

PIANO TOWN TEACHER'S GUIDE for Primer Level Lessons

The Perfect Place to Learn to Play the Piano

By Keith Snell & Diane Hidy

Join us for a page-by-page tour of Piano Town. This detailed guide will offer you tips and advice about exactly how to teach each page in Piano Town Lessons Primer. We hope this behind-the-scenes look will help you understand the design and purpose of every facet of the method.

The guide will be most useful if you have a copy of Piano Town [Lessons Primer Level](#) (MP100) for reference as you read the commentary.

Let's explore Piano Town!

Handwritten signature of Keith P. Snell in black ink.Handwritten signature of Diane Hidy in black ink.

FRONT COVER

Every element in the picture on the cover appears inside Primer Level Lessons.

We named the method **Piano Town** with the idea of creating an environment for learning. The town provides a place for exploration, as well as a feeling of home, with recurring characters and locations.



PIANO TOWN

Primer Level Lessons

Keith Snell • Diane Hidy

MP100



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to play the piano

THE PERFECT PLACE TO LEARN

INSIDE FRONT COVER

PREFACE

On the inside of the front cover, we wrote a concise preface, with information about the distinctive features of Piano Town. The bulleted points are especially important.

Dear Teachers, Students, and Parents,

Welcome to **Piano Town** – a method for beginning piano students ages six and up. The course of study is divided into five levels. Each level has four correlated books:

Primer	Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four
<i>Lessons</i>	<i>Lessons</i>	<i>Lessons</i>	<i>Lessons</i>	<i>Lessons</i>
<i>Theory</i>	<i>Theory</i>	<i>Theory</i>	<i>Theory</i>	<i>Theory</i>
<i>Technic</i>	<i>Technic</i>	<i>Technic</i>	<i>Technic</i>	<i>Technic</i>
<i>Performance</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Performance</i>	<i>Performance</i>

Lessons is the core of **Piano Town**. The controlled, steady pacing of the curriculum introduces one element at a time. Each concept is presented in a consistent, reliable format. This clear presentation helps students focus on new skills and information.

Practical teaching experience, and the process of writing and testing **Piano Town** with a wide variety of students, led us to important conclusions about features which are absolutely essential to the success of each student.

- **Questions at the beginning of each piece in *Lessons*:**
 - Encourage students to look through the music before playing it.
 - Give teachers a tool for presenting new concepts, reviewing old concepts, and preparing successful sight-reading, practice, and performance.
- **Call-outs** introduce all new concepts. A pointer line pairs each term with its definition, and each symbol with its explanation. Definitions and explanations appear when and where they are needed in the music.
- **Classical literature** is introduced in Level One, and used almost exclusively in Level Three and Level Four. **Piano Town** also includes original music, as well as arrangements of folk melodies and familiar tunes.
- **Theory, Technic, and Performance** provide support and review for each concept and skill and are coordinated page by page with *Lessons*. **Piano Town** is most successful when students use all four books.
- **Art and lyrics** encourage imagination and help students explore the expressive nature of music.

We hope your journey through **Piano Town** brings you great pleasure, and wish you all the joy that music can bring.

Keith Snell
Diane Hidy

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Words in *italics* show detail of concepts presented in each section.

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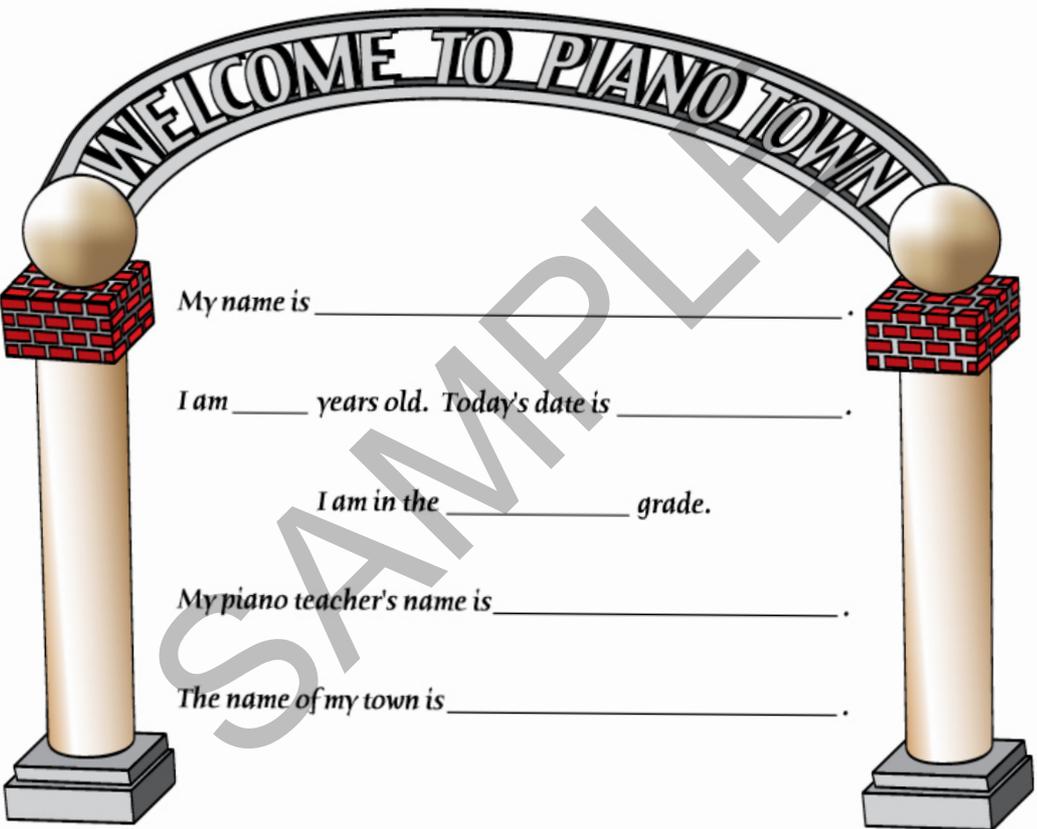
WELCOME TO PIANO TOWN

Celebrate the first lesson! This page provides a wonderful way to welcome a new student to your studio, and to Piano Town.

Students often keep their first piano book into adulthood. A cherished memory can be created by filling in the blanks. This may be done by the student, or by the teacher if the writing is too difficult for the student.

It is also an opportunity to communicate to the student how you, the teacher, prefer to be addressed, by filling in the blank for the teacher's name.

To make the page even more special, clip or tape a photo of the student to the page.



WELCOME TO PIANO TOWN

My name is _____.

I am _____ years old. Today's date is _____.

I am in the _____ grade.

My piano teacher's name is _____.

The name of my town is _____.

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SITTING AT THE PIANO/HAND POSITION

The first thing to notice on this page is the colored tab in the upper outside corner. These will be found on every page of Lessons. The tabs are there as an aid to the teacher. The information written in the tabs tells what is the most important new concept(s) being presented on a page.

Next, notice the conversational style of the text on this page. This provides the teacher with a very natural and warm sounding “script”, which will help put the student at ease as you go through these details of posture and hand position.

Each bulleted point has a call-out line, connecting it to the example in the picture. You will notice the use of call-outs throughout Piano Town as a way of directing the eye from text to a visual element, or vice versa.

It is important to be very thorough with each item on this page. The basics of good posture and hand shape will, for most students, require patient and persistent reminders. However, the earlier good habits are started, the more natural they become later on.

Sitting at the Piano
Hand Position

It is easier to play the piano when you are sitting correctly. Here are a few tips.

- Sit tall.
- You will be more comfortable when your forearms are level with the keyboard. If your elbows are lower than the keyboard, sit on a book or a firm cushion so you are high enough.
- Sit with your knees under the front edge of the piano. Avoid sitting with your knees all the way under the piano.
- Put your feet flat on the floor. If your feet don't quite reach the floor, put a stool under your feet.

Teacher: To reinforce a feeling of accomplishment, turn to page 62 and put a check (✓) or sticker in each box after the student has learned the new concept.



The shape of your hands and fingers when you play is called your **hand position**. Keeping a good hand position at all times will help you to play your best!

- Keep your fingers curved (but not curled) when you play.
- The first joint on each finger should stay firm; don't let it bend or collapse. This will take a lot of concentration at first, but as your fingers become stronger, it will be easier.
- The tips of your fingers should touch the keys.
- Keep an open space between your thumb and finger.



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THE PIANO KEYBOARD/FINGER NUMBERS

Notice the text layout which describes down/up and higher/lower: information about going down the keyboard, and lower sounds is flush left; up and higher flush right. This is a visual cue to help orient students to keyboard direction. And, like page 4, the text is in a very conversational style.

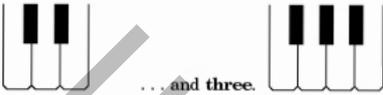
Along with learning finger numbers, this is a good opportunity to discuss LH and RH. Check to make sure that your student is secure with which hand is left, which is right. Students who have trouble with this may do better with calling the left hand the “lower hand”, and the right hand the “upper hand”.

You can, of course, introduce the concepts on this page without the book. But on days when you are a little tired, it is nice to have the "script" to use. This information is also helpful for parents, especially if they are unfamiliar with piano lessons.

The Piano Keyboard
Finger Numbers

The piano keyboard has 88 keys!
Some are **white keys**, others are **black keys**.

The black keys are in alternating groups of two ... and three.



When you play keys moving to the *left*, it is called going **down** the keyboard.

When you play keys moving to the *right*, it is called going **up** the keyboard.

As you play down the keyboard, the sounds become **lower**.

As you play up the keyboard, the sounds become **higher**.

LOW ← DOWN UP → HIGH



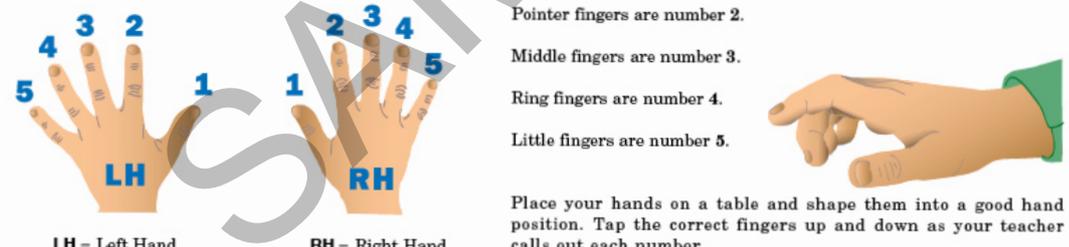
Finger numbers help you to know which finger to use on which key. Thumbs are number 1.

Pointer fingers are number 2.

Middle fingers are number 3.

Ring fingers are number 4.

Little fingers are number 5.



LH = Left Hand RH = Right Hand

Place your hands on a table and shape them into a good hand position. Tap the correct fingers up and down as your teacher calls out each number.

MP100 5

BLACK KEY GROUPS

This is the first opportunity for students to make sounds at the piano. Notice that the pictures help show the student the correct direction to play (up or down). We find it most effective to play the keys together (blocked) first, then one at a time.

You may do this by playing:

1. All four exercises consecutively, keys together; then go back and play all four exercises consecutively, one key at a time.
2. Each individual exercise, keys together, then repeat the exercise playing one key at a time.

Another way is to play the keys one at a time, then immediately together in each place on the keyboard, i.e. 2—3 2/3, move up, 2—3 2/3, move up, etc.

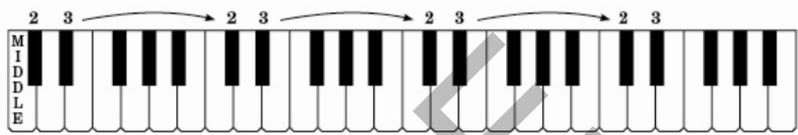
Re-assign this page for one or two weeks, as it will help students become very secure with the keyboard geography, as well as create more freedom of arm movement across the keyboard.

When a student plays the keys one at a time, observe their coordination and help them to acquire a legato touch. This is an excellent preparation for the upcoming music on page 8 and 9.

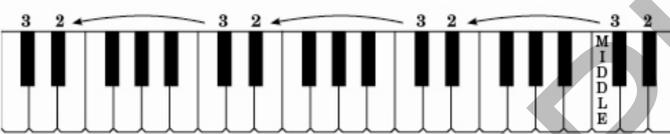
Black Key Groups



RH
Play each group of two black keys.*



Start in the middle and go up the keyboard.



