

ALTO SAXOPHONE PRELIMINARY LESSON

VID LINK: [Preliminary Lesson](#)

How to Use this Sheet

To get the most out of these lessons first watch each segment of the video. Pause the video wherever you need to and slowly go through the exercises yourself before going on. As you practise the work use the video as a reference but spend most of your time playing slowly and patiently off this pdf. Once you feel confident return to the video and try to play along with me! If you can more or less keep up you may be ready for the next lesson.

THEORY

Beat

All music is based on a regular rhythmic pulse called the BEAT. We don't always hear the beat but it's the implied basis for all the rhythms we play. The amount of time between each beat always remains the same.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 etc

To help us count the beat we break it up into groups. Most commonly into groups of 4. We separate each of these groups with a vertical line. The beats between each line make up the BAR and the lines are called BARLINES. We finish the final bar with a DOUBLE BARLINE.

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 ||

To indicate that there are 4 beats in each bar we write a TIMESIGNATURE at the beginning. The top number of the time signature indicates how many beats in a bar and the bottom what kind of beats. We'll talk about this bottom number later. Our time signature here is 4/4.

|| 4/4 ————— **||**
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

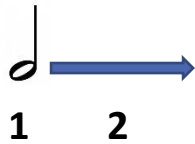
Notes

Into each bar we can write notes of varying lengths to give us the rhythms we play.

A SEMIBREVE holds for 4 beats



A MINIM holds for 2 beats

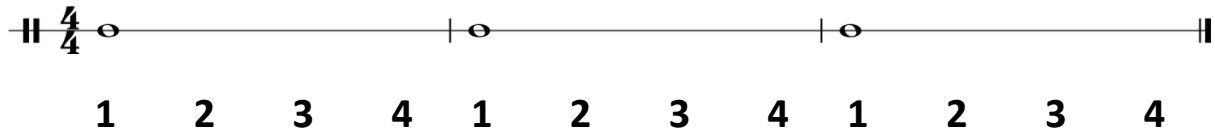


A CROTCHET holds for 1 beat

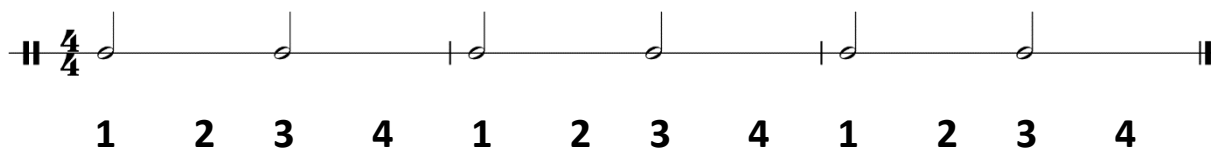


This is how each would look if written in bars:

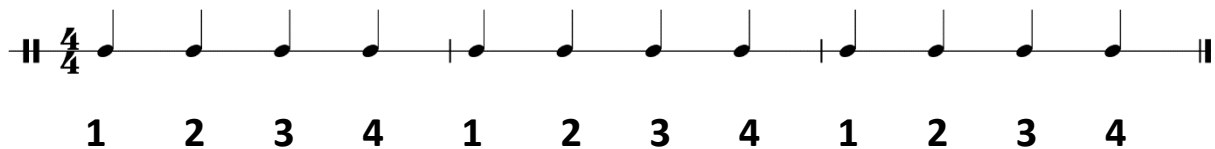
Semibreves



Minims



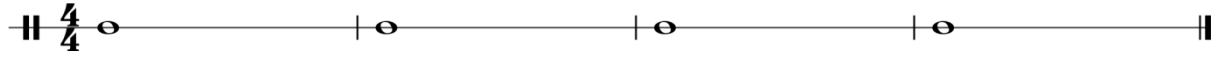
Crotchets



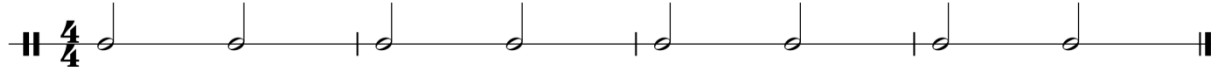
EXERCISES

Clap the rhythms in each of the following exercises.

