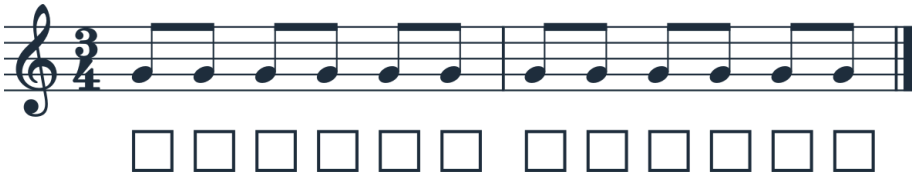
Simple vs compound: 3/4 or 6/8?
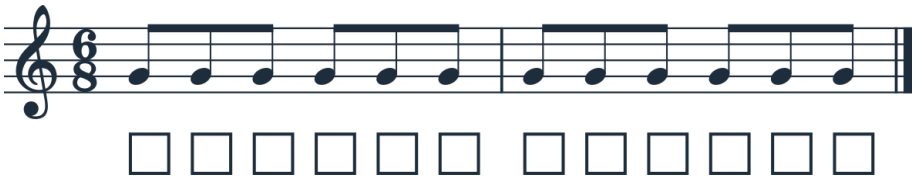
Both time signatures hold **six eighth notes** in a measure. The difference is how they group. **3/4** has three beats, and each one splits in **two**. **6/8** has two big beats, and each one splits in **three**. The beams show you the groups. (See Handouts 44 and 45.)

1 · SAME SIX EIGHTHS — WRITE THE COUNTS
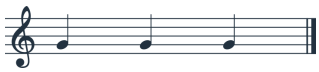
3/4
eighths in groups of two
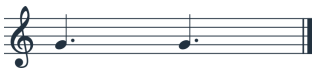


6/8
eighths in groups of three



2 · THE TIME SIGNATURE IS MISSING — CIRCLE 3/4 OR 6/8

1 
3/4 6/8

2 
3/4 6/8

3 
3/4 6/8

4 
3/4 6/8
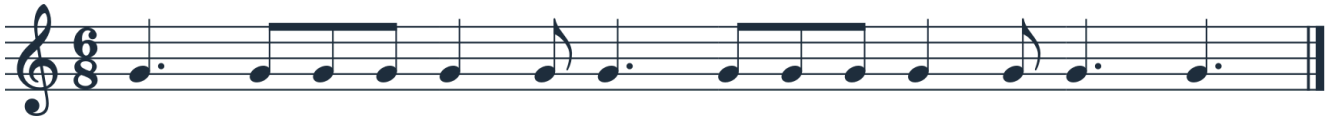
5 
3/4 6/8
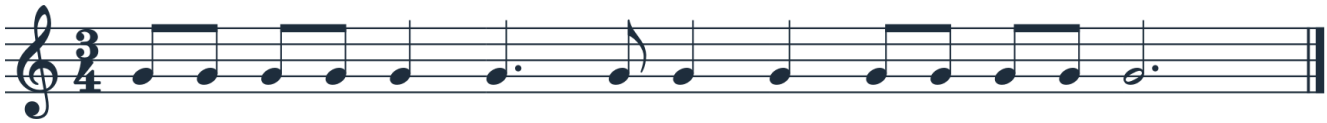
6 
3/4 6/8

7 
3/4 6/8

8 
3/4 6/8

3 · DRAW THE BARLINES

A 

B 

Count six eighths, then draw a barline. A dotted quarter is three eighths; a quarter is two.

Hint Look at the beams: they show you the groups (Handout 393). Eighths in **pairs** mean quarter-note beats: 3/4, counted "1 & 2 & 3 &". Eighths in **threes**, or dotted quarters, mean dotted-quarter beats: 6/8, counted "1 2 3 4 5 6" with weight on 1 and 4. In 6/8, no note crosses the middle of the measure. Scan the code to hear every line: Part 1 to clap along, Parts 2 and 3 to check your answers (one bar of clicks shows the beats). Next: Exercises 83 and 84.

LISTEN

Answers (flip the page) — Part 1: 3/4 = 1 & 2 & 3 &; 6/8 = 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1 & 2 & 3 &. Part 2: 1. 3/4 2. 6/8 3. 6/8 4. 3/4 5. 6/8 6. 3/4 7. 6/8 8. 3/4. Part 3: 6/8: after notes 4, 7, 12 3/4: after notes 5, 8, 13.

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