The pair of numbers at the start of a score tells you how beats are grouped. The top number counts the beats per bar; the bottom number shows which note gets one beat.

4/4 time

Four quarter notes fill each bar of 4/4. Most popular music uses it. You count 1 2 3 4 with the strongest accent on beat one.

3/4 time

3/4 has three beats per bar, with a strong first beat. Waltzes and many folk songs use it.

6/8: compound time

6/8 has six eighth notes per bar, grouped into two sets of three. That gives it metronome a rolling feel, common in jigs and ballads.

Odd meters

Meters like 5/4 and 7/8 combine twos and threes, for example free metronome 3+2 or 2+2+3. A metronome that accents each group helps you feel them quickly.