending with a double bar line.

Exercise 8

Exercise 8 consists of two staves of music. The first staff contains four measures of music, mostly eighth notes. The second staff contains four measures, including some beamed sixteenth notes and rests, ending with a double bar line.

Exercise 9

Exercise 9 consists of two staves of music. The first staff contains six measures of music, featuring a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff contains six measures, including some beamed sixteenth notes and rests, ending with a double bar line.

Exercise 10

Exercise 10 consists of two staves of music. The first staff contains eight measures of music, featuring a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff contains eight measures, including some beamed sixteenth notes and rests, ending with a double bar line.

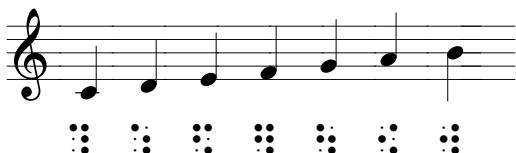
Chapter 3

Quarter Notes, the Quarter Rest, and the Dot

The Quarter Note [T1, 1.1]

The quarter note is formed as follows: **Basic shape + Dot 6** = 



Since the basic shapes have already been memorized, nothing new has to be learned in order to transcribe quarter notes; one simply follows the formula given above, adding dot 6 to the “name” part of the note. Notice the familiar upper dots (names) in these quarter notes:






The **name** is shown by upper dots only. The **time value, quarter**, is shown by the presence of dot 6.

To transcribe quarter notes, get the fingers ready for brailleing the upper dots (basic), then for brailleing dot 6, and finally press the keys simultaneously. It may be helpful to think: “upper,” “lower,” “together.” Practice as before, up and down the scale and then at random, until the notes can be transcribed easily. Recite the notes while brailleing: “C a quarter,” “D a quarter,” etc.

The Quarter Rest [T4]

The quarter rest is designated by dots 1236:  

The Dot [1.4, 4.4]


The dot (for dotted notes or rests) is shown in braille by dot 3:   

The dot sign follows the note or rest immediately, without exception. If a double dot is shown in the print, the dot sign is brailled twice in succession after the note or rest.

Examples for Practice


These six examples should be practiced as before; one should cover the braille dots (ink) and work only from the print notation. Each example should be repeated until it can be brailled easily and correctly. Then the following Drills for Chapter 3 should be completed perfectly before one prepares the exercises shown at the end of the chapter.

Example 3-1



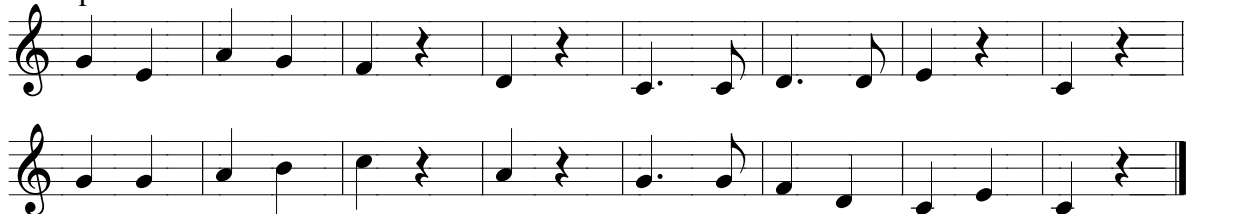
Musical notation for Example 3-1, featuring a single treble clef staff with a sequence of notes and rests. Below the staff is a corresponding Braille musical notation consisting of two rows of Braille characters.

Example 3-2



Musical notation for Example 3-2, featuring a single bass clef staff with a sequence of notes and rests. Below the staff is a corresponding Braille musical notation consisting of two rows of Braille characters.

Example 3-3



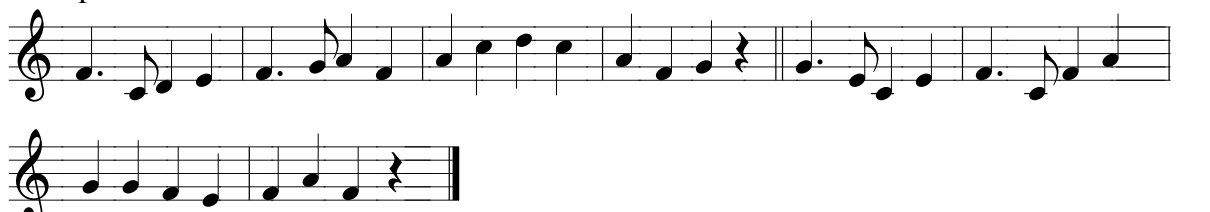
Musical notation for Example 3-3, featuring two treble clef staves. The first staff contains notes and rests, and the second staff continues the sequence. Below the staves is a corresponding Braille musical notation consisting of two rows of Braille characters.

Example 3-4



Musical notation for Example 3-4, featuring two bass clef staves. The first staff contains notes and rests, and the second staff continues the sequence. Below the staves is a corresponding Braille musical notation consisting of two rows of Braille characters.

