Fantastic Fiction Composing Project

HOW TO USE

- Use with all students in a studio-wide project, or just with an individual student or group.
- Adapt to each student's level by exploring or ignoring the articulation, dynamic and form suggestions.
- With prereaders, allow them to notate in their own style – rewrite for them on the staff if necessary.
- Complete each section together in the lesson, or assign as homework where possible.
- Encourage your student to take their time and try out many different options before deciding on their final composition.

Optional extra: Record your students' compositions and put them together on a studio CD or soundcloud page or notate them digitally and create a book of your students' pieces.

ASSEMBLY

- Print out the project (pages 2-9) and put it in your students folder/ binder.
- You will need one copy for each student.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Composing is a fun and interactive way for students to learn about form, notation and other music theory. A studio-wide composing project is also fantastic for creating a sense of community and team spirit in your studio.

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FANTASTIC FICTION
COMPOSING PROJECT



Step 1: Favourite fiction

Make a mindmap of favourite books and films you might like to use for this composing project. Brainstorm which characters or scenes you might like to write your piece about.

(character or scene)

(character or scene)

(book or film title)

(character or scene)

(character or scene)

(character or scene)

(character or scene)

(character or scene)

(character or scene)

(book or film title)

(character or scene)

(character or scene)

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Step 2: Set the mood

Write your chosen character or scene from a book or film that you're going to compose a piece about.

How would you describe this character or scene? Circle 3-5 adjectives that apply.

Busy	Loyal	Wild	Caring
Lazy	Happy	Crazy	Hopeful
Careless	Cheerful	Fussy	Spoiled
Clumsy	Joyful	Odd	Generous
Nimble	Carefree	Alert	Beautiful
Brave	Friendly	Sleepy	Adorable
Clever	Moody	Tense	Messy
Dull	Cranky	Rude	Slimy
Scared	Gloomy	Selfish	Horrid
Cowardly	Angry	Strict	Nasty
Bashful	Worried	Tough	Cruel
Proud	Excited	Polite	Creepy
Fair	Calm	Amusing	Loud
Greedy	Bored	Kind	Shrill
Wise	Hardworking	Gentle	Muffled
Foolish	Silly	Quiet	Creaky

Feel free to write in other adjectives that aren't on the list above too.

Now think about how this could be represented in your music. Circle the elements you think your piece about this scene/character should include.

Minor key	High notes	Smooth legato phrases
Major key	Clashing notes/chords	Glissando
Long notes or slow tempo	Scale runs up and down	Chromatic notes
Short notes or fast tempo	Off-beat rhythms	Big jumps/intervals
Low notes	Staccato notes	

Feel free to write in your own ideas that aren't on the list above too.

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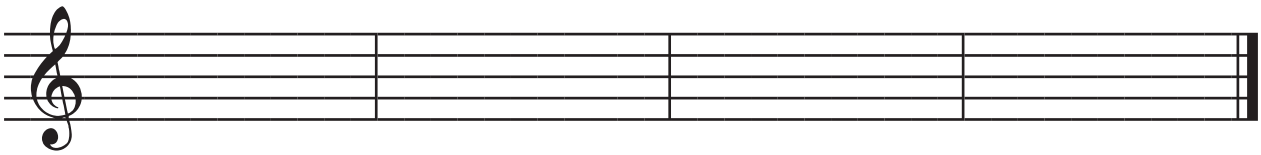
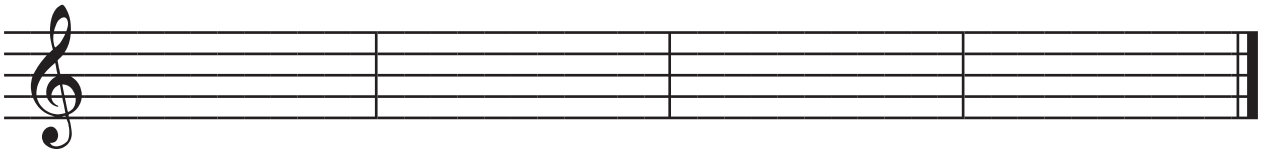
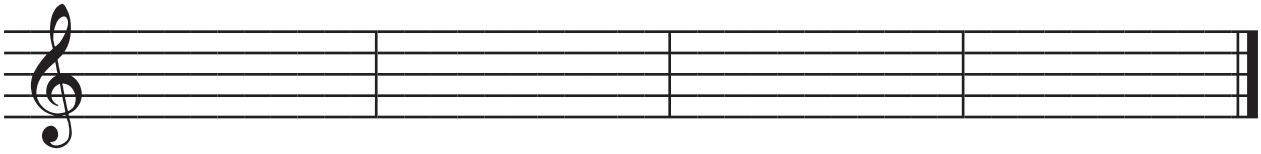
Step 3: Melody

With these adjectives and ideas in mind, experiment at the piano and compose some melody ideas that you could use as your main theme. They should be 4 bars long but do not have to be in the same time signature or use the same scale.