1.



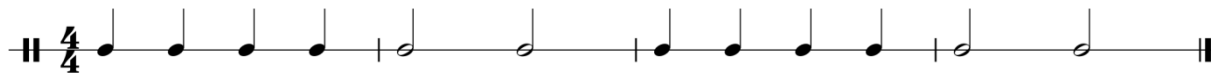
2.



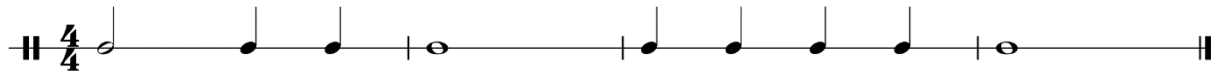
3.



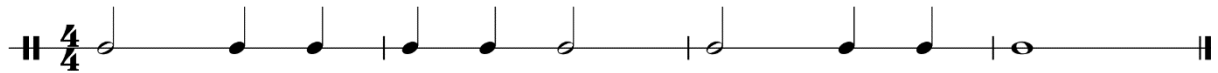
4.



5.



6.



7.



ASSEMBLY

The Reed

1. Your reed is the most important part of your saxophone. All sound begins when it vibrates against the mouthpiece. Because this is the case, you have to take special care when handling and using your reeds.
2. Never touch the end tip of your reed with anything but your tongue. If you do, it will become hard to play and you will have to throw it away. Always handle your reeds by the thick end.
3. Wet any reed before using it by putting it flat on your tongue and passing it between your lips a few times. This will have to be done more for new reeds than used ones. This makes the reed flexible so it can vibrate more easily.
4. If your reed becomes chipped, wavy or discoloured it is time to throw it away. You will only have a harder time playing your saxophone and get a bad sound if you persist with it.
5. Always put your reed back in its case when you are done. Do not leave it on the mouthpiece when you pack your sax away.

Assembling your Mouthpiece

1. Wet your reed.
2. Place the reed on the flat part of the mouthpiece so the reed's tip meets up with the tip of the mouthpiece. Line them up so that if you hold the mouthpiece with the reed facing you, you can just see the tip of the mouthpiece above the tip of the reed.
3. Keep your thumb firmly on the thick end of the reed and slide the ligature over the tip and down. Make sure that the screws are on the reed's side.
4. Bring the ligature down so that it is below the cut of the reed and tighten the screws.

Assembling your Sax

1. Assemble your mouthpiece (see above). Put it to the side.
2. Put your neck strap on.
3. Pick up your sax by the bell or by holding onto the section in the middle with all of the bars. Attach the body of the saxophone to the hook on your strap.
4. Attach the neck to the top of the body and tighten the screw.
5. Attach the mouthpiece to the end of the neck so that the reed faces down.

Disassembling your Sax

1. Do the reverse of assembling your sax.
2. Take your reed off your mouthpiece and put it back in your case.

CLEANING

Your sax will sound its best and will not wear as quickly if you keep it cleaned and well maintained.

1. After you play your sax, use the pull-through for the body and the neck (or the brush for the neck). Use your mouthpiece brush to dislodge any detritus in the mouthpiece.
2. Once a week wash your mouthpiece in warm, slightly soapy water. Be careful with it and use the mouthpiece brush to clean it. Dry it with your cloth.
3. Regularly apply cork grease to the cork on the neck and the metal on the other end of the neck that connects it to the body. Dab a little valve oil on the end of a bent paperclip and work it into any joint where metal meets metal to lubricate it.

Always remember that your saxophone is a fragile thing. It might look like it is made of strong metal but it will dent and break easily if dropped. Likewise your mouthpiece is brittle and the end can chip easily. Any chip in the mouthpiece or scratch inside it is good grounds for getting a new mouthpiece.

If your sax is broken in any way seek the advice of an instrument repairer. Do not try and fix it yourself.