Example 3-5



Musical notation for Example 3-5, featuring two treble clef staves. The first staff contains notes and rests, and the second staff continues the sequence. Below the staves is a corresponding Braille musical notation consisting of two rows of Braille characters.

Example 3-6

The image shows a musical example with two staves of music. The first staff contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff continues with: B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. Below the music is a Braille transcription of the same notes, with each note represented by a specific Braille cell and its duration by the number of dots in the lower half.

Proofreading

Strict accuracy is far more important in music braille than in literary braille. If a transcriber makes a mistake in a letter or a word, the reader still may be able to tell what that word or letter is supposed to be from the context. In music, however, the reader has no way of catching a mistake; he is completely dependent upon the transcriber. A mistake may affect not only a single note, but an entire passage, and since all music must be memorized before it can be performed, the musician may well have memorized an incorrect passage before he learns that it contains an error. Therefore, the student is urged to proofread each melody two ways, following the same familiar order of “upper-lower.”

1. Check only the upper dots of the notes, for the correct names, ignoring the lower dots.
2. Check only the lower dots, for time values, and **count the beat out loud**.

One can spot very quickly any mistake in this manner, if there are too many or too few beats in a measure. If the transcriber will follow this procedure, seeing the braille note not as an entity but rather as two parts joined together, he will be able to develop an amazing degree of accuracy. Some transcribers, as a check against “seeing the expected,” proofread the notes in reverse order, from the end of the melody to its beginning.

The transcriber’s name and address and the date have not been shown in the transcriptions of the drills from here onward. However, please braille and write your own at the end of each set of exercises. Special treatments of the information will be specified in chapters 23, 28, and 34.

Drills for Chapter 3

(Correct transcriptions of these drills are on page 260.)

Drill 1

The image shows a single staff of music for Drill 1. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The notes are grouped into measures with rests.

Drill 2

The image shows a single staff of music for Drill 2. The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The notes are grouped into measures with rests.

Drill 3



Drill 4

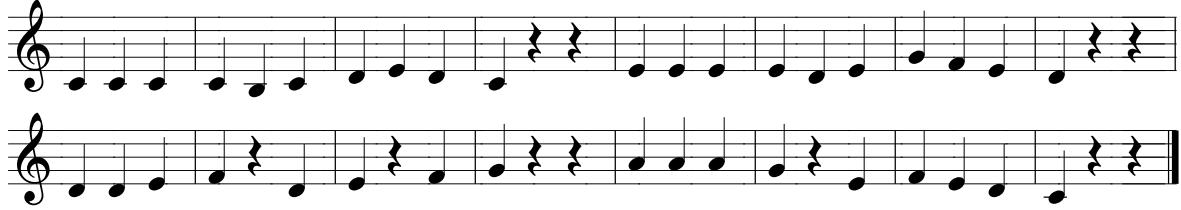


Drill 5



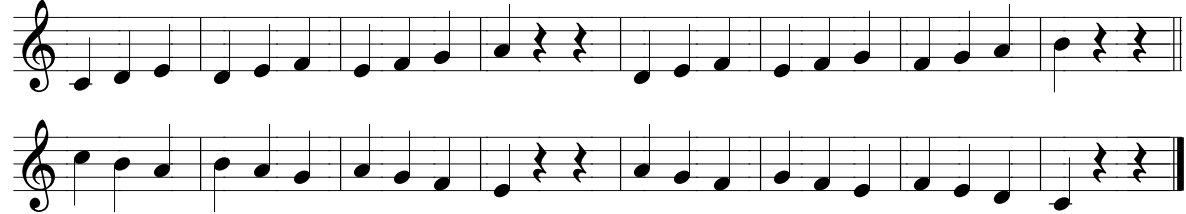
Exercises for Chapter 3

Exercise 1



Exercise 1 consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The second staff begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

Exercise 2



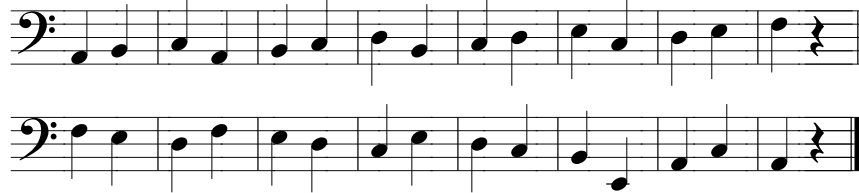
Exercise 2 consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The second staff begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

Exercise 3



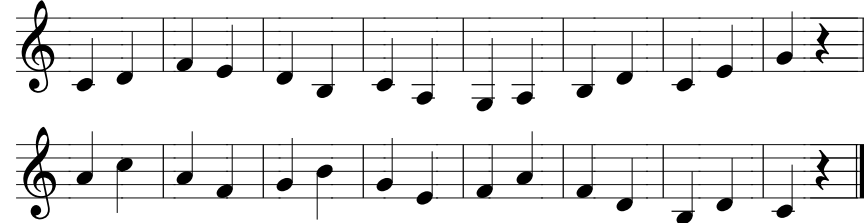
Exercise 3 consists of a single staff of music. It begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

