

# Help! I can't read music!

Sometime, people can be put off joining a singing group because they “don't read music”. There are very few people (usually professional musicians) who can look at a page of music and immediately hear it in their head, as easily as reading words. For the rest of us, the music helps us know some basic things -



- Does the tune go up or down?
- How fast is it?
- Are we singing in unison (everyone singing the same thing) or in harmony (splitting into two or more parts)?

From experience, we then get an idea of how much the tune goes up and down, and once we've practised a piece the music helps remind us of all the details.

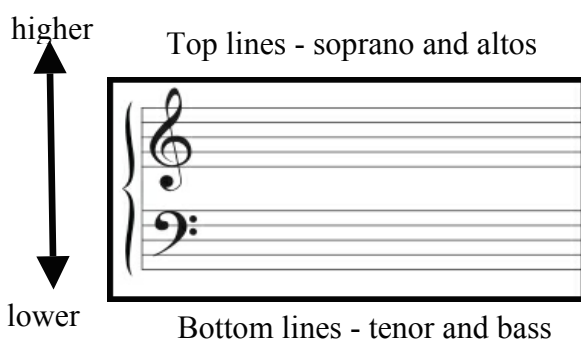
Although it does take a little while to get used to the special symbols used in music, concentrating on the most important ones first can be helpful.



## The ten second basics!

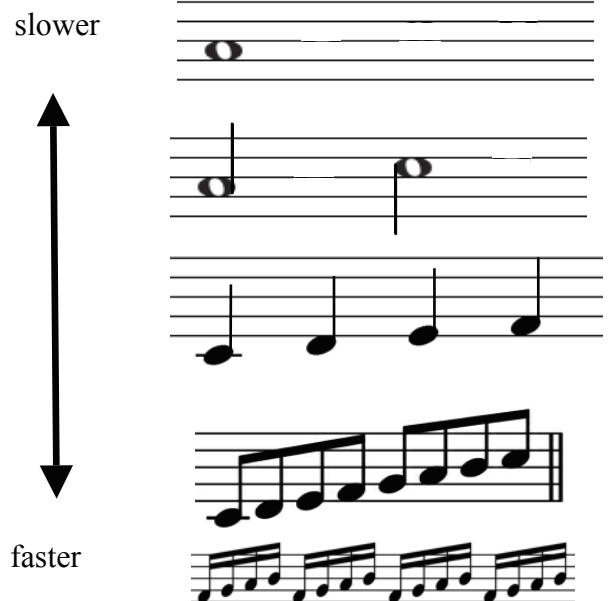
### Higher and lower

Notes which are higher on the musical staff (the 5 parallel lines) are higher, lower notes are lower.




### Faster and slower

In general, the closer together and blacker the notes are the faster they are



### Louder and softer

p=piano-quiet, f=forte - loud, mp= a little quiet and so on. “Hairpins” mean get louder  or softer 