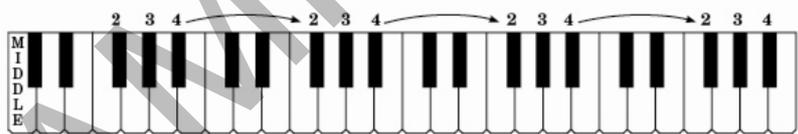
Start in the middle and go down the keyboard.



LH
Play each group of two black keys.



RH
Play each group of three black keys.



Start in the middle and go up the keyboard.



Start in the middle and go down the keyboard.



LH
Play each group of three black keys.

*The keys can be played together, or one at a time.

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NOTES AND RHYTHM

Here we present two different note values: quarter note and half note. It is important to show students that the way something *looks* gives us information about how it should *sound*. Connecting the visual representation with the act of producing a sound is basic to good reading and musicianship.

We suggest two ways to count. “Unit” counting -- 1,1,1-2 -- is an excellent way for students to learn about relative duration in a way that will lead to metric counting. However, some students confuse unit counting with finger numbers. As an alternative, we recommend the chanting of note values: quar-ter, quar-ter, half—note. This method of counting avoids confusing finger numbers with counts and provides these three benefits:

1. Chanting note values requires a slower tempo than counting numbers, thus helping students to practice slowly, while keeping a steady beat.
2. The constant repetition of note values names helps to ensure that students will memorize them.
3. Learning to play eighth-note rhythms is easier, because when transitioning from “quar - ter, quar - ter” to “two-eighths, two-eighths” the sound of subdividing the quarter note into eighths is already there.

We stay out of your way for most of the book when it comes to ways to count. Although we recommend these ways, feel free to use whatever way you may prefer.

Notes and Rhythm

Music is made of sounds called **notes**.

The way each note *looks* shows how short or long it will *sound*.

Here are two kinds of notes: **Quarter Note**  **Half Note** 

Saying words or counting numbers helps us hear how short or long a note should sound.

say:	quar-ter	half	note
or count:	1	1	2

When notes are arranged into patterns, it is called **rhythm**.

Clap and count these rhythms.

1. 

2. 

Double bar line: means “the end.” 



1, 1, 1-2



quar-ter, quar-ter, half—note

Teacher: To reinforce a feeling of accomplishment, turn to page 62 and put a check (✓) or sticker in each box after the student has learned the new concept.

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NEW THINGS

Things to Review

Quarter Note, Half Note
 Finger Numbers 2, 3
 LH, RH
 Groups of Two Black Keys

What's New

Practice Steps
 Song Lyrics
 Duet
 Legato

On this page, we have our very first piece of music. The words of this song are wonderful for capturing the imagination of a student: "I like trying new things; Let's see what today brings." Before we look closely at the music, let's take a tour of other important features of the page.

Two Black Keys
 Legato



Note: Student parts printed above the duet show the octave in which the student should play when playing with the duet.

Student *8va*

Duet *LH 1 legato*

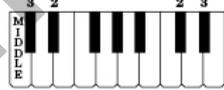
When you practice, play and:

- Sing the finger numbers.
- Count the rhythm aloud.
- Sing the words.

New Things

LH
 3 2

RH
 2 3



When you hold one key down until you play the next, you are playing **legato**. Legato is an Italian word that means **smoothly connected**.

This piece uses black keys in groups of (circle your answer):

Two Three

Which hand plays first?

LH RH

RH 2 3 2 3 2 3
 I like try - ing new things,

LH 2 3 2 3 2 3
 Let's see what to - day brings.

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MP100

Artwork

In the artwork in the top left corner of the page, we see a little girl just waking up (7 am, by the clock) who is thinking about new things she will try that day: a piece of pizza, riding a horse, and playing the piano. On her wall is a blue ribbon; and if you look very closely at that ribbon (and your students will) you will see that it says “1st Place, Best Lamb”. (The lamb will show up a little bit later on page 10.) As we look outside her window, we see a barn -- this barn will appear many times throughout the book; it can even be seen on the book cover.

Duet

To the right of the picture, we find the duet. Notice that the student part is printed above the duet so that you can keep track of the student part without having to look up and down the page.

Practice Suggestions

Just below the duet are some practice suggestions. These three essential steps develop reading, rhythm, and ear training. By focusing on a different element each time the piece is played, the eyes take in more of what is there, which is fundamental to good reading. Counting aloud while playing not only promotes good rhythm and steady tempo, but also helps to open the mind to structure and form, and is an important aid in secure memorization. Singing is the most effective form of ear training; and singing the words helps create a sense of phrase, line, and breath. The words also stir a student's imagination, with the potential to elicit more creative performances. Exploring the words with a student gives you an opportunity to help a student understand that music is a form of self expression.

1. **Play and sing the finger numbers.** Notice that the LH pattern is a mirror (inversion) of the RH. This is physically more comfortable and easier for students to coordinate.
2. **Play and count the rhythm aloud.** We feel it is best to chant note values. This will help keep the tempo slow and steady, and rehearse the names of each note value.
3. **Play and Sing the words.** Have the student read the words aloud to you first. Some younger students may not be able to read the words, and you will need to teach them by rote. Make sure the student understands the meaning of the words — maybe discuss “new things” that the student has tried lately. If the student is shy about this, share something new that you have tried lately — make it up if you need to; this is just a technique to help the student.

Immediately underneath the picture is a short description of legato. If the student was successful at playing legato on page 6, you now have an opportunity to attach a word to the skill. The *concept* is the important thing here — playing smoothly connected. If the vocabulary is difficult, don't worry about it. There will be an opportunity for revisiting the vocabulary when the student learns the marking for legato (slur) on page 40. You may skip the explanation of legato altogether if the technique is a struggle for the student. It may take several weeks and a few more pieces for the coordination to develop. Never force it as you run the risk of creating tension in the technique.

Questions

Underneath the description of legato there are two questions for the student to answer. Every piece of music in the Lessons book will have questions. The questions will *always* appear in this location on the page. The questions are to be done first, *before* playing the piece. The questions help you, the teacher, prepare as successful a first playing of the piece as possible. The questions help introduce any new concept being presented in the piece, and will also review previously learned concepts. Having the student answer the questions first, gets them in the habit of looking all the way through a new piece of music, to see what is there, before playing. This is such an important habit for a lifetime. As you become familiar with the style of questions in Piano Town, feel free to adopt this technic of question asking with all of the music your students learn. Asking good questions is among the most effective of all teaching techniques: it initiates the process of reaching conclusions based on both previous knowledge and available new information. Developing this kind of reasoning strength in your students creates independent learners who will have more success and enjoyment of music.

The Music

We begin with a piece on groups of two black keys, starting with fingers 2 and 3 in each hand – the strongest fingers. On the next page, we will add finger 4. In this section of the book, where we play only on black keys, we use only fingers 2, 3, and 4.

We purposely avoid using 1 or 5 on the black keys. Fingers 1 and 5 are shorter, and therefore more awkward to position well on the black keys. They are each a special case:

- The 5th finger is the weakest, so we want to gradually develop strength and stability in the center of the hand first (fingers 2, 3, 4) so that the weaker outside of the hand has more support when we begin to use it.
- The thumb is an odd case because of its heaviness, and the fact that it moves at the knuckle in a different way from the other fingers. So again, waiting until the center of the hand begins to acquire some strength and stability helps when using the thumb for the first time.

Make sure that the student understands how to interpret the keyboard map under the title, to avoid confusion when doing home practice. Once the student has found the starting position, do all three practice steps with the student at the lesson. This helps establish the procedure for home practice. We recommend that you do in the lesson exactly what you want done at home. Check to make sure that the student's eyes look only at the music, rather than up and down from music to keyboard. As you go through each practice step, sing aloud with the student and use your finger or a pencil to track the notes on the page. This will help guide and cue the student, creating more confidence in exactly how to play and sing correctly.

The Duet

Some students may be ready to play with the duet right away, while others may need to wait until the next lesson when they have had a chance to practice and become more secure with the playing the piece. It works best to have the student and teacher count aloud the first time playing the duet and student part together. A second performance would be the time to sing the words.

UP THE STREET

Things to Review

Quarter Note, Half Note
 Finger Numbers 2, 3, 4
 LH, RH
 Groups of Three Black Keys

What's New

Looking at the direction notes move (up, down)

This piece uses the groups of three black keys and adds the 4th finger in each hand. Notice again that the melody of the right hand is mirrored (inverted) in the left hand.

On this page, we introduce the most fundamental aspect of reading music: looking to see if notes are going up or down. We want students to recognise that when notes are on an upward slant, we play up the keyboard, and that a downward slant means playing down the keyboard. We emphasize this in the pre-staff reading so that students are prepared to look for the same thing when reading on the staff (pg. 24).

We asked the music engravers to make the angles of ascent and descent very precise. Developing the awareness of direction in pre-staff music is really the significant importance of pre-staff music. Isolating this element of reading, and giving students a chance to process it before the complications of staff reading begin, will strengthen your students' understanding of how to read music. If the direction that notes move is not observed in the pre-staff music, a significant opportunity is missed for a student's comprehension of how to read music.

In the picture, we have the same child as in "New Things". She is leaving for school, waving goodbye to her mother, and about to meet a friend up the street. You will also see her lamb, peering out from behind her house.

Three Black Keys



When notes look higher,
play up the keyboard.



When notes look lower,
play down the keyboard.



Up the Street

LH
4 3 2

RH
2 3 4



This piece uses black keys in groups of:

Two Three

Which hand plays first?

LH RH

The first three notes for the LH go:

Up Down



RH 2 3 4 3 2 3 4

Now I'm walk - ing up the street,



LH 2 3 4 3 2 3 4

Won - - ing which friend I'll meet.

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MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

Things to Review

- Quarter Note, Half Note
- Finger Numbers 2,3,4
- LH, RH
- Groups of Two and Three Black Keys

What's New

- Repeated Notes
- Whole Note
- Call-Outs in the Music

Here we play a group of three black keys in the left hand, and a group of two in the right. (On the next page, this will be changed to two in the left and three in the right.)

We introduce another way that notes move: repeated notes. Direct your student's attention to the contrasting appearance of repeated notes to notes that move up or down.

A new note value is also introduced: whole note. Notice the use of the call-out line from the whole note to its name and counting explanation.

Rather than isolating new concepts in a box somewhere at the top of the page, we introduce them right where they occur: in the music. Terms and definitions are connected to the new concept in the music with a call-out line. This proximity makes it easier to teach, and makes the new information more relevant and accessible to the student.

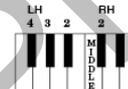
We now have that lamb we have been hinting at in the last two pieces!

Whole Note
Repeated Notes

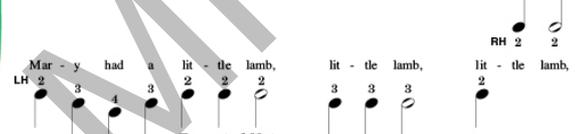




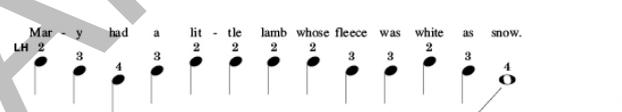
Mary Had a Little Lamb



Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb,



Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb whose fleece was white as snow.



Which hand plays first? **LH** **RH**

Which LH fingers play repeated notes? _____ and _____

Which RH finger plays repeated notes? _____

How many whole notes are there? _____

Whole Note
Count: whole note hold it
or: 1 2 3 4

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MP100

WHITE KEYS C D E

Things to Review

Groups of Two Black Keys

What's New

Music Alphabet A B C D E F G

White Keys C D E

Here we teach the white key names by relating them to the black key groups. It is the easiest way for students to learn to locate the white keys. Using something a student already knows to help them learn something new is always a good teaching technique.

After following the instructions on this page for finding all of the C's, D's, and E's, turn back to page 6 and review the groups of two black keys. Have the student play these exercises on white keys C D, then D E.

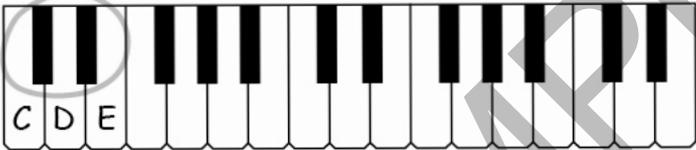
Now, turn to page 8 and play "New Things" on C and D.

White Keys C D E

A B C D E F G is the music alphabet. We use the music alphabet to name the white keys over and over on the piano.