Exercise 4



Exercise 4 consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a bass clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note B3, and another quarter rest. The second staff begins with a bass clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note B3, and another quarter rest. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

Exercise 5



Exercise 5 consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The second staff begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

Exercise 6

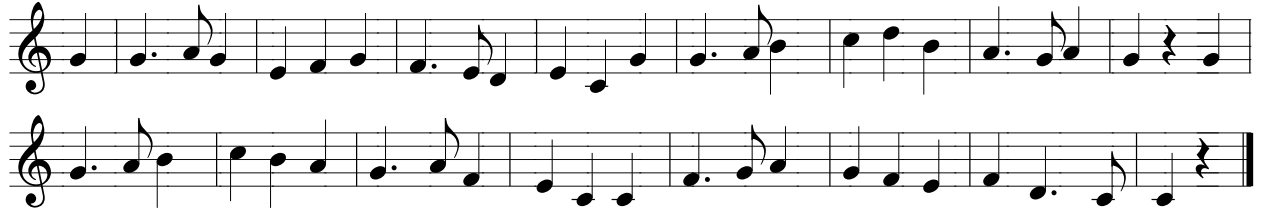


Exercise 6 consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The second staff begins with a treble clef and contains a sequence of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note G4, and another quarter rest. The exercise concludes with a double bar line.

Exercise 7



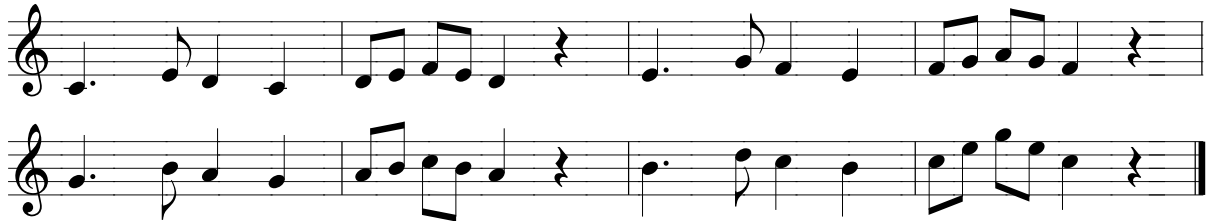
Exercise 8



Exercise 9



Exercise 10



Chapter 4

Half Notes, the Half Rest, and the Tie

The Half Note [T1, 1.1]

The half note is formed as follows: **Basic shape + Dot 3** = 


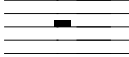
Note the familiar upper dots (names) in these half notes:



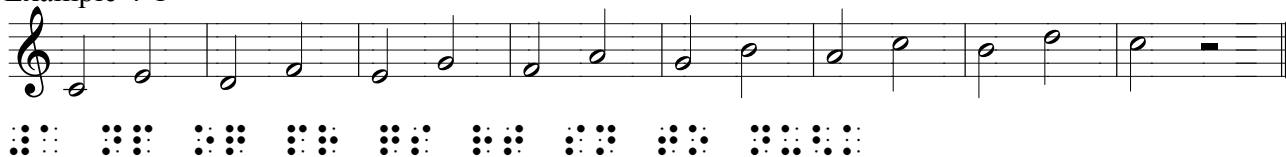
The **name** is shown by upper dots only. The **time value, half**, is shown by the presence of dot 3.

To transcribe the half note, get the fingers ready for brailleing the upper dots (basic), then for brailleing dot 3, and press the keys simultaneously. Think: “upper,” “lower,” “together.” Practice brailleing the notes as before until they can be done easily and correctly.

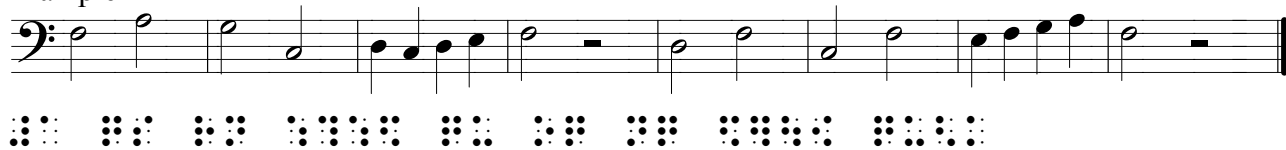
The Half Rest [T4, 4]

The half rest is designated by dots 136:  

