

Dictionary of Braille Music Signs for GTLA

Revised Edition: 2022

Note: this dictionary covers the signs used in the GTLA tests from 2022, it is not a full list of all possible braille music signs. For the full list, consult the New International Manual of Braille Music, available at www.ukaaf.org/music

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Signs Organised by Type

Notes

	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	Rest
Quaver	⠠	⠡	⠢	⠣	⠤	⠥	⠦	⠇
Crotchet	⠠	⠡	⠢	⠣	⠤	⠥	⠦	⠇
Minim	⠠	⠡	⠢	⠣	⠤	⠥	⠦	⠇
Semibreve	⠠	⠡	⠢	⠣	⠤	⠥	⠦	⠇

Dotted note: ⠠ placed after the note or rest.

A bar's rest is shown as a semibreve rest, regardless of time signature. For more than 3 bars' rest, use a number immediately followed by the rest.

One bar's rest: ⠇

Three bars' rest: ⠇⠇⠇

Four bars' rest: ⠇⠇⠇⠇

Note: the same signs are used for semibreves and semiquavers, for minims and demisemiquavers; context determines which is meant.

Accidentals

Flat	Natural	Sharp	Double flat	Double sharp
⠠	⠠	⠡	⠠⠠	⠡⠡

Accidentals are placed before notes and their octave signs.

Octave Signs

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠	⠠

Octave below 1st octave: ⠠⠠

Octave above 7th octave: ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

Octaves run from C to B. Octave signs are placed before the note where needed. The first note always needs an octave sign. Subsequent notes may need an octave sign depending on the interval from the previous note:

No octave sign is needed for a 2nd or 3rd

Octave sign is always needed for a 6th or greater

Octave sign is needed for a 4th or 5th if crossing an octave boundary.

Example: ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠ goes up, ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠ goes down.

Note that some intervening signs require a following octave sign.

Print's 8va (ottava) and 8va with dots are represented by a double octave sign on the first note showing the written and sounding pitch respectively, and identical double octave signs on the first note after the end of the 8va showing that written and sounding pitch are once again the same.

Clef Signs

Treble

⠠⠠⠠⠠

Bass

⠠⠠⠠⠠

Alto

⠠⠠⠠⠠

Tenor

⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

Key and Time Signatures

For up to three sharps or flats, show this number of sharps or flats. For more than 3, use a number immediately followed by sharp or flat.

For numeric time signatures, write the top number immediately followed by the denominator in the lower portion of the cell.

Common time: ⠠⠠⠠ Cut common time: ⠠⠠⠠

Examples:

2/4 time:

⠠⠠⠠⠠

4/4 time:

⠠⠠⠠⠠

Begin crescendo: ⠠⠠⠠ End crescendo: ⠠⠠

Begin diminuendo: ⠠⠠ End Diminuendo: ⠠⠠

Examples:

f (forte): ⠠⠠ p (piano): ⠠⠠ mf (mezzo forte): ⠠⠠⠠

mp (mezzo piano): ⠠⠠⠠

pp (pianissimo) ⠠⠠⠠ ff (fortissimo): ⠠⠠⠠

rall. (Rallantando): ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

cresc. (crescendo): ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠

dim. (diminuendo): ⠠⠠⠠⠠

Add the separation sign after the expression if the next braille sign contains any of dots 1, 2 or 3.

Fingering

Keyboard:

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

Strings:

1st 2nd 3rd 4th Open String

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

Intervals and In-Accord

2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th Octave

⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠ ⠠

Where four or more repeated intervals appear in succession, the interval is stated twice at its first occurrence and once at its last, omitted in between. This is called "doubling", e.g. ⠠⠠⠠⠠ for doubled thirds.

Note: intervals read downwards in the right hand or treble clef and upwards in the left hand or bass clef, unless otherwise stated.

These interval signs are also used for multi-stopped notes in string music.

Full bar in-accord: ⋮⋮
Part bar in-accord: ⋮⋮
Part bar division: ⋮⋮

Stem Signs and Metronome Markings

Minim Crotchet Quaver
⋮⋮ ⋮⋮ ⋮⋮

Stem signs are used in metronome markings, e.g. ♩=100. The equals sign is the standard equals sign, ⋮⋮

Ornaments and Nuances

Acciaccatura: ⋮
Appoggiatura: ⋮⋮
Trill: ⋮
Trill with line of continuation: ⋮⋮⋮
End line of continuation: ⋮⋮
Upper mordent: ⋮⋮
Lower mordent: ⋮⋮⋮
Turn between notes: ⋮
Turn on the note: ⋮⋮
Staccato: ⋮
Staccatissimo: ⋮⋮
Mezzo-staccato: ⋮⋮
Tenuto: ⋮⋮
Accent: ⋮⋮
Pause: ⋮⋮

Nuances may be "doubled", stated twice before the first occurrence of a succession of notes, once before the last and omitted in between.

