

ALL ABOUT THE BASS

Exploring Bass Clef Reading and Notation



A. Bass Clef & Bass Clef Notation

STAFF is the name given to the five lines where musical notes are written.

The position of notes on the staff or staff shows their **PITCH** (how high or low a note is).

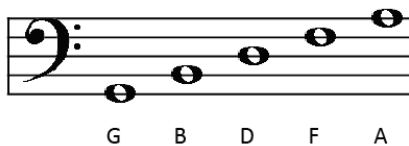
The **BASS CLEF** is a symbol used to show low-pitched notes on the staff and is *usually* used for the left hand on a piano or keyboard to play the **BASS LINE** and also used by low pitched instruments (*see B.*)



The staff or staff is made up of 5 **LINES** and 4 **SPACES**.

Notes on the **LINES** of the **BASS CLEF**: **G, B, D, F, A**

Green Buses Drive Fast Always

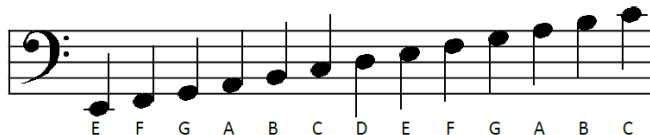


Notes in the **SPACES** of the **BASS CLEF**: **A, C, E, G**

All Cows Eat Grass



Bass Clef **STAFF NOTATION**:



B. Musical Instruments that use the Bass Clef

									
Left Hand of a Piano/Keyboard	Left Hand & Pedals of an Organ	Bassoon	Cello	Double Bass	Trombone	Tuba	Timpani	Bass Guitar	Bass (deepest male singing voice)

C. Bass Line Patterns

BASS RIFFS – Short, repeated, ‘catchy’ and memorable Bass Line Patterns used in Rock, Rap, Hip Hop, R’n’B, and Pop songs often performed on Bass Guitar. Bass Riffs ‘fit’ with the notes in the chord, but also use other ‘**EXTRA**’ notes (**PASSING NOTES**) to make them more memorable.



WALKING BASS – used in Jazz, Blues, Rhythm and Blues, and Rock’n’roll, and featuring **a note on every beat**. Using the **ROOT, THIRD** and **FIFTH** of the chord, and ‘**EXTRA**’ notes (called **PASSING NOTES**) to create a smooth bass line often moving mainly by step (**CONJUNCT**).



ALBERTI BASS – a type of **ACCOMPANIMENT PATTERN** in the **BASS LINE** using the **ROOT, THIRD** and **FIFTH** notes of a **CHORD** played in a **specific order**:

ROOT <i>Lowest</i>	FIFTH <i>Highest</i>	THIRD <i>Middle</i>	FIFTH <i>Highest</i>
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The pattern repeats, but notes change as chord changes and a melody is added ‘on top’ of the Alberti Bass. Used by Classical composers such as Mozart, especially in solo piano music, as well as modern composers.



ARPEGGIO: Playing the notes of a chord separately and **in order** *root, third fifth, root, third, fifth etc*, can be ascending (going up) or descending (going down).



BROKEN CHORD – Playing the notes of a chord separately but **not necessarily in strict order** (*e.g., like an Alberti Bass*), often creating a repeated musical pattern, can be ascending (going up) or descending (going down).



(BASS) PEDAL (POINT/NOTE) – a note of long duration, often held in the bass part, often the **ROOT** (and/or **FIFTH**) of a chord over which a melody line and chords will “fit”.

