A Sound Score Needs a Legend

A graphic score is a set of performer instructions drawn as symbols. For this piece, our legend tells another player exactly which sounds we intend.

1 · LEARN THE SYMBOL LEGEND

Clap

One gentle handclap

Taps

Two fingertip taps at the two marked times. Two strokes = two taps, one at each stroke.

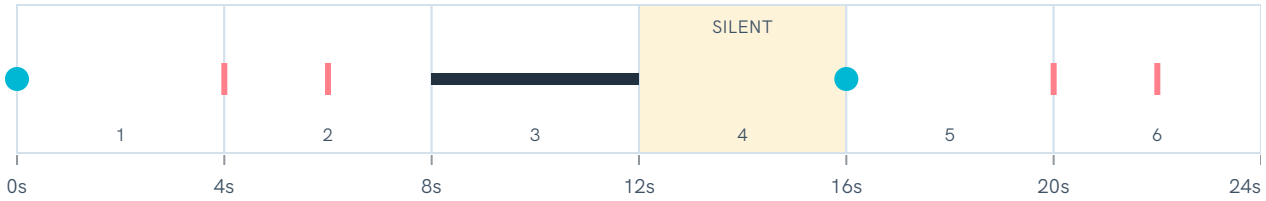
Sh

Say a soft "sh" from the bar's left end to its right end.

These symbol meanings belong to this piece; they are not universal.

For this score, height has no meaning. A dot or tap stroke marks a start time. A horizontal bar means keep the "sh" going from its left end to its right end. Each numbered window lasts 4 seconds.

2 · READ THE MODEL SCORE



Events (seconds): Clap at 0 s; Tap at 4 s; Tap at 6 s; Sh from 8–12 s; silence 12–16 s; Clap at 16 s; Tap at 20 s; Tap at 22 s. Stop by 24 s.

Window 4 (12–16 s), labeled SILENT, is silent. Keep the whole 12–16 s window silent. Stop the "sh" at 12 s; begin the next clap at 16 s. No sound continues through this window.

Other graphic scores may invite different interpretations; this one uses the specific meanings in our legend.

3 · PERFORMER-CHECK CARD

Did the player use all three sound types: clap, taps, and "sh"?

Did you hear 2 claps, 4 taps, and 1 sustained "sh"?

Was window 4 (12–16 s) silent?

One thing to make clearer in the legend:

After a partner performs, use this card to check. If they misread a symbol, revise its description and try again.

Try it For the first trial, show your partner only the timeline and its time labels; cover the legend, Events sentence, and self-check. Then show the legend and try again. Discuss what became clearer.

Listen: **tissimo.co/worksheets/graphic-score-sound-legend**
MP3: constructed clap, tap and "sh" sound model (one chosen realization).
MIDI: piano timing guide only; C5 = clap, E5 = tap, G5 = "sh".

The first click is 0 s. Each next click starts a new 4-second window. Stop at the high end cue at 24 s, after window 6. The cue is outside the piece. The reference clicks are not part of your piece.

Self-check: window 4 (12–16 s) is silent. 2 claps; 4 taps; 1 sustained "sh".

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