Doubled staccato: ⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨
 Doubled tenuto: ⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨
 Doubled accent: ⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨

Miscellaneous

Right hand in keyboard music Left hand in keyboard music
 ⠠⠨⠠⠨ ⠠⠨⠠⠨

For keyboard music, bar numbers are written to the left and spaced from the right hand sign, print line numbers are unspaced from the left hand sign. Numeral signs are omitted. e.g. bar 1 line 1:

⠠⠨⠠⠨ ⠠⠨⠠⠨
 ⠠⠨⠠⠨

Up bow Down bow
 ⠠⠨⠠⠨ ⠠⠨⠠⠨

String Signs:

1st string: ⠠⠨⠠⠨ 2nd string: ⠠⠨⠠⠨
 3rd string: ⠠⠨⠠⠨ 4th string: ⠠⠨⠠⠨
 5th string: ⠠⠨⠠⠨ 6th string: ⠠⠨⠠⠨

Left hand (percussion) Right hand (percussion)
 ⠠⠨ ⠠⠨

Pedal down Pedal up Half-pedal
 ⠠⠨⠠⠨ ⠠⠨⠠⠨ ⠠⠨⠠⠨⠠⠨

Breath sign Comma
 ⠠⠨⠠⠨ ⠠⠨⠠⠨

Word/phrase repeat signs in vocal music:

Repeated once: ♪ word or phrase ♪

Repeated twice: ♪ ♪ word or phrase ♪

Repeated three times (alter number for more than 3 repeats):

♪ ♪ ♪ word or phrase ♪

Elision signs in lyrics:

In the words ♪ and ♪ e.g. ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

In the music:

For two syllables: ♪

For three syllables: ♪

Spread chord: ♪ ♪

Special parentheses surrounding a bar number or rehearsal letter/number ♪

Signs Organised by Braille

- ⠠ (dot 1) First finger; also left hand in percussion work
- ⠠⠠ (dots 1,2) Second finger; also two syllables sung to one note
- ⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,4) Slur between two notes or chords; also end of syllabic slur over four or more notes in vocal music
- ⠠⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,4 1,4) Start of syllabic slur over four or more notes in vocal music
- ⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,4,5) Quaver C
- ⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,5) Quaver D
- ⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,2,4) Quaver E
- ⠠⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,2,4,5) Quaver F
- ⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,2,5) Quaver G
- ⠠⠠⠠ (dots 2,4) Quaver A
- ⠠⠠⠠⠠ (dots 2,4,5) Quaver B
- ⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,3) 5th finger; also open string
- ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,2,3) 3rd finger; also three syllables to one note; also right hand in percussion work
- ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,3,4) Whole bar rest; semibreve rest; semiquaver rest
- ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,3,4,5) Minim C; demisemiquaver C
- ⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠⠠ (dots 1,3,5) Minim D; demisemiquaver D

- ∴ (dots 1,2,3,4) Minim E; demisemi-quaver E
- ∴ (dots 1,2,3,4,5) Minim F; demisemi-quaver F
- ∴ (dots 1,2,3,5) Minim G; demisemi-quaver G
- ∴ (dots 2,3,4) Minim A; demisemi-quaver A
- ∴ (dots 2,3,4,5) Minim B; demisemi-quaver B
- ∴ (dots 1,3,6) Minim rest; demisemi-quaver rest
- ∴ (dots 1,2,3,6) Crotchet rest
- ∴ (dots 1,3,4,6) Quaver rest
- ∴ (dots 1,3,4,5,6) Semibreve C; Semi-quaver C
- ∴ (dots 1,3,5,6) Semibreve D; Semi-quaver D
- ∴ (dots 1,2,3,4,6) Semibreve E; Semi-quaver E
- ∴ (dots 1,2,3,4,5,6) Semibreve F; Semi-quaver F
- ∴ (dots 1,2,3,5,6) Semibreve G; Semi-quaver G
- ∴ (dots 2,3,4,6) Semibreve A; Semi-quaver A
- ∴ (dots 2,3,4,5,6) Semibreve B; Semi-quaver B
- ∴ (dots 1,6) Natural
 - ∴ ∴ Pedal up
- ∴ (dots 1,2,6) Flat
 - ∴ ∴ Down bow

- ⋮⋮ Pedal down
- ⋮⋮ Double bar line
- ⋮⋮⋮ Thin double bar
- ⋮⋮ Pause
- ⋮⋮ Double flat
- ⋮⋮ End of repeat
- ⋮⋮ Beginning of repeat
- ⋮⋮ Full bar in-accord
- ⋮⋮ Up bow