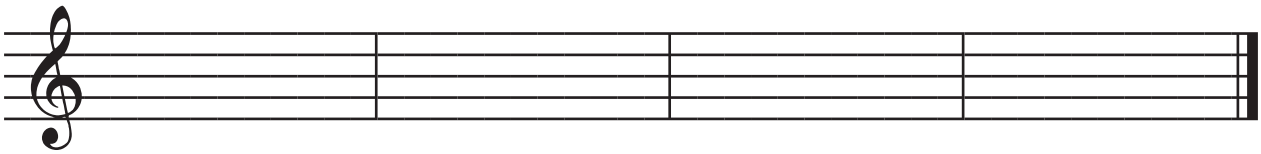
Compose at least three different options for your A motif before picking your favourite.

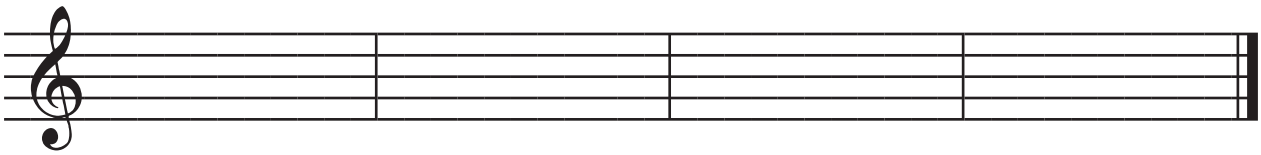


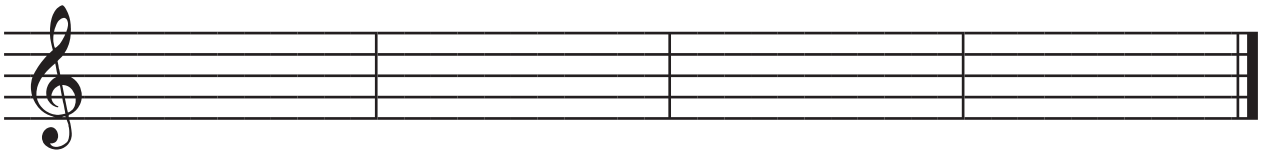




Choose your A motif and then compose at least three different options for your B motif before picking your favourite. They should all be 4 bars long, use the same time signature and go well with your A motif.