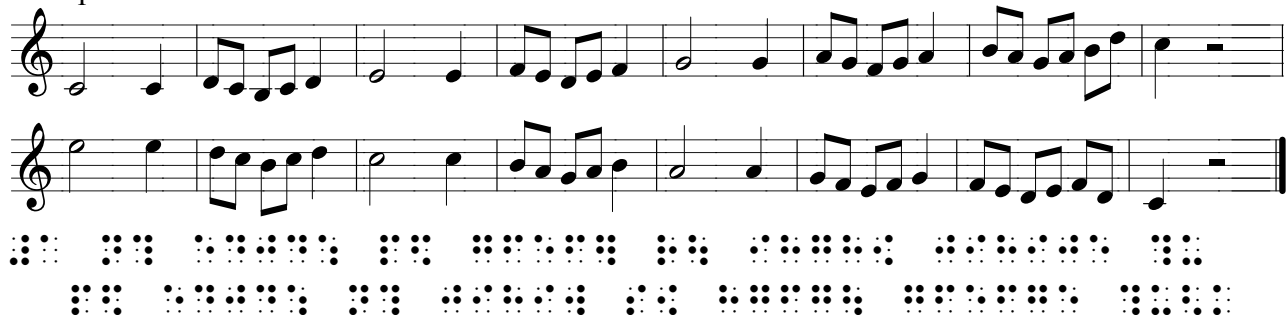
Example 4-1





Example 4-2



Example 4-3


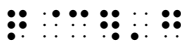


The Tie [T9, 9.1-9.3]



The tie is shown in braille by dots (4, 14):  

The tie sign follows the first note of the two involved. If the note is dotted, the tie comes after the dot. If the two notes are separated by a measure bar, the space comes after the tie sign. The following five examples illustrate these statements.



Example 4-4

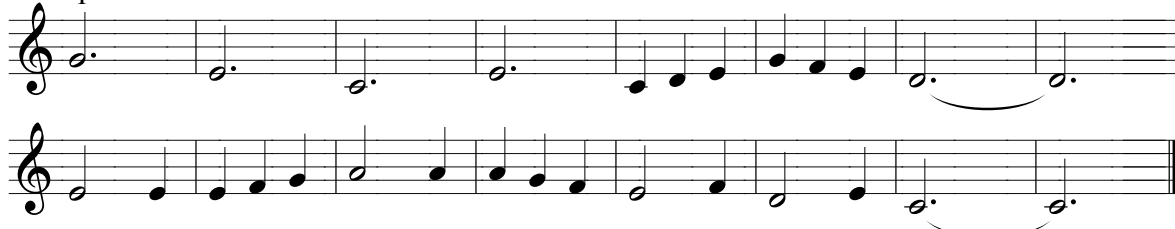
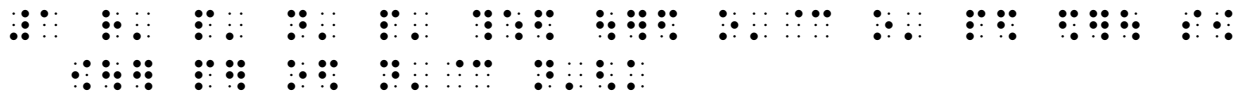
Example 4-5

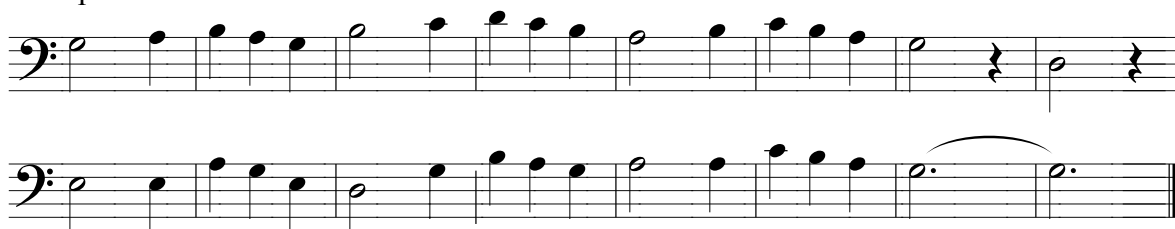
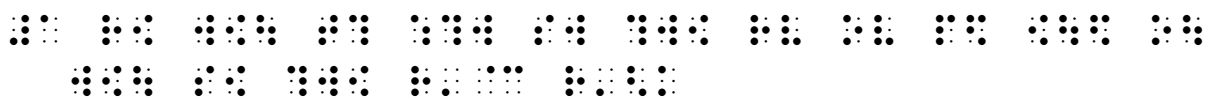
Example 4-6

Example 4-7

Example 4-8

Practice braille all of the examples in this chapter, working from the print copy with the corresponding braille covered, and complete the drills perfectly before transcribing the exercises to be submitted to your instructor.

Drills for Chapter 4

(Correct transcriptions of these drills are on page 261.)

Drill 1



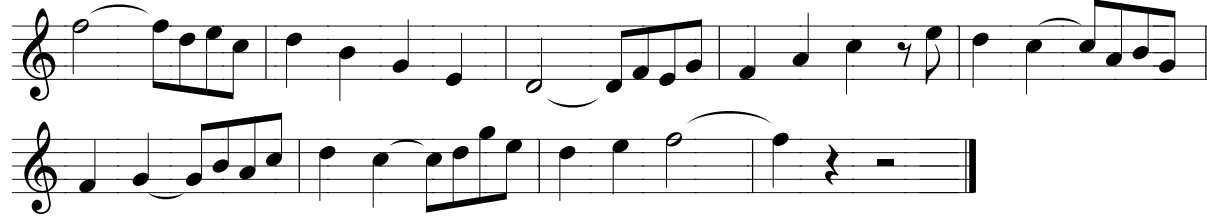
Drill 2



Drill 3



Drill 4



Drill 5



Exercises for Chapter 4

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Both staves end with a double bar line.

