

# andy thurston | drum tuition

## Counting Quarter Notes & Eighth Notes

Counting quarter notes in standard time is easy. Simply counting to four for each bar... one, two, three, four, one, two, etc. A quarter note lasts for one full beat, or each count.

We know that there are four quarter notes in a bar by these numbers at the beginning of a piece of music.



This is called the *Time Signature*. You know there are four beats in the bar from the top 4, and that those beats are quarter notes from the lower 4. Like a fraction would be written, it shows four quarters.



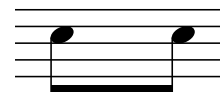
Similarly, this would show that there are two quarter notes in each bar. If this were the case, we would simply count to two for each bar.

So what does a quarter note look like? A quarter note has a solid black dot with a stem going vertically either up or down from it.



An eighth note looks very similar, with the solid black dot and stem, but in addition has one tail coming off the end of the stem.

If two eighth notes are played consecutively they may be joined together by the tail, and written as in this example. As both still have one tail we know that they are still eighth notes.



An eighth note is worth half of a quarter note, so there are two played in the time of one quarter note. Therefore, they are twice as fast!

To count the eighth note, simply place an 'and' between each quarter note. So... one, and, two, and, three, and, four, and, one, etc. If there are a mixture of both quarter notes and eighth notes in a piece of music, still count the 'and' between beats, but only play if there is an eighth note written on it.

For this two bar phrase we would need to count eighth notes. The count for these has been written above. The beats that you would play on are shown in **bold**.



As you play this, make sure that the spacing between beats and eighth note divisions is consistent. An easy way to do this is to have a clock with a second hand, and count each number on the beat as the second hand ticks, and the '&' in between each tick. As there are 60 seconds in a minute, we would say we are playing at 60bpm (Beats Per Minute). The speed is more formally referred to as the *Tempo* of the music.