

RWCC Music Reading 101: Session 3

Repeats and Roadmaps in Music



Part 1: Repeat Signs

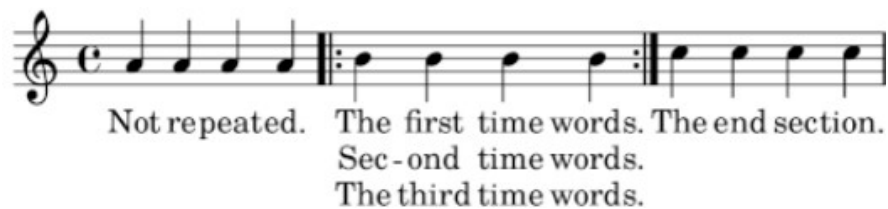
Repeat signs tell the musician to go back to a specific measure and repeat that section of music.



If the music doesn't have a starting repeat sign, when you reach the end repeat sign go back to the beginning of the piece and play/sing through the rest of the piece.

You may also see an indication that the section should be repeated multiple times!

In this example, you can see how sometimes in Choral music the repeat requires different lyrics each time:



You may also see indications for multiple endings. Here, you would start at the beginning and sing through ending 1 to the repeat sign, then on the second time through skip the section under the "1" bracket and proceed to ending 2.



Part 2: Other repeated sections

You may also see instructions like “D.C. al Fine” or “D.S. al Coda”. These can be a little confusing to learn, but once you get the hang of it you’ll be flipping through pages like a pro!

D.C. al Fine

This stands for “Da Capo al Fine”, or in plain English, “From the Head (capo) to the end (fine)”. Here’s how it works:

1. Play the entire piece to the D.C. al Fine marking



The image shows a musical staff in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. A yellow vertical bar labeled "Fine" is placed at the end of the first phrase. Further to the right, another yellow vertical bar labeled "D.C. al Fine" is placed at the end of the second phrase. Arrows point from the text instructions to these markings.

2. Go back to the beginning (the "Capo")

3. Finish at the Fine ("end") marking.

D.S. al Coda

This stands for Dal Segno al Coda, which translates into English as “From the Sign (segna) to the coda”. The “coda” is the concluding passage of a piece of music. These instructions mean you will go back and repeat a particular section of music, and then jump ahead to the Coda.


This is the Segna symbol: %

This is the Coda symbol: ⊕

Here’s how it works:

1. Start at beginning, play to "D.S. al Coda" marking

2. Go back and play from the Segna symbol



The image shows two musical staves. The first staff is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melody with a Segna symbol (% in a circle) and a Coda symbol (⊕ in a circle). The text "To Coda" and "D.S. al Coda" is written above the staff. Red arrows and brackets indicate the flow: from the beginning to the D.S. al Coda marking, then back to the Segna symbol, and finally to the Coda symbol. A bracket under the second phrase is labeled "(skip 2nd time)".

3. Play up to the "To Coda" instructions (skip 2nd time)

4. Go to the Coda, continue to end