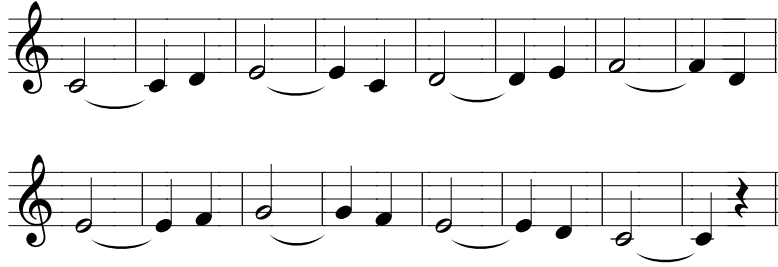
Exercise 4

Exercise 4 consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Both staves end with a double bar line.

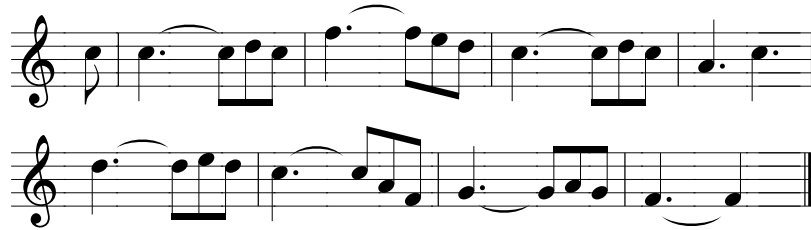
Exercise 5

Exercise 5 consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2. Both staves end with a double bar line.

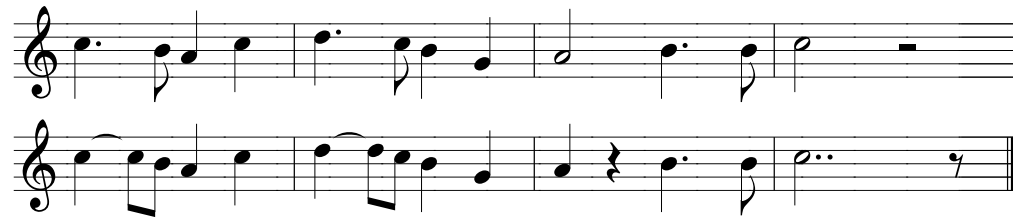
Exercise 6



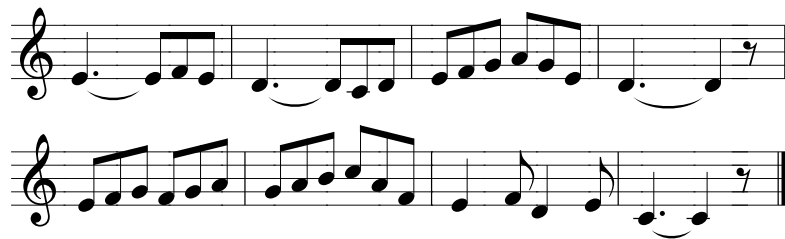
Exercise 7



Exercise 8



Exercise 9



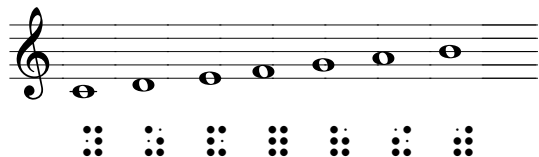
Chapter 5

Whole and Double Whole Notes and Rests, Measure Rests, and Transcriber-Added Signs

The Whole Note [T1, 1.1]

The whole note is formed as follows: **Basic shape + Dots 3 and 6 =** 

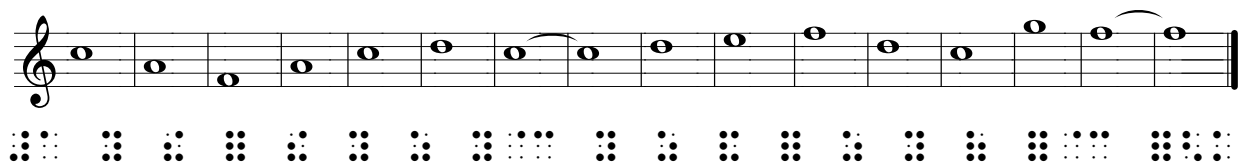
Note the familiar upper dots (names) in these whole notes:



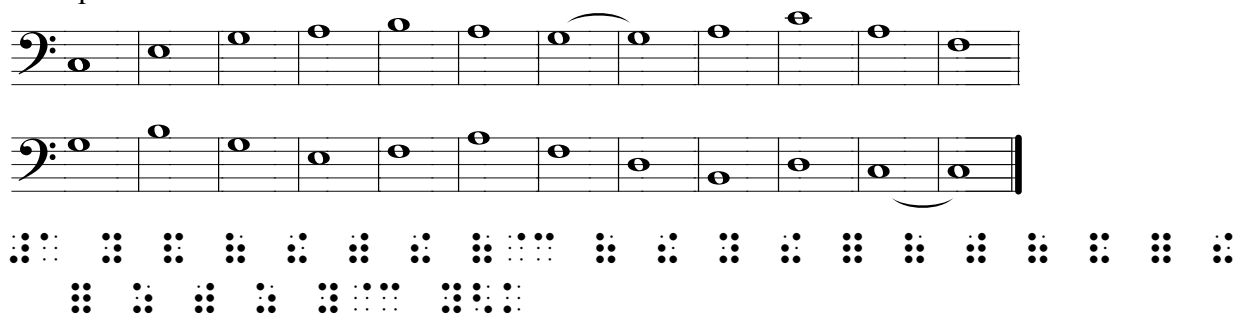
The **name** is shown by upper dots only. The **time value, whole**, is shown by the presence of dots 36.

To transcribe the whole notes, first get the fingers ready for the upper dots (basic), then for braille dots 3 and 6, and press the keys simultaneously. Think: “upper,” “lower,” “together,” as before. Examples 5-1 and 5-2 are presented for additional practice in brailleing whole notes.

Example 5-1



Example 5-2



The Whole Rest [T4, 4]



The whole rest is designated by dots 134: 

Example 5-6 illustrates a breve rest and a breve note, brailled both ways. In transcribing the drills and exercises in this book, you may employ either procedure, but should not use both in the same transcription. When finger markings have been introduced, the student will see that method (b) is preferable in a transcription that includes fingerings.

Example 5-6



a.



b.



Transcriber-Added Signs [GT Note 9, 4.1, 5.2]

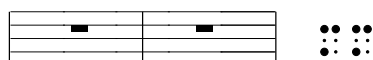
Occasionally, the transcriber will find that he must add a music sign in braille that is not actually included in the print. He must identify the sign as transcriber-added by preceding it with dot 5. The signs that most frequently must be added are rests and accidentals. The need for transcriber-added rests will be encountered and explained in Example 5-14. Transcriber-added accidentals will be discussed in later chapters.

The prefix for a transcriber-added sign: ⠠

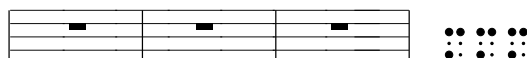
Consecutive Measure Rests [4.3]

Two consecutive measures of silence are indicated by brailing the whole-rest sign twice, without spacing. Three consecutive measures of silence are shown by brailing the sign three times in succession, without spacing. For four or more consecutive measure rests, however, one rest sign is shown immediately preceded by the numeral sign and the correct number, all written without spacing. These different combinations are illustrated as follows:

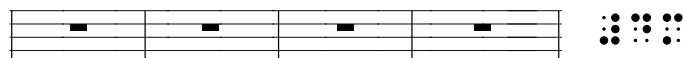
a. Two consecutive measure rests:



b. Three consecutive measure rests:



c. Four (or more) consecutive measure rests:



The combination shown under **c** (using the numeral sign) cannot be divided at the end of a line, but the combination shown under **a** and **b** may be separated if there is not room to place the entire combination on the same line. Grouping consecutive measure rests is an exception to the rule in braille music that states that consecutive measures must be separated by a space.

Various Print Methods for Showing Consecutive Measure Rests

Now that the student has learned how to write consecutive measure rests in braille, he needs to direct his attention to the many different methods employed in print notation to show such rests. He is likely to be confronted with any or all of the following presentations, especially in music for an orchestral or band part. The rest of the material in this chapter is not intended primarily to be a braille exercise, but a reading exercise to be studied carefully.

1. Each measure rest may be shown individually, sometimes with small numerals printed above the staff to be used as a counting device by the sighted reader. Such numerals should not be included in the braille transcription, however. The transcriber has, in effect, gone through the counting process for the reader.

Example 5-7

Three musical staves illustrating individual measure rests. The first staff shows five measures with rests of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 measures. The second staff shows four measures with rests of 1, 2, 3, and 4 measures. The third staff shows two measures with rests of 1 and 2 measures. Braille transcriptions are provided for each staff.

2. All the measure rests may be indicated with a single sign between two measure bar lines -- the familiar heavy horizontal line with cross bars at each end, superimposed on the middle line of the staff -- with the correct number printed within or above. This number, of course, must always be indicated in the transcription because it represents the total number of measures of rest.

Example 5-8

Three musical staves illustrating consecutive measure rests indicated by a single sign. The first staff shows a 4-measure rest. The second staff shows a 3-measure rest. The third staff shows a 38-measure rest. Braille transcriptions are provided for each staff.

In band and orchestral music particularly, several such indications may occur consecutively. Where these indicators are separated by such symbols as a sectional double bar, a forward- or backward-repeat sign, a printed section number or letter, or a change of signature, each group of rests should be brailled separately, as shown in the following example.

Example 5-9

A musical staff illustrating two groups of consecutive measure rests. The first group is a 6-measure rest, followed by a sectional double bar line, and then a 4-measure rest. Braille transcriptions are provided for each group.

