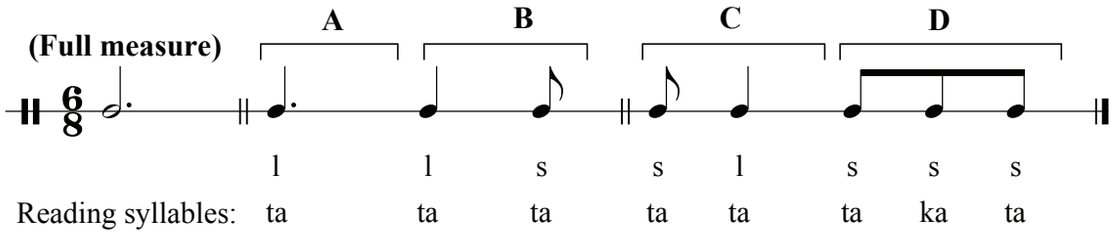
Remember that we hear many rhythmic patterns not as a series of discrete attacks but as single units and, furthermore, that we can recognize specific patterns of long (l) and short (s) that make up individual rhythmic gestures. For compound meters, the most common patterns are illustrated in **Example 3–27**. Practise vocalizing and internalizing these rhythms before you attempt their transcription.

Example 3–27 Rhythmic patterns in compound time using eighth-note divisions

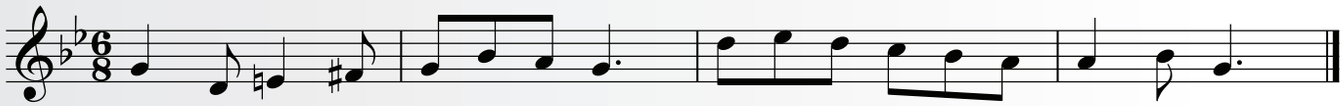


Note that these patterns are shown in $\frac{6}{8}$ only. The same principle applies to $\frac{9}{8}$ and $\frac{12}{8}$.

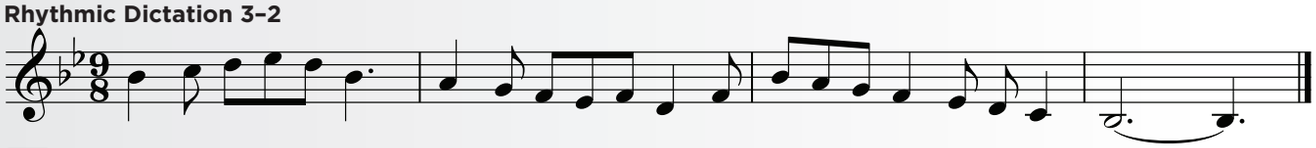
Exercises

As your teacher plays the rhythmic dictations below, remember to use physical movements to keep a steady beat and maintain your place in each measure.

Rhythmic Dictation 3–1



Rhythmic Dictation 3–2



online Audio files for these transcription exercises may be found online at www.oupcanada.com/Ethier

Sight-reading rhythms in compound time is a bit different than in simple time. In simple time it is easy to group beats together in pairs because there are only one to four rhythmic values (half note, quarter note, eighth note, and dotted quarter) possible for every two beats. In compound meters, on the other hand, there are many more possibilities for combinations of long and short rhythms over two beats.[7] This fact makes it unwieldy for the performer to try to be familiar with all of them. Instead, we take a single beat and its division into three, and we find that there are only the four possibilities for rhythmic combinations that were illustrated in **Example 3–27**.

Performance Tip

Many non-classical performers, especially those in jazz and popular music fields, think of compound time signatures such as $\frac{9}{8}$ as simple meters with a **swing**. That is, they feel them as two-, three-, or four-beat meters with **triplets**. Although the treatment of and approach to triplets will be covered more thoroughly in a later chapter, this is a good musical approach. Feeling the swing as you vocalize rhythmic exercises in compound meter will help you keep a steady beat and read the passages more quickly.