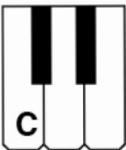


Circle the groups of two black keys. Write C D E on the keys near them.



We can use the black key groups to find white key names.

C is below two black keys.



Play all the C's.

D is between two black keys.



Play all the D's.

E is above two black keys.



Play all the E's.



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WHITE KEYS F G A B

Things to Review

Groups of Three Black Keys
White Keys C D E

What's New

White Keys F G A B

We continue to teach the white key names by relating them to the black key groups.

After following the instructions on this page for finding all of the F's, G's, A's, and B's, turn back to page 6 and review the groups of three black keys. Have the student play these exercises on white keys F G A, then G A B.

Now, turn to page 10 and play "Mary Had a Little Lamb" with LH fingers 4 3 2 on F G A, and RH finger 2 on C.

Then, on page 11, play "Town Hall" with RH fingers 2 3 4 on G A B and LH finger 3 on D.

White Keys F G A B

Circle the groups of three black keys.
Write **F G A B** on the keys near them.



F is below three black keys.

Play all the F's.
B's.

B is above three black keys.

Play all the

G is the next key up from F.

Play all the G's.

A is one key down from B.

Play all the A's.



MP100 13

THE ARTIST

Things to Review

- Quarter Note, Half Note
- LH, RH
- Finger Numbers 1 2 3
- White Keys A B C D E

What's New

- Using Finger 1
- Middle C Position

This is the first white key piece, the first time we use the thumbs, and the introduction of Middle C position.

We delay using the thumbs and the 5th fingers until we are on white keys. These digits have such special coordination issues that it is best to gain some control of the longer, stronger middle fingers (2,3,4) before integrating 1 and 5.

When teaching the use of the thumb, make sure that the thumb touches the key where the skin and nail meet. Also, keep an open space between the thumb and 2nd finger. Tension in the hand will close this gap. Move the thumb at the joint, and avoid dropping the wrist and arm when the thumb plays.

We like starting in Middle C position best because it is the easiest for kids to remember where to put their hands. We also like Middle C position because it has all the notes of the scale, and more musically satisfying melodies can be created.

The barn has been in several pictures, as has the girl. Her painting will re-appear later on.

Middle C Position

Student

Duet

When you practice, play and:

- Sing the finger numbers.
- Sing the letter names.
- Count the rhythm aloud.
- Sing the words.

The Artist

Both thumbs on Middle C

LH 3 2 1 2 3 RH

Name the two RH notes that go down.

Name the three LH notes that go up.

How many times does this piece use the rhythm:

When I paint,

When I draw,

Soon you'll see just what I saw.

14

MP100

PURPLE PAINT

Things to Review

- Dotted Half Note
- Middle C Position
- Notes Moving Up or Down

What's New

Adding Finger 4

The music provides a great opportunity for looking at notes moving up and notes moving down. (The questions will help.) It is important to spend time working regularly with students on this aspect of reading music.

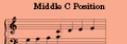
The new note in each hand (finger 4) is held longer the first time it is played. This gives students more time to observe what is new. It also gives you time to make any hand shape corrections that might be needed.

Use the Technic, Theory, and Performance book pages to supplement and reinforce every concept from the Lesson book. We rarely assign more than two pages from the Lesson book per week, and frequently only one page, so that we can make a lateral move to the other books. We will also include seasonal books like "Piano Town Halloween" and "Piano Town Christmas", as well as sheet music.

Work patiently and thoroughly through these early weeks and months of piano lessons. A strong foundation leads to a more enjoyable and successful experience for both student and teacher.



Middle C Position



Student

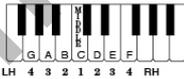


Duet



legato

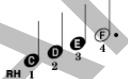
Purple Paint



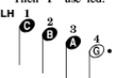
What is the highest note your RH will play? _____

What is the lowest note your LH will play? _____

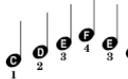
Name the three RH notes that go down. _____



First I use blue.



Then I use red.



Mix them to-gether, it's pur-ple in-stead.

MP100

15

KITES FOR SALE

Things to Review

Half Note, Whole Note
Middle C Position

What's New

Adding Finger 5

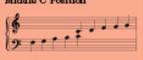
With the addition of the finger 5 in each hand, we complete the Middle C position. Also, students have experienced quarter, half, dotted half, and whole notes.

Notice that 5 is used only once in each hand. We want to avoid over-using 5 until it gains a little strength. Also notice that just before 5 plays, there is a longer note to give time to stabilize the hand position. Immediately after 5 plays, we move away from it, back towards the stronger, more stable part of the hand.

The mirror-image of the LH melody to the RH provides a clear opportunity to work on recognition of notes moving up and notes moving down.

In the artwork, we see our two young people buying kites, which they will take to the park to fly. Look at the buildings in the background. There is the Town Hall, but also especially notice the Pizza Parlour.

Middle C Position



Student



Duet





Kites for Sale

Middle C Position



How many whole notes are there? _____

What is the highest note your RH will play? _____

What is the lowest note your LH will play? _____

RH 1 2 3 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 3

Kites for sale, ev - ry kind, ev - ry col - or too.

LH 1 2 3 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1

I think that this one here is the one for you.

16

MP100

GETTING HUNGRY

Things to Review

Half Note, Whole Note
Middle C Position

What's New

Steps and Skips on White Keys

In this piece, students begin to learn about the essential building blocks of step and skip. Notice that the rhythm slows to half notes for the skips, giving students more time to process skipping letters, fingers, and white-keys, for the first time.

We will call them 2nds and 3rds later on, but the words "step" and "skip" provide a more vivid and memorable description.

As before, the mirrored melodies provide a wonderful opportunity for looking at the direction notes are moving. Also, one can clearly see the larger distance between skipping notes because of the precisely measured printing of the note-heads.

The characters in the art have decided to get some food before heading to the park to fly their new kites!

Step, Skip



From one white key to the next is a **step**.



Skipping one white key is called a **skip**.



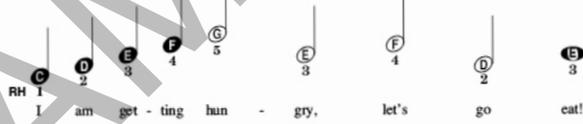
Getting Hungry

Middle C Position

In the RH:

5 skips down to ____.

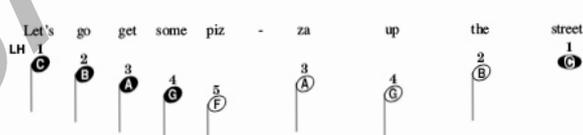
4 skips down to ____.



In the LH:

5 skips up to ____.

4 skips up to ____.



Which hand plays steps going down?

LH RH

MP100

17

PIZZA PARLOUR

Things to Review

- Notes Moving Up or Down Steps
- Repeated Notes

What's New

C Major Five-Finger Position

As stated earlier, we like starting in Middle C Position for secure orientation; however, the goal is to get to five-finger positions. Piano Town is a gradual multi-key method: when a student completes the entire method, they will have played in all keys. We begin this process with five-finger positions.

The questions for this piece help students discover the parallel nature of the notes between the RH and LH, and the contrasting fingers used to play them.

In the art, we see that we are now inside the Pizza Parlour. Take a look at what you can see in the window -- we will go there next!

C Major Five-Finger Position: Steps

Student



Duet





Pizza Parlour

C Major Five-Finger Position



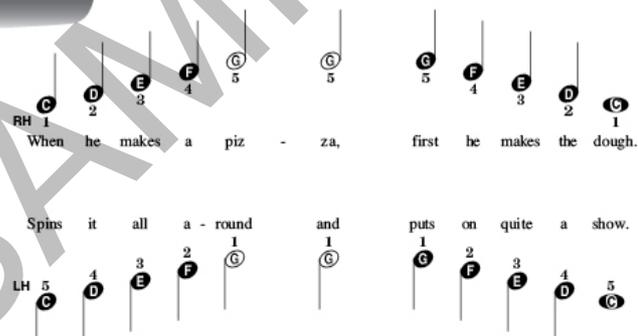
LH 5 4 3 2 1 RH 1 2 3 4 5

Which **RH** finger plays repeated notes? _____

Which **LH** finger plays repeated notes? _____

What is the lowest note your **LH** plays? _____

Spins it all a - round and puts on quite a show.



18

MP100

THE DRAWBRIDGE

Things to Review

Notes Moving Up or Down
Skips

What's New

Skips in the C Major Five-Finger Position

Here we focus on skips; in the previous piece (Pizza Parlour), we focused on steps. The two pages are side by side in the book, and provide an excellent opportunity for "compare and contrast". You will find many pages throughout the book where concepts have been paired on side-by-side pages in order to facilitate this teaching technique.

In the Middle C Position pieces, many of the LH melodies move in contrary motion to the RH. But now, in the C Major Five-Finger Position, the LH melodies will move parallel to the RH. This means that each hand plays the same notes, but they are played with different fingers (except for finger 3).

In the second question, students circle the fingers they will use. Notice how the numbers are arranged, contrasting LH and RH, to help students see that in the LH, "up" is going towards the thumb, while in the RH, "up" is towards 5. This is an important building block for fluent reading on the staff, good fingering habits, and coordination.

On tandem pages with paired concepts, such as 18 and 19, some students do better working one page at a time, while others are more successful with both at once. In other words, for some students, assign page 18 one week, then introduce page 19 the following week; but with other students, assign both pages the same week. It depends on the individual learning style of each student.



C Major Five-Finger Position: Skips



The Drawbridge

C Major Five-Finger Position

This piece is made of:

Steps	Skips
RH 1 2 3 4 5	LH 5 4 3 2 1

Circle the fingers you will use.

First it's up, then it's down, It lifts up and down.

If you're tall, or you're small, Wel - come to our town!

MP100
19

MY NEW KITE

Things to Review

Steps Moving Up or Down
C Major Five-Finger Position

What's New

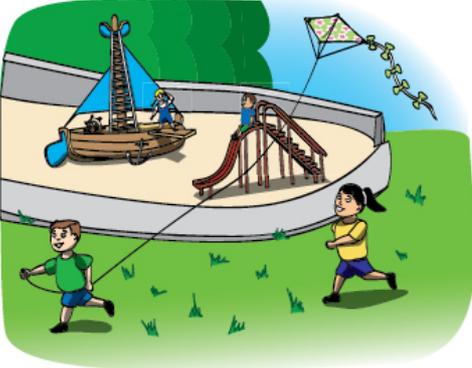
Bar Lines
Measures
Time Signature

When introducing time signatures for the first time, we start by using the quarter note as the lower symbol. This will get replaced with a "4" later on, but starting with the quarter note on the bottom helps students remember and understand what the 4 represents.

If you begin counting metrically in this piece, you will notice that the finger numbers in measures 1, 2, 5, and 6 match the beats. Just a little help as students get used to using numbers in a different way.

Those kids have finally made it out to the park to fly their kites!

Bar Lines
Measures
Time Signature



When you practice, play and:

- Sing the letter names.
- Count the rhythm aloud.
- Sing the words.

My New Kite

C Major Five-Finger Position

Bar lines divide music into measures.

Time Signature

2

beats in a measure
= one beat

	RH 1 C Let's	D go	C fly	D my	E brand	F new	G kite.	
	LH 1 G	F	G	F	E	D	C	

How many measures are in this piece? _____

How many beats are in each measure? _____

20
MP100

PIRATES AT SEA

Things to Review

Steps and Skips
Dotted Half Note

What's New

Time Signature 3 Quarter

Fingers 1 2 3 match beats 1 2 3 in measures 1,2 and 5. (One measure less than page 20.)

We include skips in measure 7. It is good to take a look at these ahead of time. The questions will guide you to this.

We still include syllabic counting as a practice step, even when introducing metric counting. Have a student play the piece with syllabic counting first, to set the pace and rhythm, then follow it with metric counting. There is no best time to discontinue syllabic counting; continue with it as long as you wish, while introducing metric counting along the way.

After flying kites, the kids join other friends in the park playground, using their imaginations as they pretend to be pirates on a make-believe ship. Keep your eye on the violin case, subtly placed at the stern of the ship.