Where there is no symbol of this type separating them, however, it is generally better for the transcriber to add the numbers together and to braille only the total, if the transcription is intended for a young person playing in a public-school orchestra or band. This procedure is followed in Example 5-10a.

One should always remember that the blind child must memorize all of his music and do it as quickly as possible, especially if he is playing with a sighted group. Consequently, it is usually less complicated for him to read and memorize one total, rather than to try to recall several numbers in succession at the same time he is counting. Only in rare instances might he conceivably miss some clue as to the form or structure of the music. For a teacher, a professional musician, or a conductor, however, one should follow the print notation exactly when transcribing. This procedure is illustrated in Example 5-10b.

Example 5-10

a.

b.

3. Often consecutive measures of silence are indicated by using the vertical double-whole-rest sign, alone or in various combinations, between two bar lines. A single sign represents two measures of silence, with the numeral shown over the staff. For each additional two measures of silence, the sign is repeated. Thus two signs are used to show four measures of silence, three to show six measures, etc. If the total number is an uneven number, such as three, five, or seven, one horizontal whole-rest sign is placed beside the combination to show the odd number. The signs are arranged in various combinations. Where more than one double-whole-rest sign is present, usually they are arranged in pairs, one directly above the other. The notation for such combinations is illustrated in Example 5-11.

Generally, the pertinent numeral is prominently displayed directly over the combination, above the staff. Sometimes, however, the numeral is missing, as in the final illustration of this example where five measures of silence are indicated. The numeral must be shown in braille, of course, and the transcriber must be certain that he reads these kinds of rest indications correctly.

Example 5-11

4. In music for orchestral or band instruments, consecutive measure rests often are not grouped together in print, although they must be so transcribed in braille. In cases where the music for an accompanying instrument is written out in full but in small type, a single whole-rest sign usually appears for the solo instrument in each consecutive measure, either above or below the notes for the accompanying instrument. This format is also employed where part-measure rests are involved.

Such small-print music enables the sighted reader to see what the other instrument is doing and to sight-read his own part simultaneously. The small-print music, however, generally is not included in the braille score for the solo instrument, and the brailist must take great care to transcribe only those rests and notes that belong to the solo part. (If the transcriber is requested to include the cued small notes in the solo parts, this can be done, of course. A brief explanation is given in Chapter 17.)

In the following example, one should transcribe two measure rests, leave a space, then transcribe the notes in the third measure. The small notes in the first two measures are for the accompanying instrument only.

Example 5-12

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The first two measures contain small notes (likely eighth notes) for an accompanying instrument. The third measure contains larger notes (likely quarter notes) for the solo instrument. To the right of the staff, there are two Braille symbols: the first is a dot-5 symbol (⠠) followed by a space, and the second is a dot-5 symbol (⠠) followed by three dots (⠠⠠⠠).

Sometimes such a section will be shown in print minus the proper rests for the solo instrument. The small size of the type is then the only indication that the music is for the accompanying instrument alone. The transcriber must be very careful to include the necessary rests, each preceded by the dot-5 indication that it is transcriber-added. (See Example 5-14.)

Reading Drill

Typical examples of print notation for consecutive measure rests and how to interpret them for purposes of music braille are presented to illustrate and emphasize the points discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

In Example 5-13, notes and rests in small type are obviously for some other instrument; notes for the solo instrument start in measure 6. One should transcribe five measure rests, space, then braille the notes in measure 6.

Example 5-13

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The first five measures contain small notes and rests for an accompanying instrument. The sixth measure contains larger notes for the solo instrument. To the right of the staff, there are two Braille symbols: the first is a dot-5 symbol (⠠) followed by a space, and the second is a dot-5 symbol (⠠) followed by three dots (⠠⠠⠠).

In Example 5-14, the size of the type is the only indication that the notes in the first three measures and the first note in measure 4 are for another instrument. It is imperative that the corresponding rests for the solo instrument be transcribed, although they are not actually shown in the print. One should therefore transcribe three measure rests, each preceded by dot 5, a space, then an eighth rest also preceded by dot 5, before transcribing the first three notes of the solo.

Example 5-14

In Example 5-15, the student should transcribe seven measure rests followed by a space, then the quarter and eighth rests, before transcribing the first note of the solo part.

Example 5-15

In Example 5-16, one should braille eleven measure rests followed by a space, then the quarter and eighth rests, followed by the first three notes of the solo. Although no numeral is shown, the printed signs preceding the first measure-bar line indicate ten measures of silence.

Example 5-16

In Example 5-17, eight measure rests are indicated. The “6” refers to six measure rests, while the “1” and “2” are for counting two individual measure rests.

Example 5-17

Often a band or orchestral part for a single instrument is printed as shown in Example 5-18. One should transcribe six measure rests. This total includes the double-whole-rest sign (showing two measures of silence), the whole-rest signs below the small notes in three of the measures, and the whole-rest sign above the quarter note and rest in the next-to-last measure. The very small figure “6” in parentheses above the staff gives this clue. Sometimes, the total is **not** shown in print, however, and the transcriber must do his own counting. The “1,” shown above the staff in the next-to-last measure as a counting device, is confusing.

