

Basic Music Theory  
Handbell Musicians of America Certification Course C1  
Course Outline  
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- I. The basic anatomy of a score
  - a. Bar line/double bar line
  - b. Notehead
  - c. Stem
  - d. Beam/flag
  - e. Grand staff
  - f. Voice-leading lines
  - g. Handbells/Handchimes Used Charts
- II. Pitch names and how handbells use them
  - a. C3 through C6 (handbell designation C4 through C7)
  - b. Transposing instruments
- III. Rhythmic values of notes and rests
  - a. Sixteenth
  - b. Eighth
  - c. Quarter
  - d. Half
  - e. Whole
  - f. What dots do
  - g. How triplets work
- IV. Common time signatures
  - a. Perfect meter: measure can be divided into equal halves or into equal thirds
  - b. Simple meters (each beat can be divided into two equal parts)
    - i. Simple duple meter
      1. 2/2, 2/4
    - ii. Simple quadruple meter
      1. 4/4
    - iii. Simple triple meter
      1. 3/2, 3/4, 3/8
  - c. Compound meters (each *major* beat [pulse] can be divided into three equal beats)
    - i. Compound duple meter
      1. 6/8
    - ii. Compound triple meter
      1. 9/8 (3+3+3)
    - iii. Compound quadruple meter
      1. 12/8
  - d. Abbreviations for common time and cut time
- V. Basic key signatures
  - a. C major through A Major (3 “sharp” keys and relative minor keys)
  - b. C major through E-flat Major (3 “flat” keys and relative minor keys)

- VI. Basic dynamic markings
  - a. *ppp, pp, p, mp, mf, f, ff, fff*
  - b. *diminuendo/decrescendo, crescendo, mezzo*
  
- VII. Basic performance markings
  - a. *a tempo, accelerando, adagio, allegro, andante, col/colla/con, da capo, dal segno, fine, legato, lento, ma non troppo, meno, moderato, molto, non, più, poco (a poco), prima/primo, quasi, rallentando, ritardando, senza, simile, staccato, tacet, vivace, optional handbell-note enclosures*
  
- VIII. Ear-Training: Basic Intervals
  - a. minor/Major third, perfect fourth, perfect fifth, octave
  - b. The difference between “prime unison” and “colloquial unison” (e.g., “unison at the octave”)
  
- IX. Building Major and Minor triads
  - a. “Tonic” vs. “Root”
  - b. “spell” in thirds (e.g., “skip a letter”)
  - c. Inner intervals (minor and Major thirds, “partition” shift)
  - d. Outer interval (perfect fifth)
  
- X. Enharmonic equivalents
  
- XI. Basic score navigation
  - a. repeat signs, basic endings, *D.S.*, *D.C.*, Coda.