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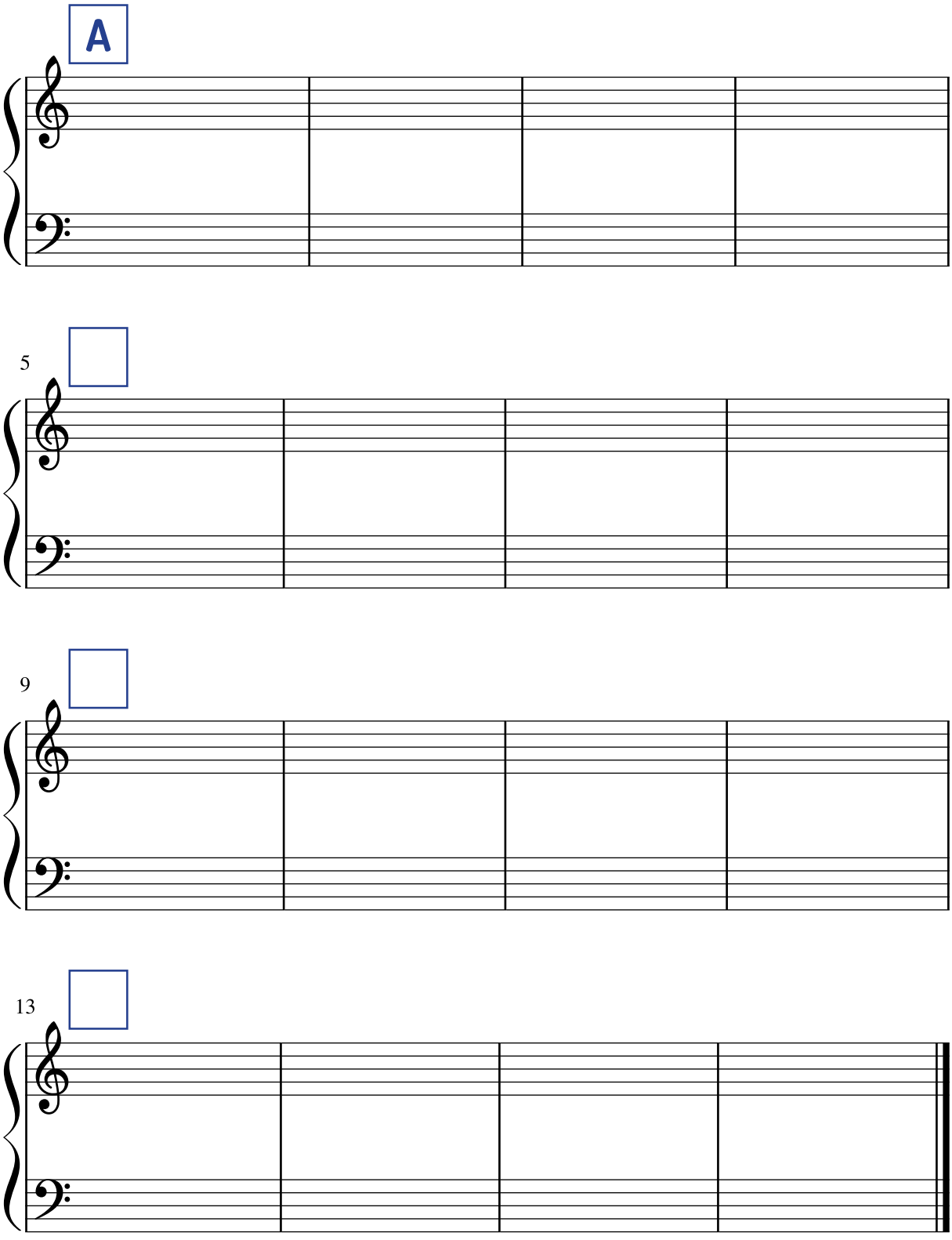
Step 4: Form

Choose a form for your piece using your two motives.

ABBA **ABAB** **AABA** **ABAA** **AABB**

Label the lines and write out the A motif and B motif to start your draft piece on the blank staff below.



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Step 5: Harmony

Now it's time to add some harmony! Think about what type of harmony would go with your melody. Have a look through your music books for more ideas.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Play the melody in both hands
- One hand plays the melody a third higher or lower
- One hand plays the melody a fifth higher or lower
- Chords
- Alberti bass
- Jump bass
- Open fifths
- Broken chords
- Waltz pattern

These are just a few suggestions. Try these out, as well as any patterns you find in pieces you're playing. You can use more than one type of harmony in your piece, but try not to use too many different types or it won't sound like one piece!

After experimenting, add your harmony ideas to the draft piece you wrote out on the previous page.



Step 6: Dynamics & Articulation

To finish your piece, you need to add some details to make the music exciting. Think about adding some articulations and other details such as:

- Staccato notes
- Slurs
- Phrase lines
- Accented notes
- Passing tones
- Turns
- Trills
- 8va
- Pedal marks

You also need to decide how fast/slow and loudly/softly you want your piece played. Add tempo marks and dynamics.

- Allegro
- Andante
- Largo
- Vivace
- Crescendo/diminuendo
- Forte
- Pianissimo
- Mezzo piano
- Ritenuto

Rewrite your piece as neatly as you can on a "Draft Piece" page, and give it a title.

Play your draft piece for several weeks and make notes about changes before re-writing it on the "Final Piece" page.

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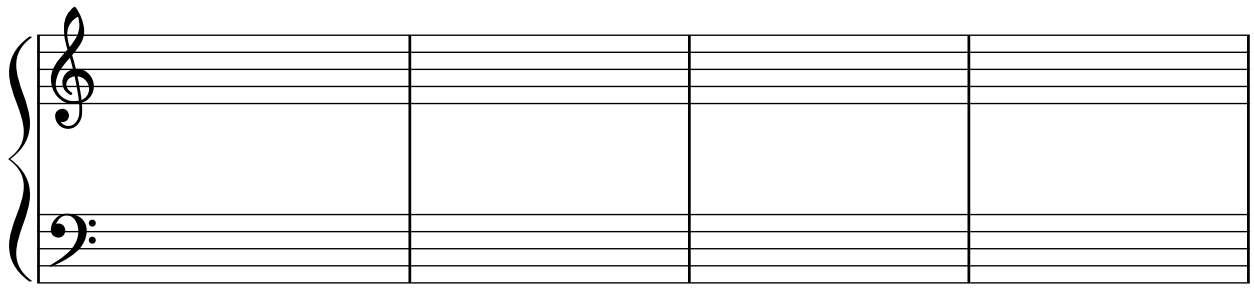
Draft Piece

