Ornaments

trill, short trill and turn — the melody's jewelry, each sign with its sound spelled out

An ornament is a tiny squiggle that stands for a flurry of notes. Instead of writing every fast note, composers hang a sign over ONE note and trust you to know the recipe. You already met the simplest ornament — the **grace note**. Here are the three great classics: each card shows **the sign** first, then **how it actually sounds**, written out in full. All three decorate with the note's **neighbors** — nothing farther than one step away.

The trill

tr — a rapid flutter with the upper neighbor



Alternate quickly between the written note and the note **above** it, for the note's whole length — a bird warbling. Speed matters less than **evenness**. Since about 1830 most players start on the written note, as here; in Bach's and Mozart's music, start on the note above (Handout 389).

The short trill

upper mordent · a single quick bite



One fast shake: **note – upper neighbor – note**, all in a blink, then continue normally. That is today's reading; in Bach's music it starts on the note above (Handout 389). With a vertical stroke through the sign it is the **mordent**: the bite goes **below**.

The turn

a little loop around the note



A graceful spin: **above – note – below – note**. The S-shaped sign literally draws the path the melody takes. The most elegant of the three.

Try it Learn each recipe **slow first** — play the written-out version at a snail's pace, then speed it up until it blurs into one gesture. Then decorate: put a short trill on the first note of Hot Cross Buns, a turn in the middle of Ode to Joy, a trill on any long note. Baroque players like Bach were **expected** to add these everywhere — ornaments were the improvisation of their day. Write them out: Exercise 79. Recognize the signs: Exercise 75.

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