

Off the Charts (Ledger Lines)

The two clefs together can only graph about 20 notes, but there are 88 keys on the piano! When we need to graph a note that is off the normal staff, we just make up little 'ledger' lines for the note we want to graph. We use these lines just as if they were a part of the staff. Here's an example (the note names are written in for you):



Musical notation for a piece in 4/4 time. The notation is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The notes are labeled with letters: F, G, A, B, C, E, D, C, B, G, F, E, D, C, B, A. The notes are written on and below the staff lines, illustrating ledger lines.

It can be a pain to have to read a whole lot of notes on ledger lines! If a whole section is supposed to be played extremely high or low, the notes may be graphed on the staff, but there will be an indication to play the notes higher or lower than it appears. The "8va" on this section means that these notes should be played 8 notes higher than what is written.