Time Signature $\frac{3}{4}$



Pirates at Sea

C Major Five-Finger Position

The time signature for this piece is:

$\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$

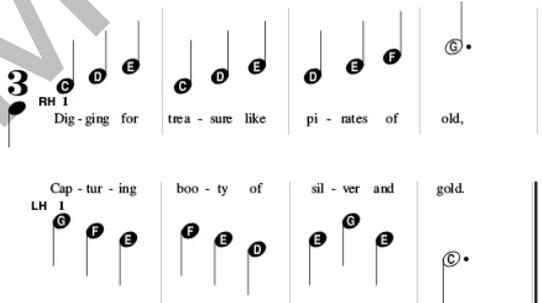
How many beats are in each measure? _____

How many measures are in this piece? _____

How many dotted half notes are there? _____

Which measure has only skips? 6 7

MP100



3

RH 1

Dig - ging for trea - sure like pi - rates of old,

LH 1

Cap - tur - ing boo - ty of sil - ver and gold.

21

THE DINOSAUR SONG

Things to Review

Steps and Skips
Dotted Half Note

What's New

Time Signature 4 Quarter

This piece is a very thorough review of how notes move:

1. Steps: up & down.
2. Skips: 1-3-5, as well as 2-4.
3. Repeated notes.

We have done this purposely in anticipation of beginning staff reading, which starts on page 24.

In measures 1 and 5, the finger numbers match the beats. (Only two measures like this now. We are gradually getting away from this aid.)

Few subjects are as engaging to young people as dinosaurs. As the children in the picture play with toy dinosaurs, we see "real" dinosaurs peeking out from the trees. Notice the boy who is carrying a violin case and waving good-bye: he is going off to orchestra rehearsal.

Time Signature $\frac{4}{4}$





The Dinosaur Song

C Major Five-Finger Position

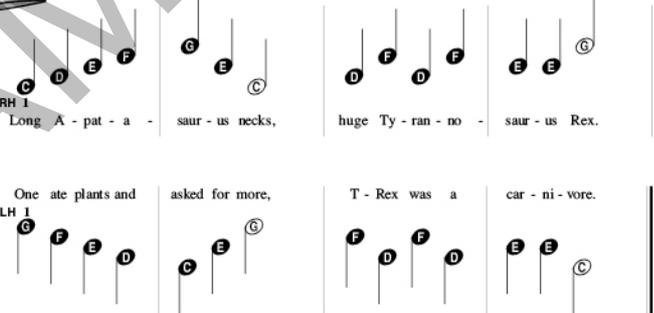
The time signature for this piece is:

$\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

How many beats are in each measure? _____

How many measures are in this piece? _____

Which measure has steps going down? 1 5



22

MP100

THE SYMPHONY

Things to Review

Steps and Repeated Notes

What's New

Time Signature 4/4

This is our final pre-staff piece, and is based on the famous melody from the 9th Symphony of Beethoven. Whenever we have music by a master composer in Piano Town, we always include a short biography on the page of music.

If your student knows the tune with the dotted rhythm in measures 4 and 8, it's fine to let them play it that way. If you want, you can even draw a dot by the first quarter, and a flag on the second (turning it into an eighth) and show them what the rhythm looks like. You can count it by saying: "quar-ter-dot-eighth".

This tune is excellent practice for reading steps and repeated notes. Of the three ways notes move — step, skip, repeat — repeated notes are the ones students overlook most.

The first question helps students begin to recognise form in music, and how a composer varies a melody.

The lyrics provide an opportunity to discuss the instruments of an orchestra, and you can use the art to help with this. Start by pointing out that the boy from the previous page, who was carrying his violin case, is in amongst the other musicians.

The accompaniment is quite grand and really fills out the sound. Makes for an excellent recital piece played as a duet.

Same as $\frac{4}{4}$ RH 3

Measures 5–8 are almost exactly like measures 1–4. Which measures are different?
3 and 7 4 and 8

Are there any skips in this piece?
Yes No

Wood-winds, strings and brass and ev - en sing - ers and the tim - pa - ni.

LH 3

The Symphony
C Major Five-Finger Position

Melody by Ludwig van Beethoven

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was a famous composer from Germany. He became deaf as an adult. Although he could no longer hear, he continued to compose. He used his imagination to hear what the music would sound like. The melody below is from his Ninth Symphony (the last one he wrote) and is called "Ode to Joy."

MP100 23

THE SUNSET

Things to Review

Middle C Position for the LH
Time Signature 4/4

What's New

Reading F and Middle C in the Bass Staff

We begin with the bass staff because we want to show how the clef sign names a particular line, and this is easier to do with the bass clef sign. The large dot, and the two small dots which mark the F line are clear for a student to see. For extra clarity, we bolded the F line.

On the keyboard map, not only do we identify middle C, but we also place a bass clef sign on the F below middle C, to further strengthen the relationship of a note on the keyboard to its location on the staff.

We move back to Middle C Position when introducing staff reading, because we want to use Middle C and bass staff F as landmark notes for students to use as tools for navigating around the staff. Middle C is such a natural landmark because it is so distinctive in appearance. Even if a student cannot remember any other note names on the staff, they always know middle C. F below middle C is distinctive because it is named by the clef sign.

These two notes, F and C, are the outer notes of the middle C position for the LH. The familiarity students already have with this position helps them to feel more secure and confident as they take this first step into staff reading.

Staff
 Bass Clef

You will now begin to read notes written on five lines called a **staff**.

This sign is called a **bass clef**:

A staff with a bass clef is called the **bass staff**.

The bass clef names the **F line**.

The two dots on the right of the bass clef are above and below the F line.

When you see a note on the F line, play F below Middle C on the piano.

Middle C is on a short line above the bass staff.

The Sunset

How many times will you play F? _____

F Line

24
MP100

LOW TIDE

Things to Review

Bass Staff F and C

What's New

Reading Steps and Repeated Notes in the Bass Staff
 Reading G, A, and B in the Bass Staff

Now we add the notes between our landmarks F and C, giving us all five notes of the Middle C position for the LH. We continue to bold the F line, and have removed letter names from F and C. Letter names for G, A, and B are given only in the first measure.

In this piece, students discover that:

- Notes can be on a line, or in a space.
- Lines and spaces help us know the distance (step or skip) between notes.
- They can see the direction notes move (up, down, repeat).
- They can know what notes to play by looking at which line or space they are on.

Line & Space Notes
 Steps on the Staff



Student



Duet



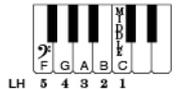
Notes are written on lines or in spaces.

Steps on the staff move from a:

- Line to the next space.
- Space to the next line.



Low Tide



LH 5 4 3 2 1

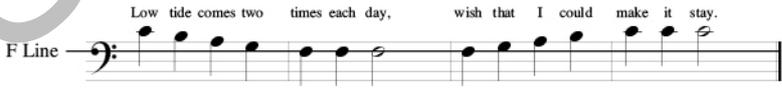
The notes in spaces are:
 C and A B and G

Watch the waves wash out to sea, see them roll back grace - ful - ly.



LH 1 Steps going down Repeated notes Steps going up

Low tide comes two times each day, wish that I could make it stay.



MP100 25

TAKING ATTENDANCE

Things to Review

Middle C Position for the RH

What's New

Treble Clef
Reading G and Middle C in the Treble Staff

We teach about the treble staff with the same process as for the bass staff. Students discover that the treble clef names the G line, and that this is the G above middle C.

Notice the treble clef sign on the keyboard map to help reinforce the correlation between location on the staff to location on the keyboard.

The RH will play just C and G in this piece, establishing our two treble staff landmark notes. The G line is bold to help remind students of the significance of the clef sign, and how we can use this to help us know where we are in the treble staff, and what keys to play on the piano.

Treble Clef 

This sign is called a **treble clef**.

A staff with a treble clef is called the **treble staff**.

The treble clef names the **G line**.

The curl in the treble clef circles the G line.

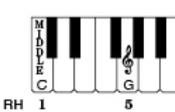
When you see a note on the G line, play G above Middle C on the piano.

Middle C is on a short line below the treble staff.



Taking Attendance

How many times will you play G? ____



RH 1 5

G line 

Short, tall, rise all, stand up! Now you may sit down.

26 MP100

AQUARIUM, TERRARIUM

Things to Review

Treble Staff C and G
Line and Space Notes

What's New

Reading Steps and Repeated Notes in the Treble Staff
Reading D, E and F in the Treble Staff
Measure Numbers

Now we add the notes between our landmarks C and G, giving us all five notes of the Middle C position for the RH. We continue to bold the G line, and have removed letter names from C and G. Letter names for D, E and F are given only in the first measure.

Steps on the Staff
Measure Number

Aquarium, Terrarium

Which measures have steps going up?
1 and 5 3 and 7

Measure number

5

RH 1 Steps going up Repeated Notes Steps going down

G line

We have an a - quar - i - um, and a glass ter - rar - i - um.

G line

One is filled with fish and plants, one is home to bus - y ants.

MP100

27

THE MIRROR

Things to Review

Clef Signs, Bass Staff, Treble Staff
F, C, and G
Whole Note

What's New

Grand Staff

The treble and bass staves are now joined with a brace to form the grand staff. The F and G lines are named and bold. On the keyboard map, clef signs are placed on the keys. In this piece, students will only play bass F, middle C, and treble G, establishing these outer notes of the middle C position as landmarks to use while learning to read.

The first question "How many measures are in this piece?" is extremely important. We want to make sure that students comprehend that a single measure includes both treble and bass staff.

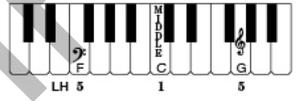
The second question, "Which hand plays first?" is also important, as we want make sure that students understand what "higher" and "lower" looks like on the grand staff.

If a student has trouble remembering right and left, substitute upper and lower. In other words, call the left hand the "lower hand" and the right hand the "upper hand".

Grand Staff



The Mirror



A brace joins two staves to make the grand staff.

How many measures are in this piece? ____

Which hand plays first?
LH RH

How many times will your LH play:
F? ____
Middle C? ____

How many times will your RH play:
Middle C? ____
G? ____

Try - ing on a new ca - reer, Lik - ing what I see.

What I'm try - ing on to - day, I may some - day be.

28 MP100

Things to Review

Lines and Spaces
Up and Down

What's New

There is a key on the piano for every note on the grand staff.

This page has two parts. The first is to give students a complete picture of how the grand staff correlates to the keyboard. We often take things apart in such detail when teaching, that it is hard for students to imagine the big picture. This is an opportunity for students to take a look at it. However, this is not meant as a task for students to learn or memorize all of the notes on the grand staff now. It is only here for them to get the idea of how it works.

The second part is an important pencil activity, reviewing up and down, and line and space notes, as a prep for the next page of music.

**Review: Line & Space
Up & Down**

There is a key on the piano for every note on the grand staff.

You don't need to memorize all the notes on the grand staff right now.
As you go through this book, you will learn just a few notes at a time. Before long you will be able to name any note on the grand staff.

These notes are going:
Up Down
Circle each note that is on a line.

(The first one is done for you.)

These notes are going:
Up Down
Circle each note that is in a space.

MP100 29

PIANO TOWN PARK

Things to Review

- Grand Staff
- Middle C Position
- F, C, and G
- Up, Down, Repeat

What's New

All the Notes of Middle C Position on the Grand Staff

This page is a culmination of beginning staff reading from pages 24-28. We are putting together all that we have looked at:

Middle C position notes in bass and treble staves (pages 25 & 27).

Landmarks F, C, G (pages 24, 26, 28).

Grand staff (pages 28 and 29).

This method of taking things apart, and then reassembling them in layers, is integral to how Piano Town teaches about reading and playing.

On pages 30 – 34, the melodic patterns begin only from F, C, or G. In 'Piano Town Park', there are no changes of direction within each five note pattern. In other words, five notes going all the way up or down from F, C, or G. This helps students focus on direction (up, down, repeat), and it reinforces the recognition of landmarks F, C, and G.

The characters in the art are entering the park, and we will continue to follow them on their adventures in the park for several pages.

Middle C Position on the Grand Staff



Piano Town Park

Middle C Position



The RH plays the notes written on the upper staff.

1

Which hand plays first?

LH **RH**

How many measures have:

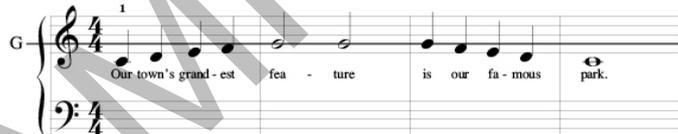
Steps going up? ____

Steps going down? ____

How many times will your:

RH play G? ____

LH play F? ____



5

The LH plays the notes written on the lower staff.



