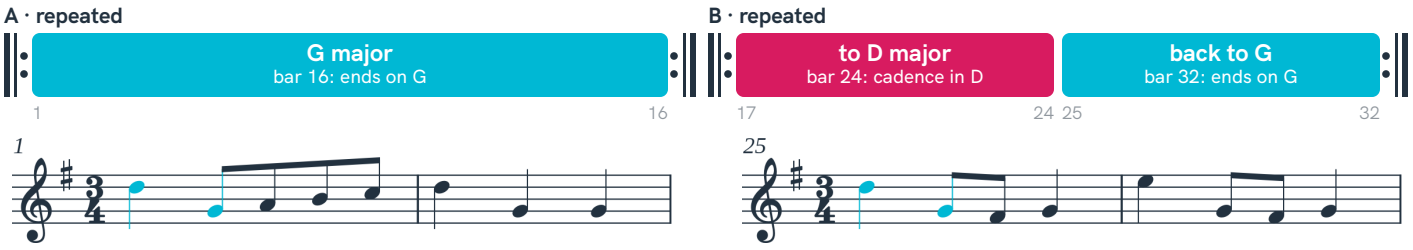
Binary, rounded binary & ternary

Many short pieces are built from two or three big sections, named with letters as on Handout 233. To tell the forms apart, watch the end: **does the opening tune come back, and how?**

BINARY · TWO HALVES, NO RETURN

Map colors show keys, not letters: home key · key of V · key of VI

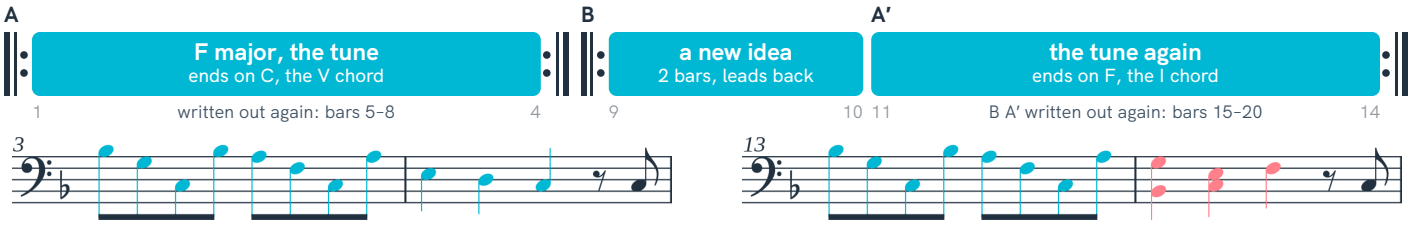


Bars 1–2: the tune drops from **D to G**, then climbs back.

Bars 25–26: D to G again, then it turns away.

The *Minuet in G* (Handout 238) has two halves of 16 bars, and **each half is repeated**. The first stays in **G major**; the second travels to **D major** and comes home. Bar 25 nods to bar 1, but the tune itself never returns. Two halves and no return: **binary form**.

ROUNDED BINARY · THE TUNE RETURNS INSIDE THE SECOND HALF



A, bars 3–4: the tune stops on **C**, the V chord: a half cadence.

A′, bars 13–14: bar 3 again, then a **new ending** on **F**, the I chord.

In *The Happy Farmer* (Handout 347) the second half opens with two new bars, **B**, and then the tune comes back, **A′**. The return sits **inside the second repeat**, together with B (Schumann writes both repeats out in full). A′ is not a plain copy: A stopped on V, and A′ is changed so that it ends at home.

HEAR IT **Burgmüller, *Arabesque*** (Handout 343): A turns to C major; B and A′, back in A minor, are repeated together.

TERNARY · A B A, THREE SECTIONS



In *The Wild Rider* (Handout 240) the middle is **a section of its own**: B is the same gallop a tenth lower, in **F major** and in the left hand (the contrast is the key and the hand, not a new tune), and it closes in F. Then **A comes back complete**, in **A minor**: bars 17–24 = bars 1–8. How A itself ends does not decide it: in Burgmüller's *Ballade* (Handout 382) A stops on V, and the piece is ternary too.

A **da capo** makes A B A too. On the page, the *Musette in D* (Handout 346) has two halves, each repeated: that looks binary. Then *D.C. al Fine* (Handout 48) sends you back to the start to stop at bar 8, so the whole piece plays A B A: **ternary**. A minuet and trio works the same way.



Which form? Three questions, in order

1. Does **A come back**? **Never → binary** · **Again and again → rondo**
2. Once, at the end: is it **repeated with B**? **Yes → rounded binary**
3. If not: is the middle a **section of its own** (new key or character), and does **all of A** come back, not just its ending?
   Yes → ternary · **No → rounded binary**

A **rondo**: *Für Elise* (Handout 342), A B A C A.

Try it Play bars 1–4 of *The Happy Farmer*, then bars 11–14: hear the tune come home. Then map a piece you are learning (bars, repeats, a letter and a key for each section) and ask the three questions. More practice: **Exercises 53 and 74**.

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