Title _____ **by** _____



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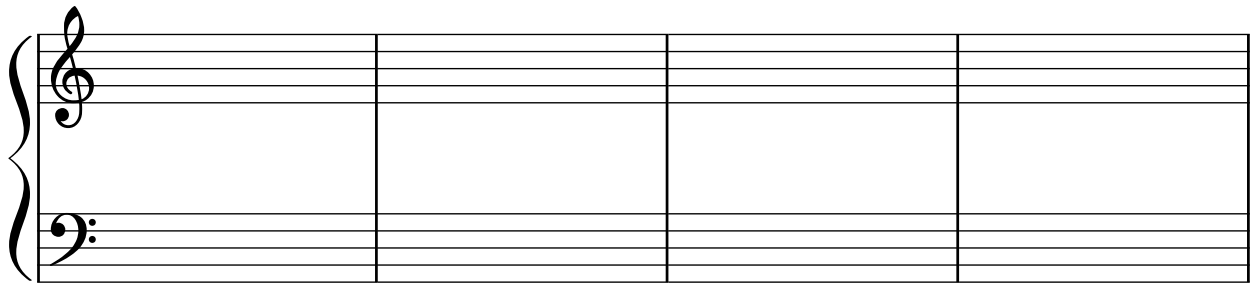

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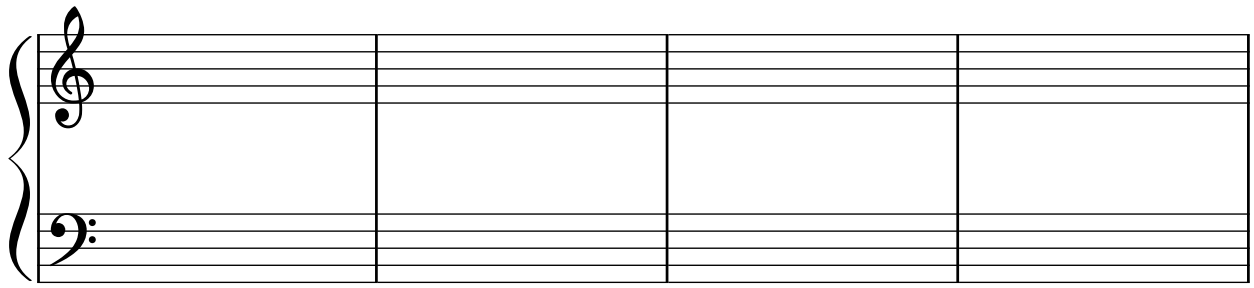

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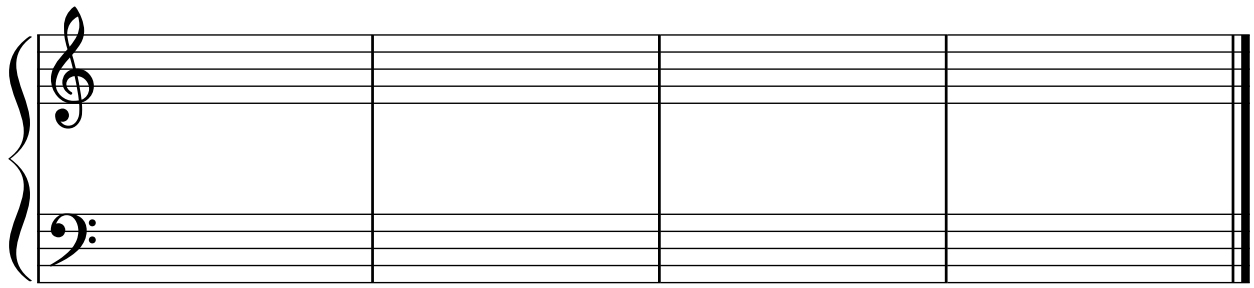