30
MP100

HORSEBACK RIDING

Things to Review

- Grand Staff
- Middle C Position
- F, C, and G
- Up, Down, Repeat

What's New

All the Notes of Middle C Position on the Grand Staff

Each melodic pattern begins on F, C, or G, and moves by steps only in one direction -- all the way up or all the way down. F and G lines continue to be named and bold for support.

The hands alternate two measures at a time, rather than four, as we learn to recognize more quickly the shift and relationship between upper and lower staves.

Bass and treble clef signs are on the keyboard map for added reinforcement of the keyboard to staff relationship.

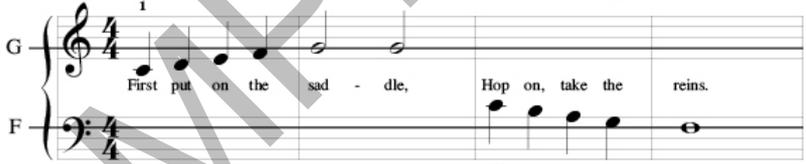
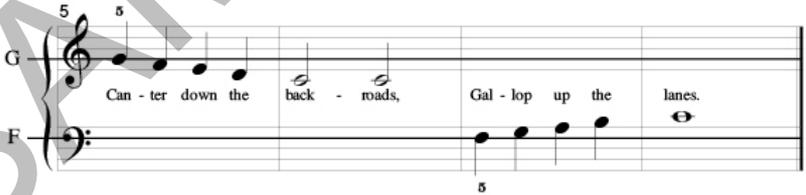



Horseback Riding

How many measures have:
 Steps going up? ____
 Steps going down? ____

Circle the only:
RH quarter note G.
LH quarter note F.

Which hand plays
 in measure 3?
LH **RH**

MP100
31

THE SATISFIED SNAKE

Things to Review

- Clef Signs
- F and G Lines
- Steps Going Up and Down, Repeated Notes

What's New

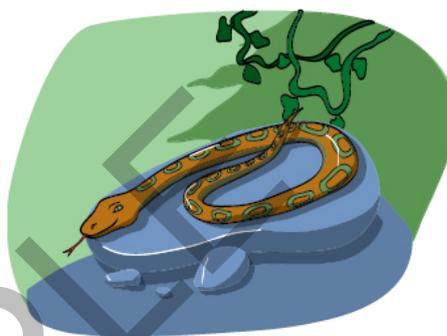
- Intervals
- A Step is the Interval of a 2nd
- Filling in Empty Boxes

Similar to the previous two pieces, the melodic patterns start from F, C, or G. The new reading challenge is the change of direction within each pattern: stepping up and then back down, or stepping down and then back up.

The F and G lines are still bold, but no longer named. Instead, there are empty boxes for students to fill in the names of these lines. You will begin to see empty boxes throughout Piano Town such as these. We use them to name lines, notes, intervals, and chords.

We show intervals up to 5th in the diagram, even though the piece only uses 2nds. It is easier for students to grasp the concept if they can compare a series of intervals on white keys.

Intervals: 2nd



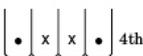
The distance between two notes is called an **interval**.



A **step** is the interval of a **2nd**.

Line Space or Space Line







The Satisfied Snake

When you see an empty box, write the name of the line or note. (The first one is done for you.)

In measure 1, the 2nds go:

- Up, then down
- Down, then up

In measure 5, the 2nds go:

- Up, then down
- Down, then up



32
MP100

OBEDIENCE SCHOOL

Things to Review

F and G Lines
2nds Going Up or Down

What's New

Two Changes of Direction in Each Melodic Pattern

This piece has the biggest reading challenge so far. The melodic patterns still start only from F, C or G, and are only made 2nds. But now there are two direction changes within the pattern: up two steps, down one, and then continue up; and down two steps, up one, then continue down. We are gradually, systematically, adding reading skills.

It is important still to begin by answering the questions, and now also filling in the empty boxes to name the F and G lines.



Obedience School

In measure 1, the 2nds go:
Up, then down
Down, then up

In measure 3, the 2nds go:
Up, then down
Down, then up

MP100

33

Student

Duet

1 5

1 5

If Spot won't o - bey the rule, Then I'll take him off to school.

Roll - ing o - ver, play - ing dead, Now he will be - have in - stead.

CHECKERS

Things to Review

- F and G Lines
- Line Notes
- Skips
- Intervals

What's New

A Skip is the Interval of a 3rd

Each time we introduce a new interval, we include the diagram of all the intervals for comparison, not just the new one.

Here we teach that a skip is a 3rd, and only use line note 3rds in this piece. We start by looking at line 3rds separately from space 3rds to help students see each clearly.

The melodic patterns still start only from landmarks F, C or G.

The second question, where students circle finger numbers, is a strong visual representation of skipping fingers in each hand.

As you can see in the art, our young people are continuing to enjoy time in the park, and meeting up with others. The image of playing Checkers underscores the idea of skips.

3rds on Lines

A skip is the interval of a 3rd.

Line Line or Space Space

Checkers

The notes in this piece are all:

Line notes

Space notes

Circle the fingers you will use to play this piece.

RH 1 2 3 4 5

LH 5 4 3 2 1

34

MP100

SKATEBOARDS

Things to Review

- F and G Lines
- Line and Space Notes
- A 3rd is a skip
- Empty Boxes to Fill-In

What's New

- Space Note 3rds
- Starting a 2nd above or below landmark C

Now we look at space note 3rds. And, this is the first piece where melodic patterns do not start on F, C, or G.

The empty boxes are still there to name the F and G lines, but now there are also empty boxes above the first note for the RH and the first note for the LH. These starting notes are only a 2nd above or below our landmark middle C, so students do not have very far to go to discover where to begin.

In the second question, students circle the fingers they will use (2 and 4). Compare and contrast this to the similar question on the previous page where they circled 1,3, and 5.

In all of the duet accompaniments, when the student has a long note (as in measure 4 of this page) the accompaniment fills-in the duration, never leaving the student without rhythmic support. This gives a student something to listen for as they hold their long note, to better hear and feel duration.

3rds in Spaces



Student



Duet



Skateboards

The 3rds in this piece are mostly:

On lines In spaces

Circle the fingers you will use in measures 1 through 6.

RH 1 2 3 4 5

LH 5 4 3 2 1

Which measure has the only 3rd on lines?

5 7



MP100
35

ICE CREAM TRUCK

Things to Review

- Line 3rds
- Space 3rds
- Fingers used to play 3rds: 1 3 5 or 2 4

What's New

- Line and Space 3rds in the same piece.
- F and G lines not bold.

This piece uses both line and space 3rds. We looked first at line 3rds on page 34, then space 3rds on page 35; now both in the same piece. Yet, there is still a certain separation: space 3rds occur only in measures 3 and 7. Not only is this visually strong, but the tactile feeling in the hand is distinct when switching from using 1, 3 and, 5 to 2 and 4.

Strategically placed boxes for note naming prepare students ahead of time for measures 3 and 7, as do the questions for circling finger numbers. All of these visual cues strengthen physical response to what they see on the page. We are laying a foundation of good fingering habits as we build reading skills.

Although the bold lines for F and G are removed, they will reappear later on as needed for orientation to new positions. But, right now, we are removing the "training-wheels".

3rds on Lines & in Spaces



Student 

Duet 

Ice Cream Truck

Circle the **RH** fingers you will use in:

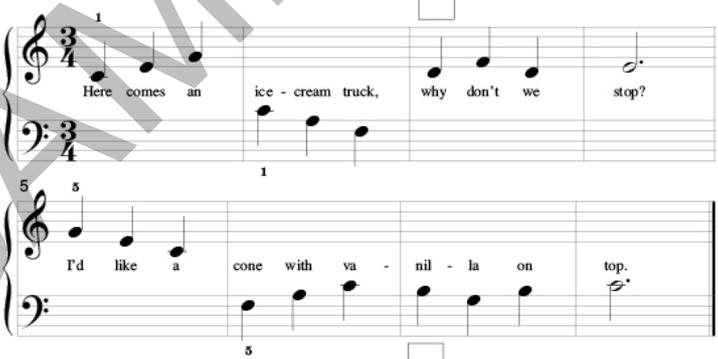
Measure 1: 1 2 3 4 5

Measure 3: 1 2 3 4 5

Circle the **LH** fingers you will use in:

Measure 2: 5 4 3 2 1

Measure 7: 5 4 3 2 1



Here comes an ice - cream truck, why don't we stop?

I'd like a cone with va - nil - la on top.

36MP100

ROWING ON THE LAKE

Things to Review

2nds and 3rds

What's New

2nds and 3rds combined

This piece combines line 3rds, space 3rds, and 2nds for the first time. We have looked at 2nds and 3rds separately on previous pages, and now put them all together.

Notice the carefully placed box for the LH in measure 3, where the LH does not begin on a landmark. This will help prepare the starting note for the LH.

The form of the piece is important to look at as well. Measures 1–2 and 5–6 (played by the RH) are the same, but measures 3–4 and 7–8 (played by the LH) are different. Notice, however, that these LH measures mirror each other. In other words, measures 7–8 have the same intervals as measures 3–4, but they are inverted.

The artwork is based on Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

2nds and 3rds Combined

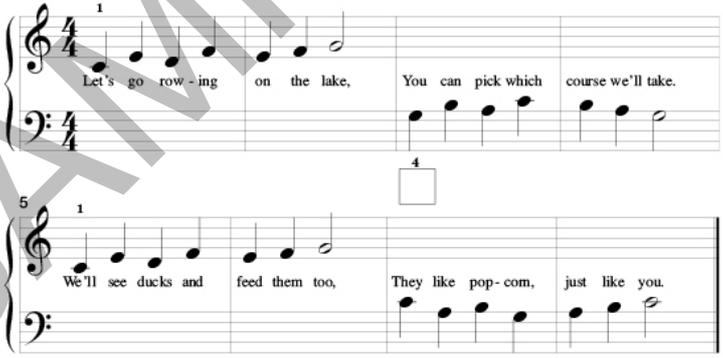




Rowing on the Lake

Measures 1 and 2 are exactly like measures:
5 and 6 7 and 8

Which measure has 3rds going down?
7 8



MP100137

YANKEE DOODLE

Things to Review

2nds and 3rds

What's New

Two Eighth Notes

We chose this student favorite to introduce eighth notes for a practical reason. When you play and count "1 and 2 and", you will notice that the counts match the finger numbers for most of the song. This can be helpful while students learn this new rhythm.

We find that introducing eighth notes by first counting "two-eighths two-eighths", before teaching "1 and 2 and" very successful.

We loved including the explanation of the word "macaroni", which appears in the lyrics. While we think it is worth knowing, it is probably the image of pasta that students remember most!

Two Eighth Notes



Two eighth notes

fill the time of
one quarter note

Count eighth notes in one or
both of the ways shown here.

$\frac{2}{4}$

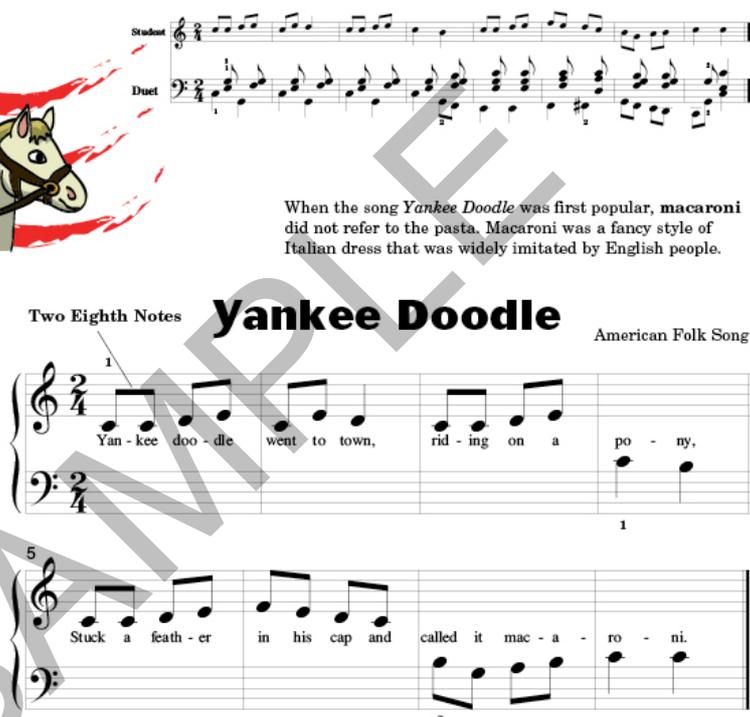
count: 1 two eighths and 2 two eighths and

1 two eighths and 2 quar - ter and

Which measure has
the only LH 3rd?

