

How to Read Chord Charts



-Chord Charts are read left to right, top to bottom, just like written language.

-Basic Chord Charts (such as this one) indicate only the Chord Changes of a song, not the Melody, Lyrics, or exact Rhythm.

-Chord Charts are an outline, especially useful for Bass, Guitar, and Keyboards, to establish a basic understanding of a song.

Time Signature: Establishes the Meter of a song. The top number indicates how many Beats per Measure, the bottom number tells what kind of Beats to use. 4/4 indicates four Quarter Notes per Measure. If no Time Signature is included, 4/4 (or Common Time) is implied.

Barlines: Indicate the start and end of each Measure/Bar. Each Measure contains the same number of Beats, as indicated by the Time Signature, regardless of how long the Measure *appears* to be in the chart. Double Barlines indicate the beginning or end of a section.

Chords: Each Chord is to be played for the duration of the Measure. This does not mean each Chord is to be held (as a Whole Note) throughout each Measure. The Rhythm within each Measure is an important piece of information not commonly included in Chord Charts.*

Sections: Smaller letters, usually above and to the left of the beginning of a line, indicate which section is which. Sections are usually labelled either alphabetically (A, B, C, etc.) or based on song structure (e.g. "in" for intro, "V" for verse, "C" for chorus, etc.)

*In Measures containing 2 or more Chords, the Measure is to be split, depending on the spacing of the Chord symbols. Usually, if there are 2 Chords in a Measure, each Chord is to be played for half of the Measure. In this example:

| C A- G |

the spacing of the Chord symbols indicates that "C" is to be played for the first half of the Measure, "A-" for the third quarter, and "G" for the fourth quarter.

Repeat Sign: Indicates the section between the two Repeat Signs is to be repeated. This section should only be repeated once before moving on to the next section unless indicated otherwise (e.g. "3x", "4x", etc.).

Tempo: Some charts also indicate tempo, though not always. If included, the tempo is usually shown in BPM (beats per minute).

Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You ♩ = 110
Frankie Valli

(Pop)

4/4	F#	F#	E	/
A	/E	/E	/E	/
B	E	/	E Δ 7	/
C	/	E7	/	A
D	/	/	/	/
E	A-	/	E	/
F	/	/	F#	/
G	/	/	F#	/
H	/	/	E	/
I	F#	B7	E	/
J	/	/	/	/
K	F#	B7	E	/
L	/	/	/	/
M	F#	B7	G#7	C#
N	/	/	/	/
O	F#7	B7	E	C#7
P	/	/	/	/
Q	F#	B7	G#7	C#
R	/	/	/	/
S	F#7	/	D9	/
T	/	/	/	/
U	A	/	G\Delta7	/
V	/	/	G7	/
W	/	/	/	/
X	C-	/	G	/
Y	/	/	A	/
Z	/	/	A	/
AA	/	/	G	/

Fine

D.S. al Fine

Signes, Fines, and Codas: Sometimes it is necessary to go back to a specific portion of a chart and repeat just that portion, or even to repeat a specific section and then skip to a new section, and it is sometimes too complicated to indicate these instructions using only Repeat Signs. Therefore, there are additional symbols that are used to indicate these more complex navigations. **D.S. al Fine** (literally, "from the sign to the ending") tells the player to go back to the sign, marked: $\text{\textcircled{S}}$ and then continue playing through the chart until reaching the Measure marked "Fine" (meaning ending). **D.C.** instead of D.S. means go back to the beginning of the song. The instruction **al Coda** (instead of "al Fine") is more complicated. This instructs the player to play through the song until reaching the Coda symbol: $\text{\textcircled{C}}$ and then jump to the section of the song marked "Coda" (sometimes marked with another Coda symbol). The Coda symbol can be thought of like a Chord Chart portal, transporting the player from one section to another without playing the section(s) in between.