

Uses of Ties and Slurs

Ties and slurs look very similar in written music, but do *not* perform the same function.

A **TIE** usually connects adjacent notes of the same pitch. It serves a *rhythmic* function, in that it changes the rhythm of a passage in one of two ways:

1. A Tie may be used to extend a note across a barline to create a note that lasts longer than one measure:

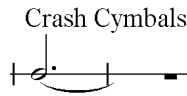


2. A Tie may be used to extend a note into the next beat group while maintaining the visual structure of the measure.



In this meter, the first measure is clearer than the second, but they both sound the same. A composer may have a reason for writing the second version.

A third use for a tie indicates that a percussion instrument is to be allowed to ring instead of being muffled at the end of the note value:



Think of this tie as a tie "to infinity."

A **SLUR** connects two or more notes of the same or different pitches. It serves a purely *expressive* function, in that it changes the nuances a performer will use. Its exact meaning depends on the musical context and the instrument involved.

1. A slur may be used simply to indicate a musical idea (commonly but incorrectly called a *phrase*). Notice that there are slurs within the larger slur, which also must be taken into account.



4. A slur may indicate that notes are to be played *legato*, that is, with as little space between them as possible.



2. A slur may indicate that the player of a wind instrument is to play two or more notes in the same breath, without using the tongue to start notes after the first one.



3. A slur may indicate that a string player is to play a group of notes without changing the direction of the bow. It is common in this case to see other articulations under the slur.



5. Lastly, in vocal music, a slur usually indicates that a syllable of text lasts for more than one note.



Lau - - - da- te!