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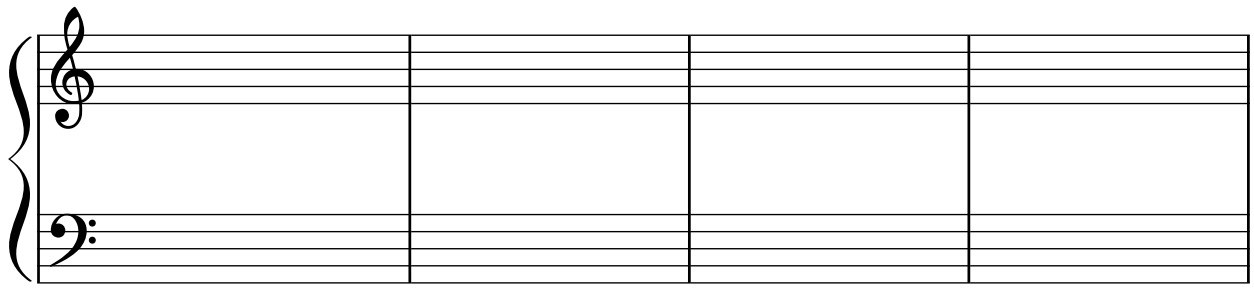
Final Piece

Title _____ **by** _____



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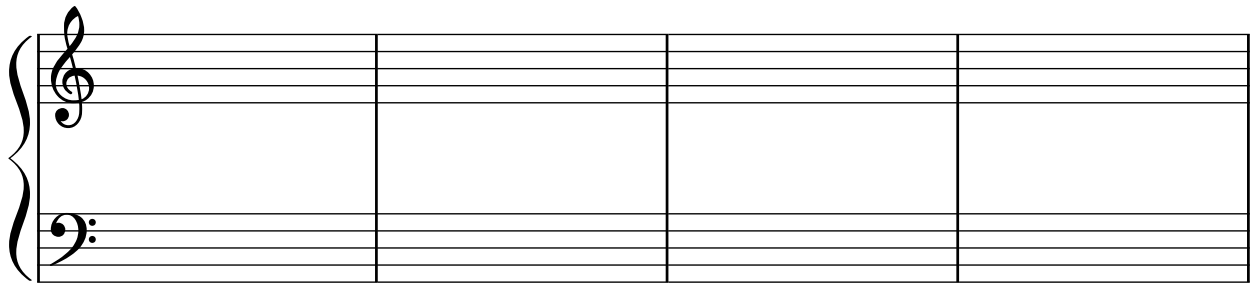

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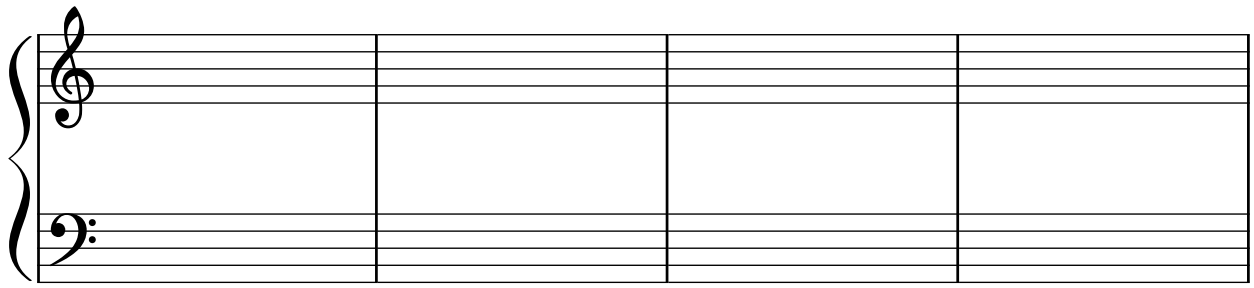

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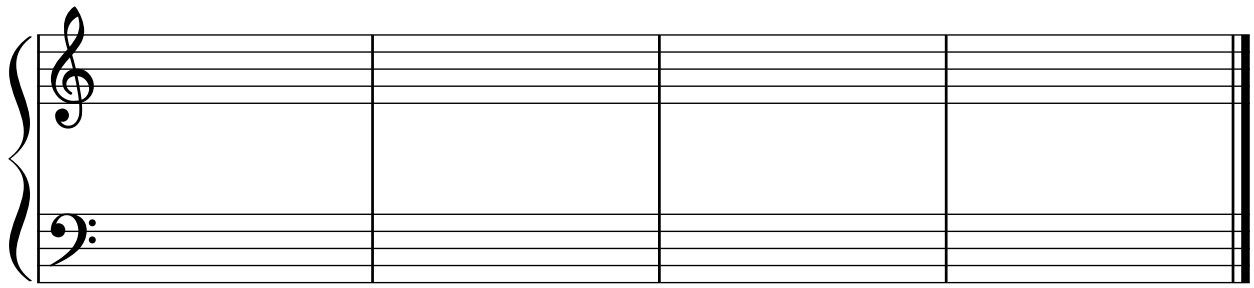

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