⋮ (dots 1,4,6) Sharp

- ⋮⋮ 1st string
- ⋮⋮ 2nd string
- ⋮⋮ 5th string
- ⋮⋮ 3rd string
- ⋮⋮ Double sharp
- ⋮⋮ 4th string
- ⋮⋮ 6th string

⋮ (dots 1,4,5,6) Crotchet C

⋮ (dots 1,5,6) Crotchet D

⋮ (dots 1,2,4,6) Crotchet E

⋮ (dots 1,2,4,5,6) Crotchet F

⋮ (dots 1,2,5,6) Crotchet G

⋮ (dots 2,4,6) Crotchet A

⋮ (dots 2,4,5,6) Crotchet B

⋮ (dot 2) 4th finger

- ∴ (dots 2,3) Triplet
- ∴ (dots 2,5) Interval of 7th; also end doubled 7th interval
 - ∴ ∴ Begin doubled 7th interval
- ∴ (dots 2,5,6) Turn between notes
- ∴ (dots 2,6) Acciaccatura
- ∴ (dots 2,3,5) Trill
 - ∴ ∴ ∴ Trill with line of continuation
- ∴ (dots 2,3,5,6) Bar or part-bar repeat; also special parentheses around bar number or rehearsal letter/number
- ∴ (dots 2,3,6) Staccato; also end doubled staccatos sign; also beginning elision sign in lyrics
 - ∴ ∴ Begin doubled staccatos sign
- ∴ (dots 3,5) Interval of 5th; also end doubled 5th interval; also word repeat sign in vocal music
 - ∴ ∴ Begin doubled 5th interval; also word repeated twice in vocal music
- ∴ (dots 3,5,6) Interval of 6th; also end doubled 6th interval; also end elision sign in lyrics
 - ∴ ∴ Begin doubled 6th interval
- ∴ (dots 3,4) Interval of 2nd; also end doubled 2nd interval
 - ∴ ∴ Begin doubled 2nd interval
- ∴ (dots 3,4,6) Interval of 3rd; also end doubled 3rd interval
 - ∴ ∴ Begin doubled 3rd interval
- ∴ (dots 3,4,5,6) Interval of 4th; also end doubled 4th interval
 - ∴ ∴ Begin doubled 4th interval

⋮ (dots 3,4,5) Word sign

⋮⋮ Beginning of crescendo

⋮⋮ Beginning of diminuendo

⋮⋮ Spread chord

⋮⋮ Comma or half breath

⋮⋮ End of crescendo

⋮⋮ End of diminuendo

⋮⋮⋮ Treble G clef

⋮⋮⋮ Alto C clef

⋮⋮⋮ Tenor C clef

⋮⋮⋮ Bass F clef

⋮⋮ End of continuation line (e.g. for trill with line of continuation)

⋮ (dot 3) Dot on dotted note or rest; separation dot after hand sign or word expression

⋮ (dots 3,6) Interval of an octave; also end doubled octave interval

⋮⋮ Begin doubled octave interval

⋮ (dot 4) 1st octave

⋮⋮ Octave below 1st octave

⋮⋮ Tie

⋮ (dots 4,5) 2nd octave

⋮⋮ End of phrase

⋮ (dots 4,5,6) 3rd octave

⋮⋮ Crotchet stem sign

⋮⋮ Quaver stem sign

⋮⋮ Cut common time

⋮⋮ Minim stem sign

- ⋮⋮ Tenuto; also end doubled tenutos sign
- ⋮⋮ ⋮⋮ Begin doubled tenutos sign
- ⋮⋮ Left hand part in keyboard music

- ⋮ (dot 5) 4th octave; also hyphen at end of unfinished bar
 - ⋮⋮⋮ Half-pedal
 - ⋮⋮ Part bar in-accord
 - ⋮⋮ Appoggiatura
 - ⋮⋮ Upper mordent
 - ⋮⋮⋮ Lower mordent
 - ⋮⋮ Equals sign in metronome marking
 - ⋮⋮ Mezzo-staccato
 - ⋮⋮⋮⋮ Begin doubled mezzo-staccato

- ⋮ (dots 4,6) 5th octave
 - ⋮⋮ Chord tie; also common time
 - ⋮⋮ Part bar division
 - ⋮⋮ Accent sign; also end doubled accents sign
 - ⋮⋮ ⋮⋮ Begin doubled accents sign
 - ⋮⋮ Right hand part in keyboard music

- ⋮ (dots 5,6) 6th octave
 - ⋮⋮ Beginning of phrase
 - ⋮⋮ Small slur

- ⋮ (dot 6) 7th octave
 - ⋮⋮ Turn on a note
 - ⋮⋮ Staccatissimo
 - ⋮⋮⋮⋮ Begin doubled staccatissimo
 - ⋮⋮ Breath mark
 - ⋮⋮ Octave above seventh octave