Example 5-18

As shown here, there may be many visual cues regarding the music for other instruments in a single score. To try to include them in the braille transcription is, for practical purposes, usually out of the question, as this would greatly lengthen and complicate the result.

However, after going through one or two group rehearsals, the blind reader usually picks up cues with his ears just as readily as the sighted player does with his eyes, so that such omissions cause no special problem.

The transcriber may find the notation in Example 5-19 puzzling at first glance. Thirteen measure rests are called for in this example. The printed numbers are visually confusing because the first two indicate a precise number of consecutive measure rests, while the last three are for counting the three individual measure rests that follow the grouping of six.

Example 5-19

Musical notation for Example 5-19. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. It contains 13 measure rests. The rests are labeled with numbers: 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, followed by a group of six rests, and finally three individual rests. To the right of the staff is the corresponding Braille notation for these rests.

Drills for Chapter 5

(Correct transcriptions of these drills are on page 262.)

Drill 1

Musical notation for Drill 1. The staff is in bass clef. It contains a sequence of 13 quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4.

Drill 2

Musical notation for Drill 2. The staff is in treble clef. It contains a sequence of 13 quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4.

Drill 3

Musical notation for Drill 3. The staff is in bass clef. It contains a sequence of 13 quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4.

Drill 4

Musical notation for Drill 4. The staff is in treble clef. It contains a sequence of 13 quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4. There is a measure rest labeled '1' followed by a group of four measure rests labeled '4'.

Drill 5

Musical notation for Drill 5. The staff is in treble clef. It contains a sequence of 13 quarter notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4.

Drill 6

Musical notation for Drill 6. The staff is in bass clef. It contains a sequence of 13 quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4.

Exercises for Chapter 5

Exercise 1

Exercise 1 consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff is also in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Exercise 2

Exercise 2 consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The second staff is also in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Exercise 3

Exercise 3 consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff is also in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Exercise 4

Exercise 4 consists of three staves of music. The first staff is in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The second staff is also in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The third staff is also in bass clef and contains a sequence of notes: C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. All three staves end with a double bar line.

Exercise 5

Exercise 5 consists of two staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The second staff is also in treble clef and contains a sequence of notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Both staves end with a double bar line.

Exercise 6



Exercise 7



Chapter 6

Accidentals [T5, 5.1-5.3]

Natural: ♮ ⠠⠨ Flat: ♭ ⠠⠋ Sharp: ♯ ⠠⠠ Double flat: ♭♭ ⠠⠠⠠ Double sharp: × ⠠⠠⠠

The signs for accidentals are shown above. Inevitably, one notices that these are the literary symbols for *ch*, *gh*, and *sh*, and for many braillists this coincidence provides the easiest way to remember them. The *sh* contraction naturally suggests the word “sharp.” In remembering the flat sign, it may be helpful to recall that the initial letter of the word “flat” -- *f* -- is immediately followed by the alphabet letters *g* and *h*. (Of course, the student is aware that each music symbol has a different meaning in the literary code. It is best not to relate the two, however, except where such natural associations as those given above may prove helpful.)

Directions for Brailleing Accidentals

The accidental sign is placed in front of the note it affects, as is shown in these examples.

Example 6-1

Example 6-2

As in print, if two tied notes affected by an accidental are separated by a bar line, the accidental is not repeated for the second note. (However, as will be discussed later, any accidental that remains in effect in a new braille line or after a major interruption should be restated at that point.)

Example 6-3

As in print, any of these signs remains in effect during an entire measure for the same note at the same pitch, but not for the same note shown in a different octave. Example 6-4 illustrates this fact.

Example 6-4

If accidentals that are not strictly necessary have been included in the print music, they should also be included in the braille transcription. See Example 6-5.

Example 6-5

Examples for Practice

Example 6-6

Example 6-7

Example 6-8

Example 6-9

Example 6-10

Example 6-10 musical notation and Braille transcription.

Example 6-11

Example 6-11 musical notation and Braille transcription.

Example 6-12

Example 6-12 musical notation and Braille transcription.

Drills for Chapter 6

(Correct transcriptions of these drills are on page 263.)

Drill 1

Drill 1 musical notation.

Drill 2

Drill 2 musical notation.

Drill 3

Drill 3 consists of three staves of music in treble clef. The first staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals). The second staff continues this sequence with similar note values and accidentals. The third staff concludes the drill with a few final notes and a double bar line.

Drill 4

Drill 4 consists of one staff of music in treble clef. It begins with a whole note, followed by a series of eighth notes, and ends with a quarter note. A '4' is written in a box at the end of the staff, indicating a measure rest for four measures.

Drill 5

Drill 5 consists of two staves of music in bass clef. The first staff contains a sequence of eighth and quarter notes with various accidentals. The second staff continues this sequence, ending with a double bar line.

Exercises for Chapter 6

Exercise 1



Exercise 2



Exercise 3



Exercise 4



Exercise 5



Exercise 6



Exercise 7



Exercise 8

