



Image from intenseproductions.blogspot.com.au

A warm welcome to you as you explore the wonderful world of choral singing and music.

This guide helps to navigate basic theory and notation for new choral singers — your very own rehearsal cheat sheet (ssshhh!).

Sing boldly and passionately, for health and happiness!

## The Very Basics — Reading a choral score

**Notes:** how we read and convey sounds on paper - the alphabet of music. In the English language, we use the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, and G from our alphabet to classify notes.

**Staff/Stave (plural = staves):** a combination of *lines* and *spaces*, the canvas on which to read music.



Figure 1: a staff with lines & spaces

**Clef:** a symbol written at the beginning of a musical staff that determines the pitch of the notes on the staff. The “signpost” of a staff.

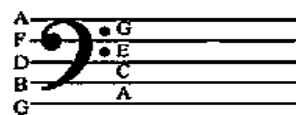
*Clefs and staves — a harmonious relationship (and lots of fun)!*

The staff is a versatile canvas (a whiteboard?) - and we change how it's used and what's written on it regularly. Each line and space of a staff represents a note, and this changes depending on the clef. This allows composers to use the simple five-lined staff to write both very high and very low notes (i.e. across the vast range of high and low instruments).

The **Treble Clef** is sometimes called the “G Clef” — not only does it look a little like the letter G, but it circles around the note G (2<sup>nd</sup> line).



The **Bass Clef** is usually the lower of the two staves, with a symbol that looks a bit like an ear with a colon alongside it (so listen up..!).



It is helpful to learn the notes associated with each line/space, and there are some helpful mnemonic devices (rhymes!) to help you remember.

Here are a few examples - feel free to make up your own!

### Bass Clef

- Lines: Great Big Dogs From Adelaide
- Spaces: Aligned Chi, Everything Groovy

### Treble Clef

- Lines — Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit
- Spaces — F.A.C.E.



Figure 2: Example of a score  
(excerpt from "The Ash Grove" arr. William Hay)  
source: <http://cdpl.org>