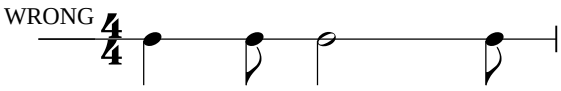
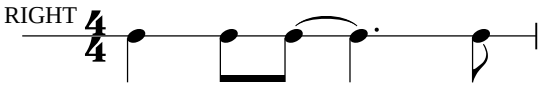
A. GROUPING NOTES

When writing rhythms, the main thing to ask ourselves is, "Will what I have written be easy for the performer to follow?" The best way to make sure that the rhythm is easy to follow is to group as many notes and rests as we can in beats. As far as possible, we finish one beat before starting the next beat.

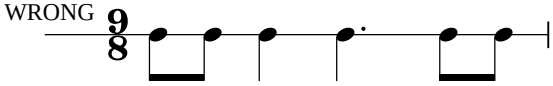
For example, in this bar the minim begins part-way through beat two and continues into beats three and four. This could be confusing to some performers.

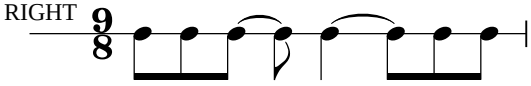


If we re-write it like this, it becomes obvious to performers where the beats begin, and how the notes fit together.

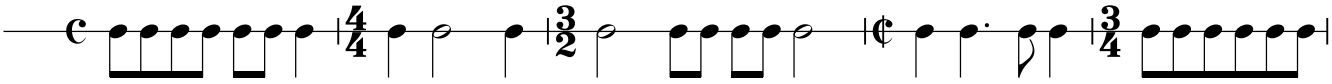


In compound time, the beats are dotted notes, so the notes have to be grouped so that each group has the value of one of those dotted notes. In 9/8 time the beat is a dotted crotchet. A dotted crotchet is worth three quavers, so quavers have to be organised in groups of three. Any other notes have to be grouped so that they "add up to" a dotted crotchet. So, for example, a crotchet and a quaver would make up one group.

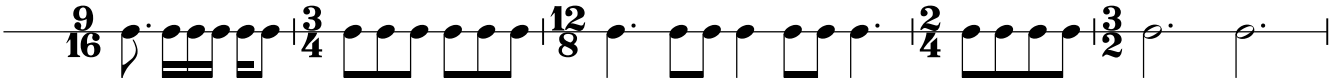




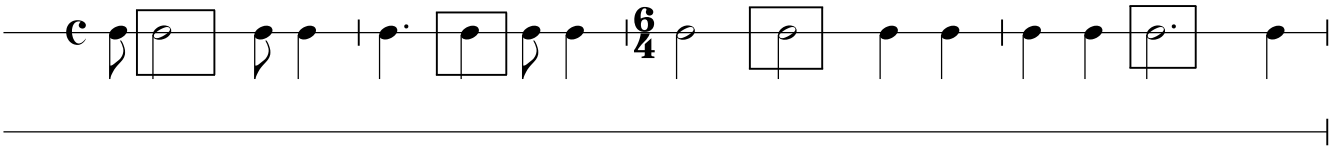
Quavers are usually grouped in twos in simple time and in threes in compound time (in which the beat is a dotted note). We can group four quavers together when the beat is a minim (e.g. 3/2, 4/2) or at the beginning or end of a bar in 4/4 or C. We can fill a 2/4 or 3/4 bar with quavers beamed together, as it is obvious to a performer how many there are. We can even have a minim or dotted crotchet connecting beats two and three if the effect is quite clear. All of these are called "correct", because most performers find them easy to follow:



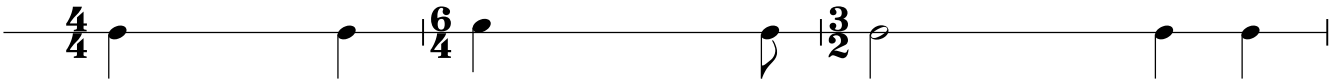
1. Tick the bars in which the notes are written correctly.

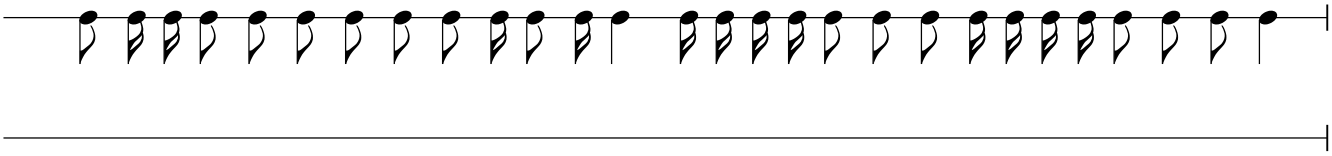


2. Rewrite these rhythms in the staves below with the notes grouped correctly. You will need to break each of the notes in boxes into two smaller notes, and tie them together.



3. Fill these bars with quavers, grouping them correctly.



4. Fill these bars with semquavers, grouping them correctly.

5. Write these notes out in 4/4 time, beamed correctly.