7 8

Two Eighth Notes **Yankee Doodle**
American Folk Song



When the song *Yankee Doodle* was first popular, **macaroni** did not refer to the pasta. Macaroni was a fancy style of Italian dress that was widely imitated by English people.

38

MP100

BAKING THE CAKE

Things to Review

- C Major Five-Finger Position
- Two Eighth Notes
- Bass Clef F Line

What's New

- C Major Five-Finger Position on the Grand Staff
- Three New Notes to Read in the Bass Staff: C D E

Here we move to the C Major Five Finger Position. In the pre-staff reading, we played in Middle C Position, then in the C Major Five Finger Position. We are going in the same order on the staff that we went in off the staff, so that students are familiar with what they are learning to read. This will give a feeling of security and confidence as they use previously gained knowledge to help them learn new concepts.

We bring back the bold F line in the bass staff. In the middle C position, we used the bold F line to help us read notes above it. Now, we use it to help read notes below it. But, just three new notes in the bass staff: C, D, and E.

In the picture, the kids are baking a cake for their mom's birthday. This art is rich with detail. Notice the cat lying on the rug -- that cat will show up again! The painting taped to the refrigerator is from "The Artist" on page 14.

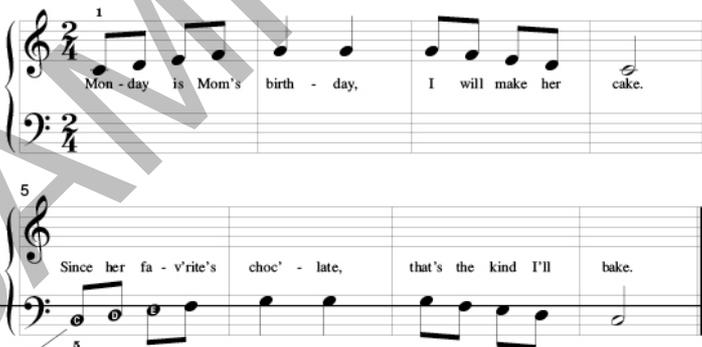
C Major Five-Finger Position on the Grand Staff



Baking the Cake

C Major Five-Finger Position





How many eighth notes are there in this piece? _____

Which finger plays C in the:
 RH? _____
 LH? _____

Which finger will play repeated notes in the:
 RH? _____
 LH? _____

Three new notes to read in the Bass Staff: C D E

MP100
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ICING THE CAKE

Things to Review

- C Major Five-Finger Position
- Steps and Repeated Notes
- Landmark F
- C D E in the Bass Staff

What's New

Slur

This is the introduction to the sign for legato, the slur. One of the more difficult concepts to teach about the slur is the sound of the lift between slurs. We have helped here with the use of repeated notes. The slight break between repeated notes gives just the right amount of lift between the slurs.

Slurs are also used to help shape a phrase, using dynamics to follow the rise and fall of the melody. This piece is written with distinct lines of steps going up or down, so that one can work on getting gradually louder to the highest note, and become gradually softer to the lowest. The final note of the slur is generally softest. (However, these are basic guidelines for shaping a phrase, but not hard and fast rules.)

We are also staying with steps up and down because we are still just beginning to read these notes for the C Major Five Finger Position in the LH. Answering the questions and filling in the boxes will help students read more successfully.

Use the vivid image of spreading icing on a cake to help students understand legato and shaping a phrase.

Slur 



Student plays small notes on repeat.

Student

Duet

Icing the Cake

A curved line over a group of notes is called a slur. It means to play legato (smoothly connected).

1

Smooth the ic - ing flat and slick, Look both ways and steal a lick.

5

Spread it o - ver ev - ry edge, Slice your - self a gi - ant wedge.

This piece has only:

2nds 3rds

40

MP100

MY CAT MAX

Things to Review

- Time Signature 3/4
- Dotted Half Note
- Slur

What's New

Tie

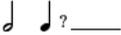
In a student's first experience with a tied note, it is a good idea to compare and contrast this with the slur, since they look like the same sign. And, from a certain point of view, they are: they both mean to "connect". The slur is for notes that change, and the tie for notes that are the same.

We are still looking only at 2nds in the C Major Five Finger Position as the LH continues to become familiar with new notes in the bass staff. The bold F line is there, also a box to name the bass clef, and another to name the starting note.

C in the bass staff is one of the most difficult notes for students to remember. Challenge students to memorize that one note especially. (And reward them when they do!) It will create security and confidence when reading in the bass staff.



My Cat Max

How many measures have this rhythm:  _____

How many beats will you hold the tied note? _____

A curved line connecting *repeated* notes is called a tie. Play the first note, but hold it for the length of both.

MP100 41

THE FIRE TRUCK

Things to Review

3rds on Lines and in Spaces
Two Eighth Notes

What's New

f and **p**

As we begin to read 3rds in the bass staff, we also learn about playing loudly and softly, and the signs that tell us to do so. Notice in the call-out how the "**f**", "forte", and "loud" are aligned vertically to show their connection. (Same with **p**, piano, soft on the next line.)

This is a wonderful opportunity to use the lyrics to help create the sound we want in the music. We can use the images in the lyrics to motivate students to play loudly or softly. For example, if a student does not quite play softly enough on the second line, rather than just telling them to play softer, you might say something like "I think your fire truck could sound farther away".

f *p*



The Fire Truck

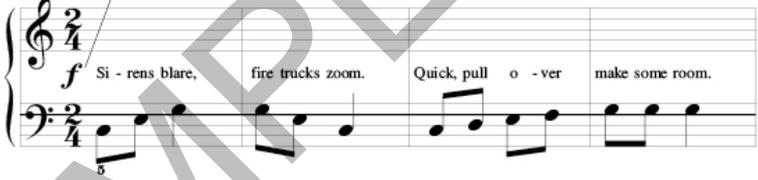
Play loudly when you see an **f**.
It stands for **forte**,
the Italian word for **loud**.

How many measures are:
Loud? ____
Soft? ____

Which measure has 3rds?
1 3

Which measure has
2nds and a 3rd?
6 7

f Si - rens blare, fire trucks zoom. Quick, pull o - ver make some room.



p Out of sight, could - n't stay, Now their sir - en's far a - way.



Play softly when you see a **p**.
It stands for **piano**,
the Italian word for **soft**.

42
MP100

THE SURPRISE PARTY

Things to Review

- 3rds
- Repeated Notes

What's New

Louds and Softs are Called Dynamics

Like page 42, we use the lyrics to inspire the use of dynamics on this page. The image of a surprise party is so engaging for students — hiding and staying quiet (*p*), then shouting and cheering (*f*) for the surprise! We also learn a new word for piano and forte: dynamics.

We continue reading 2nds and 3rds in the C Major Five Finger Position. However, here we add line note 3rds in the bass staff (fingers 4 and 2) as well as space note 3rds (5,3,1). Also, more use of repeated notes -- which are so often the most difficult for students to see. The third question helps prepare reading the repeated notes.

Beginning on a long note (half note), it can be tricky to get students to hold it full value. It is no accident that the word "stay" is used on these notes in measures 1 and 2. Then, in measures 5 & 6, "shout" and "cheer" can also help give a feeling of length.

Even the most reticent student will be delighted to answer the final question on this page: "When is your birthday?"

Dynamics





The Surprise Party

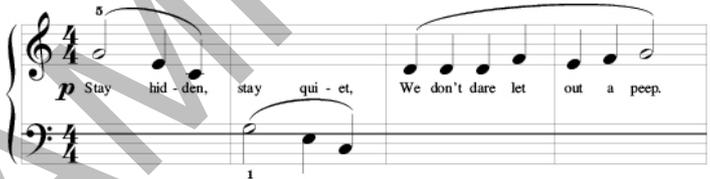
Louds and softs in music are called **dynamics**.

Circle the dynamics.

How many measures have this rhythm:
 ? _____

Which finger will play repeated notes in the:
 RH? _____
 LH? _____

When is your birthday?




MP100
43

RUNNING ERRANDS

Things to Review

- Intervals
- Slur
- f**

What's New

The Interval of a 4th

Learning to read intervals is not just about recognizing them on the staff. The real secret is that when you recognize an interval on the staff, you know what it feels like in your hand — that there is an automatic physical response to the visual input. This piece (and all of the pieces which introduce intervals) is written to strongly establish the feeling of the interval in the hand: 2nds stepping from finger 1 up to 4, then just 1 and 4; 2nds from 2 stepping up to 5, then just 2 and 5. We feel the distance between, and then the shape of the 4ths, as well as see what they look like on the staff.

Establishing good fingering habits is essential to good interval reading. 3rds are played with 1 and 3, 2 and 4, or 3 and 5. 4ths are with 1 and 4 or 2 and 5. Later on these fingerings may vary, but this is the foundation we want to build, and the place from which later variations will emerge.

Good readers know the names of the notes on the staff and recognize intervals. (After all, don't you?) The two skills go hand in hand for fluent reading. Interval reading tends to come more easily for students; remembering the name of each line and space is much harder, and takes more time and work (and patience and persistence).

4th

Running Errands

How many slurs are in this piece? _____

How many measures have 4ths? _____

Write finger numbers in measures with 4ths. (The first one is done for you.)

Circle the **f** in measure 1. It means to play:
Loud Soft

44
MP100

THE FOUNDATION

Things to Review

The Interval of a 4th
Two Eighth Notes

What's New

Fingerings to use for 4ths

Now we remove the 2nds and just experience 4ths, isolating fingering combinations 1 and 4, then 2 and 5. Circling finger numbers in the second question, students will discover that the only finger not used for playing 4ths is finger 3.

The art, title and lyrics on this page begin a new series which is leading towards the completion of a new house on page 48.

4th



Stade at
RH $\frac{2}{4}$
Duet
LH $\frac{2}{4}$

The Foundation

How many measures have this rhythm:
 ? _____

Circle the fingers you will use to play this piece.

RH 1 2 3 4 5
LH 5 4 3 2 1

Now, cross out the finger that never plays.

1
f Build the founda - tion, pour the con - crete,

5
Soon we will have a place for our feet.

4

MP100 45

BRICK BY BRICK

Things to Review

- Intervals
- F Line

What's New

The Interval of a 5th

We look at 5ths for the first time. Space note 5ths, and line note 5ths, moving up and moving down. A 5th is either line to line, skipping one line, or space to space, skipping one space. You can have a student draw an X on the skipped line or space.

Take a little time to teach measure 6 to the first note of measure 7, seeing and feeling the change from 5th to 4th.

5th

Student plays small notes on repeat.



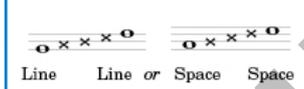


• • 2nd

• x • 3rd

• x x • 4th

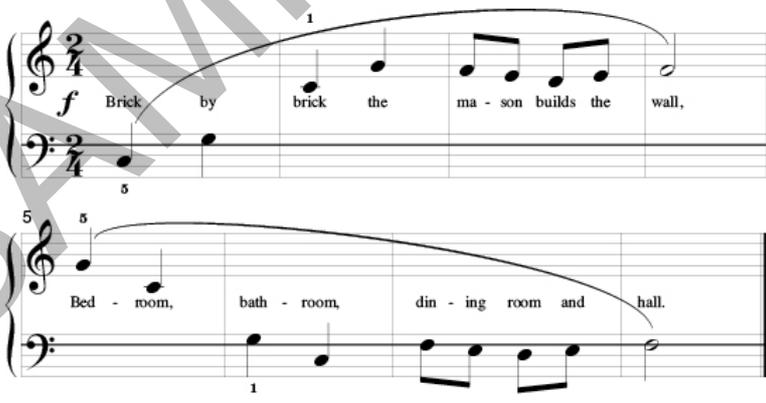
• x x x • 5th →



Brick by Brick

How many measures have:
 5ths going up? ____
 5ths going down? ____

The only 4th is in the LH.
 It starts on C, and goes up to ____.



46

MP100

THE CARPENTERS

Things to Review

3rds, 4ths, and 5ths
Playing Hands Together

What's New

Harmonic and Melodic Intervals

In the art, the carpenters are progressing with building the house. In the music, we are progressing with building the stability of the hand by playing harmonic intervals. In this piece, only 5ths are played harmonically. In the supporting material from the Technic and Performance books, harmonic 2nds, 3rds & 4ths are also used.

