

How to Number Measures

There is no universally-agreed-upon system for counting measures. The following scheme is frequently found in pre-numbered parts and can be applied successfully in almost all cases:

- Place a bar number either at the beginning of each line or every ten bars; you don't need to number each bar.
- Count the beginning of each measure. Do not count any partial measure at the start of a movement. Always check the number of beats in the first bar to be sure.
- If a measure is divided across a double bar, across a repeat, across a change of clef, key or meter, or from one staff system to the next - be sure not to count it twice. Don't count subdivisions within measures marked by dotted lines.
- At a repeat with first and second endings, don't count the first ending. In general, count only the last in a set of endings.
- Count trios, codas or variations in continuity with the preceding printed measures, even if they are not played in that sequence; do not restart from 1. Count tacet parts in trios or variations in accordance with the score.
- Count each movement individually.
- Treat an aria and its preceding recitative as one continuous movement.