Teach the last measure first, to practice the hands-together moment. Then, work on the right hand alone, looking at the melodic 3rds, 4ths, and 5ths. Finally, add the left hand, making sure to count the correct number of harmonic 5ths.

Harmonic & Melodic Intervals



The Carpenters

Melodic Intervals:
notes played *one at a time*.

1

f (tap tap tap tap...)

Car - pen - ters are ham - mer - ing.

Harmonic Intervals:
notes played *together*.

5

2

Lis - ten to them clam - or - ing.

MP100 47

MY NEW ROOM

Things to Review

- 3rds on Lines
- 3rds in Spaces

What's New

C Chord

The house is complete! And, the stability of the hand we have been building has prepared it to play chords. The metaphor of building the house for the idea of building the hand, and the completed house for playing chords, opens us up to the benefits of teaching chords to students:

1. **Technic:** Playing chords develops the shape and strength of the bridge of the hand. Students can learn to feel the technique of using arm weight, as an alternate to individual finger movement, as the bridge of the hand gains strength and becomes reliably stable.
2. **Reading:** The way chords look on the staff (line-line-line or space-space-space) can help students learn to distinguishing patterns and intervals. This visual blocking of notes is an important part of reading development.
3. **Accompaniment:** Being able to accompany oneself is one of the joys of playing the piano. This first experience of playing C chords is the very beginning of learning about keyboard harmony and how we use it.

C Chord
Broken & Blocked Chords

Three of the notes in the C Major five-finger position make the C Chord: C E G



In the C Chord, the distance from one note to the next is the interval of a:

2nd 3rd 4th 5th

The notes in the LH are all:

Line notes Space notes

How many times will your RH play a blocked C chord? _____

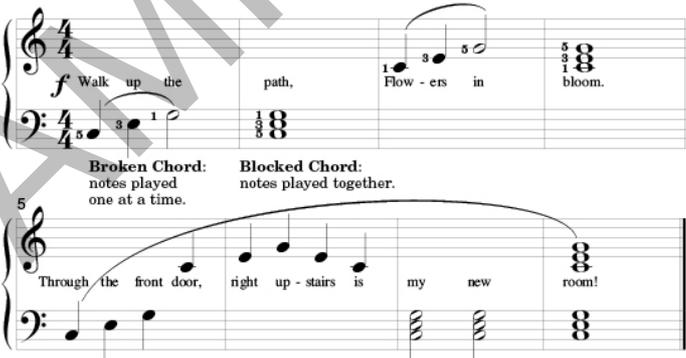


My New Room

The notes of a chord can be played **broken** or **blocked**.

Broken Chord:
notes played one at a time.

Blocked Chord:
notes played together.



48

MP100

BROTHER JOHN

Things to Review

C Chord: Blocked and Broken

What's New

Whole Rest

Playing Chords with a Melody

The whole rests are distinctively felt and heard in measures 5,6, and 7 with the sudden absence of block chords. And, each hand has an opportunity to experience a whole rest.

Take time to help the student see the broken C chords in measures 5 and 6, and contrast it with the descending C Major five-finger pattern in measure 7. (Five-finger pattern, or pentascale: either term is fine, use whichever you prefer.)

This is an ideal first experience in playing a melody accompanied by chords. The release of the chord at the end of each bar coordinates beautifully with the slurs in the RH melody. This avoids that dreaded struggle of keeping a legato melody while changing chords. In fact, this will never happen in the Primer level. Not until Level One, after students have gained enough experience and coordination, will they need to learn to keep a legato melody while changing chords.

If your student wants to change the title to the name of their brother, or sister, use a little white-out and have fun!

Whole Rest →



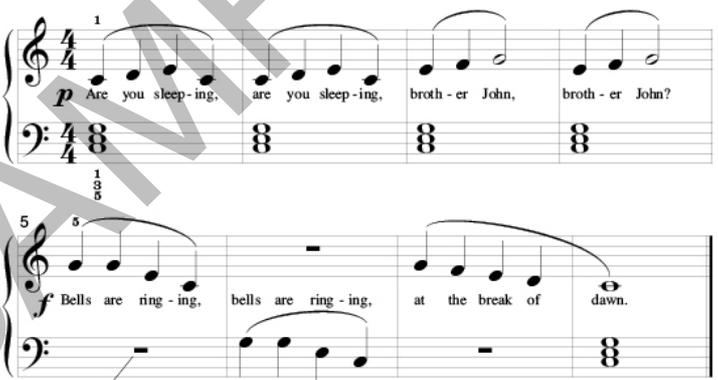
Brother John French Folk Tune

Play hands separately first and count aloud.

How many whole rests are in this piece? ____

How many times will your LH play a blocked C chord? ____

Which two measures have broken C chords?
5 and 6 7 and 8



Whole rest: a sign for a whole measure of silence.

MP100
49

ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT

Things to Review

Tie

What's New

Tied Chords
Whole Rest in 3/4

We wanted to immediately follow a piece with whole rest in 4/4 with one in 3/4, so that the whole rest is understood as an entire measure of rest, rather than assigning it a fixed number of beats. For this reason, we teach the whole rest first, before half and quarter, which are assigned a consistent number of beats regardless of time signature.

As in Brother John on page 49, when a LH chord is released and then replayed, it matches when a RH repeated note is released and replayed.

In measures 8 and 16, teach students to play the LH chords softer than the RH melody (which is tied from the previous measure). They will immediately sound more musical, and this is a good first step in listening to balance between melody and chords.

Folk tunes are such a delightful part of teaching music to young people. It is surprising how often children are not familiar with typical folk songs as those in Piano Town, and we hope that becoming familiar with them will be an enriching experience for students.

Whole Rest in $\frac{3}{4}$



Student

Duet

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Traditional

p Row, row, row your boat, gent - ly down the stream.

9 Mer - ri - ly, life is but a dream.

How many beats will each whole rest get in this piece? _____

How many times will your LH play a C Chord?
5 8

Hint: Some of the chords are tied.

The whole rest is used for a whole measure of silence in any time signature.

50

MP100

THANKSGIVING DINNER

Things to Review

- 4ths and 5ths
- C Chord
- Whole Rest

What's New

- Half Rest
- Quarter Rest

Making the rests tangible was our goal here. The only quarter rest jumps out with musical purpose. In other words, if the rests weren't there, it would be impossible to play the music in rhythm. Have students play hands separately first, counting aloud; and, have them write in the counts. We have created a clear space below the lyrics for this.



Half Rest =
Quarter Rest =

Thanksgiving Dinner

Play hands separately first and count aloud.

1
f Take some yams, stuff - ing too, Put some tur - key on your plate.

How many half rests are in this piece? _____

Write in the counts. (The first measure is done for you.)

In measure 8, your RH starts on beat:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

Half Rest: - 2 beats of silence.
Quarter Rest: 1 beat of silence.

5
Pump - kin pie's al - most gone, hur - ry, get some... Oops! Too late!

MY FRONT TOOTH

Things to Review

Blocked and Broken C Chords
Half Rest

What's New

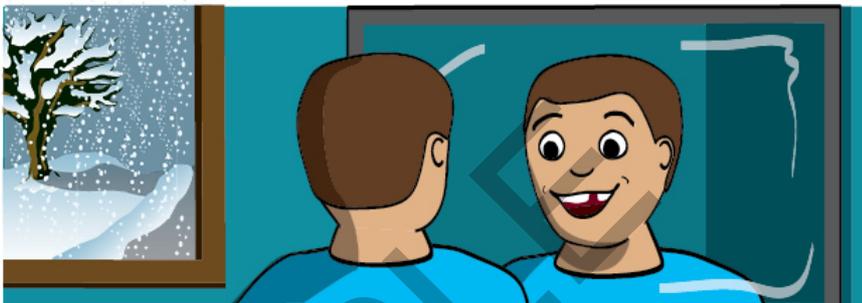
Sharp

Isolate measures 4 and 8 to teach the rhythm. Write in the counts, as well as and filling in the box with the name of the LH note. Then play, counting aloud. You might want to start with these two measures before teaching the rest of the piece.

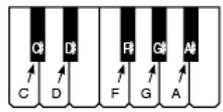
Just as we want to make intervals a tactile experience — i.e. a distinct physical response to visual stimulus — we want to do the same with sharps. The 2nd finger begins on D and then moves up to D-sharp. This relocation of the finger upwards to the nearest black key provides the compare and contrast moment to help students understand what to do when they see a sharp sign.

Use measures 2 and 6 as examples of broken and blocked C chords.

Sharp \sharp



A **sharp** sign \sharp means to play the very next key higher.



Name the black key you will play with your:

RH 2nd finger. _____

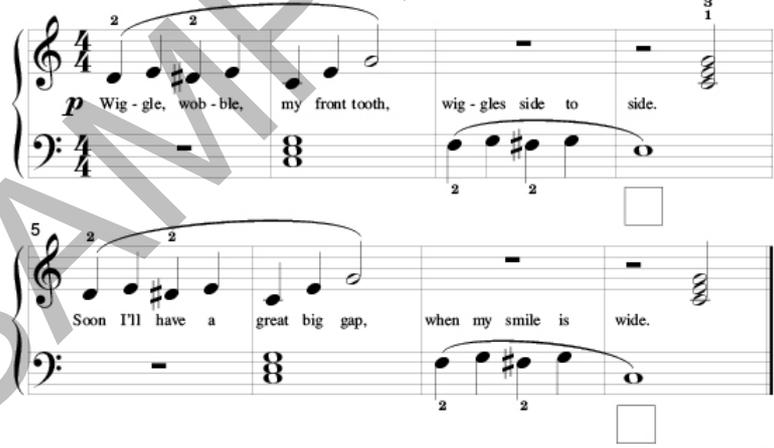
LH 2nd finger. _____

In measures 4 and 8, your **RH** plays on beat:

1 2 3 4

How many teeth have you lost? _____

My Front Tooth



52

MP100

MARCHING IN THE SNOW

Things to Review

- Middle C Position
- Note Values and Rests
- Sharp

What's New

Composer Peter Illyich Tchaikovsky

This is an important review piece. We move back to middle C position, as we have not been there for a while. Also, this piece uses every note value and rest that we have learned. And it reviews sharp, which we learned in the previous piece. This is the final piece before we move to the G Major Five Finger Position on the next page.

Students really like playing this piece, and it sounds especially grand with the duet. But, to teach the rhythm successfully, have students count syllabically. Metric counting tends to create frustration.

How to count the first four measures syllabically:

Half — note quar-ter two-eighths | half — note — dot, two-eighths |
 quar-ter quar-ter quar-ter two-eighths | whole — note — hold — it |

Middle C Position Review



Peter Illyich Tchaikovsky was a famous composer from Russia. He lived from 1840-1893 and composed many ballets such as *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*.



Marching in the Snow

Melody by Tchaikovsky

Name the black key you will play with your:

RH 2nd finger. _____

LH 4th finger. _____

Measures 3 and 4 are exactly like measures:

5 and 6 7 and 8



MP100
53

DOUBLE DECKER BUS

Things to Review

2nds and 3rds
G and F Lines

What's New

G Major Five-Finger Position
Repeat Sign

We bring back the bold G and F lines, and the clef signs on the keyboard map, to help students make the connection between the new notes on the staff, and their location on the keyboard.

We only use 2nds and 3rds in this piece. Show students that these intervals work the same wherever they are on the staff. To help achieve this, cover up the clef signs with "Post-it" notes, set the hand position, and have the student read only by interval. This builds skill and confidence when reading in a new or less familiar area of the staff.

For some bonus work, have students play hands together on the repeat.

G Major Five-Finger Position
Repeat Sign: 



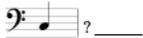
Double Decker Bus

G Major Five-Finger Position

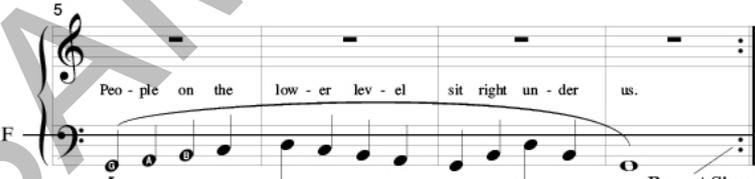


How many measures have only 3rds? _____

Which finger in your LH plays this note:

 ? _____

G 
f Climb a - board and trav - el on our dou - ble deck - er bus.

F 
Peo - ple on the low - er lev - el sit right un - der us.

Repeat Sign:
Play again.

54 MP100

HOT DOG

Things to Review

- 2nds, 3rds, 4th, and 5ths
- G Major Five-Finger Position

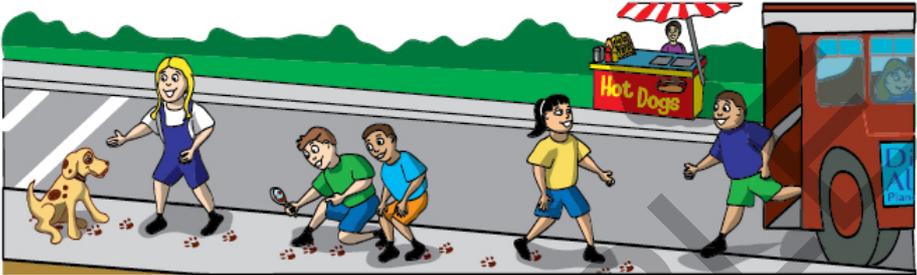
What's New

Reading Intervals in the G Major Five-Finger Position

We are looking at all intervals here in the G Major Five-Finger Position. We have used eighth-notes to visually pair notes as an aid to seeing the intervals. Our goal is to help students see that intervals work the same wherever they are on the staff.

The lyrics are a riddle for students to answer: hot dog!

Reading Intervals in the G Major Five-Finger Position



Hot Dog

Which two intervals will you play in:

Measure 1? 2nd 3rd 4th 5th

Measure 2? 2nd 3rd 4th 5th



MP100
55

SIMON SAYS

Things to Review

- Slur
- 2nds and 3rds
- G Major Five-Finger Position

What's New

Staccato

We have delayed staccato playing for rather late in the book, because to do it really well takes some finger strength and coordination. Teach a staccato technique that is played from the key, touching the key first and then playing with a feeling of pushing up. Not only does this make a better sound, and give more rhythmic control, but it also helps develop the stability of the first joint. Later on, more advanced staccato techniques will include playing from above the key, with a movement from the hand or arm. But in these beginning pieces, where students play at a relatively slow tempo, staccato works much better played from the key.

Reading skills continue to be carefully developed in G position. Notice how line 3rds, space 3rds, and 2nds, are separated into different measures. The point is to help students see these intervals, their direction, and if they are on lines or in spaces.

The questions and boxes are particularly important for a successful start.

Staccato



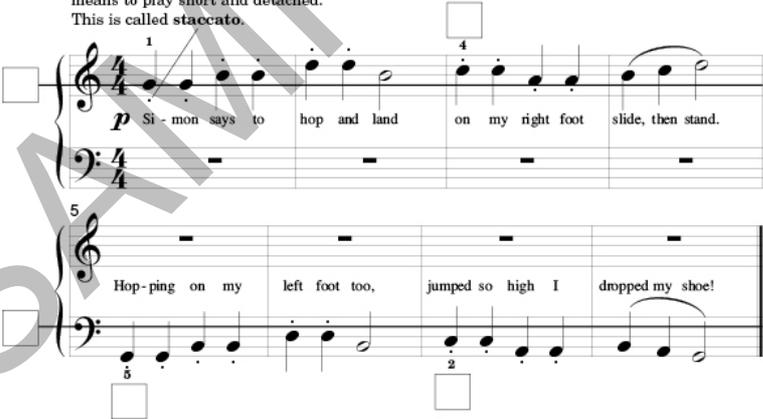
Simon Says

A dot under or over a note means to play short and detached. This is called **staccato**.

How many measures should be played legato?

In measure 4, the **RH** plays 2nds going:
Up Down

In measure 8, the **LH** plays 2nds going:
Up Down



56MP100

SAND CASTLE

Things to Review

Legato and Staccato
Quarter Rest

What's New

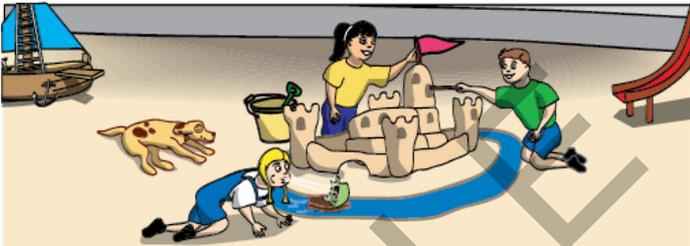
G Chord

This simple piece, with its evocative lyrics, is rich with wonderful moments for building skills. We look at G chords, contrast legato with staccato, continue to develop reading in G position, and even a review of quarter rest.

We see that the G chords are all line notes in both staves, but show students that low G is the first line, and treble G the second line. Notice the A in measures 3 and 7, and how the boxes are in close proximity to one another. Use this for a compare and contrast moment.

The lyrics say "Shape the castle with your hand". Use this image to help students shape the melody as well. And, let them enjoy the contrast of sound between strong, block chords, and a beautifully shaped melody. Then, have another contrast with the staccato of the final measure. All of these distinct sound changes bring the music to life.

G Chord



Three of the notes in the G Major five-finger position make the G Chord: G B D



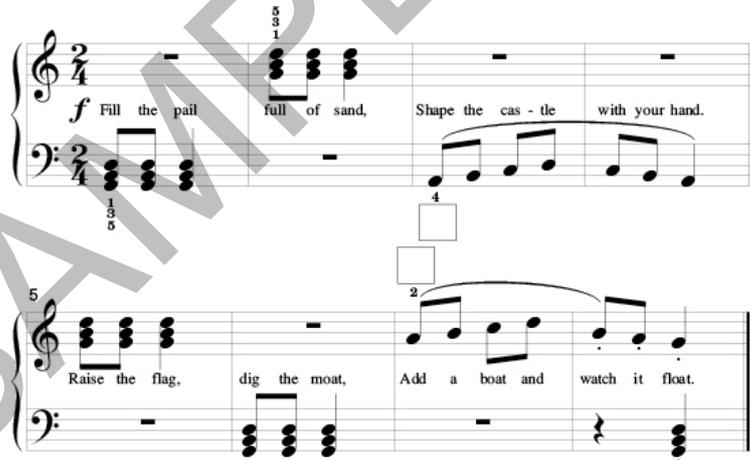
The G chords in this piece are:
On lines In spaces

What kind of rest is in measure 8?
Quarter Half

The last measure is:
Legato Staccato

The only melodic 3rd is in the RH. It starts on D, and goes down to _____.

Sand Castle



MP100 57

MOVING

Things to Review

- Tie
- Quarter Rest
- Whole Rest in 3/4

What's New

- Flat
- Moving the RH Down (out of the position)

In this piece, we take the same approach to teaching flats that we used earlier for sharps. Here, the 3rd finger moves from a white key down to a black key. It is this process of moving a finger from the natural note to the altered note that is vital for learning what to do when you see a flat or sharp.

There are wonderful opportunities in this piece for practice at counting rests. Have your student write in the counts, but also play hands separately first, counting aloud. When putting it hands together, isolate measure 7 and 8 to practice not only the rhythm, but also the right hand moving down a step. Next, isolate measures 3 and 4 hands together to secure the counting. Then, integrate these measures into the whole piece.

Flat \flat

Duet for *Night Sky*, page 59



A flat sign \flat means to play the very next key lower.



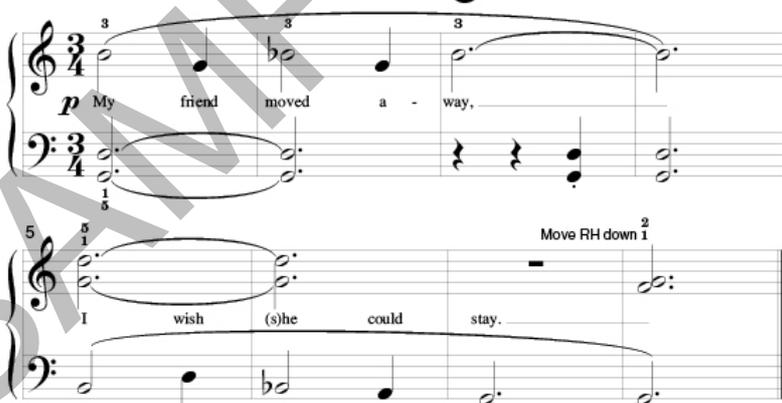
Name the black key that your 3rd fingers will play. _____

Write in the counts.

The notes of the 2nd in measure 8 are:
_____ and G.



Moving



5 5 1 1
3 3 1 1

Move RH down 2 1

58
MP100

NIGHT SKY

Things to Review

Middle C Position
Flat

What's New

Twelve measure piece
Same and Different

This is a middle C position review, and more practice with flats. You may have noticed that we keep black keys (whether sharps or flats) only under fingers 2 and 3 in this book. These are the longest fingers, and they fall most comfortably on black keys.

There is a charming moment in the final two measures for note-against-note hands together playing. Same fingers in each hand are used at the same time to help the coordination.

This is the first twelve bar piece in the book. Of course, measures 5-8 are nearly identical to measures 1-4. The last line is a little "coda".

Middle C Position Review



Night Sky*

Name the black key you will play with your:

RH 3rd finger. _____

LH 2nd finger. _____

Measures 5-8 are almost exactly like measures 1-4. Which measures are different?

3 and 7 4 and 8



*Duet is on page 58.

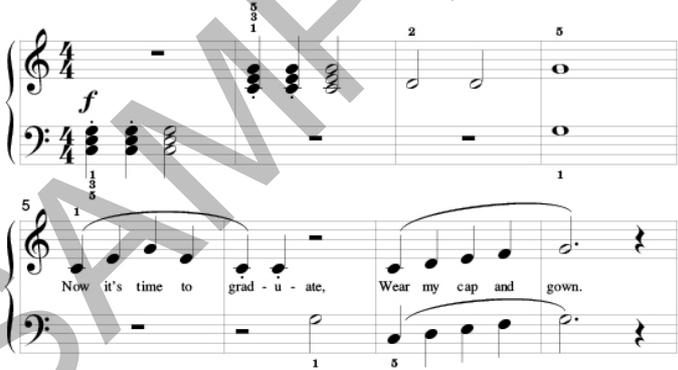
MP100
59

GRADUATION DAY

The last piece in this book, and a joy for students to play. Though it sounds quite grand, it's not difficult to play. In the art, every character from the book is included.



Graduation Day



60 MP100



9
Come a - long and cel - e - brate. In Pi - an - o Town!

13 LH cross over

* Pedal is optional.

MP100 61

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

This is essentially a glossary of all the concepts presented in the book. It provides additional review, a place to look things up, and a progress chart. You can use these pages as a motivational tool by checking off each concept learned (a check in the box, or use a sticker).

What I Have Learned*

- Sitting at the Piano
- Hand Position
- Finger Numbers

THE PIANO KEYBOARD

- Two Black Keys 
- Three Black Keys 
- Up and Down 
- High and Low 

NOTES

- Quarter Note 
- Half Note 
- Whole Note 
- Dotted Half Note 
- Two Eighth Notes 
- White Key Names 

POSITIONS (Pre-staff reading)

- Middle C Position 
- C Major Five-Finger Position 
- Step and Skip 

TIME SIGNATURES

- 2/4: Two counts in each measure, ♩ gets one count.
- 3/4: Three counts in each measure, ♩ gets one count.
- 4/4: Four counts in each measure, ♩ gets one count.

THE STAFF

- Line Notes and Space Notes 
- Bass Staff 
- Treble Staff 
- The Grand Staff 

*Teacher: To reinforce a feeling of accomplishment, put a check (✓) or a sticker in each box after the student has learned the concept.

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MP100

What I Have Learned*

READING NOTES ON THE STAFF

- Middle C Position 
- C Major Five-Finger Position 
- G Major Five-Finger Position 

INTERVALS

- 2nd 
- 3rd 
- 4th 
- 5th 
- Harmonic Intervals  : Two notes played at the same time.
- Melodic Intervals  : Two notes played one at a time.

CHORDS

- C Chord 
- G Chord 

RESTS

- Whole Rest 
- Half Rest 
- Quarter Rest 

DYNAMICS

- f* (forte): loud
- p* (piano): soft

OTHER WORDS AND SIGNS

- Legato: Smoothly connected.
- Slur  : Play legato.
- Tie  : Play only the first note, but hold for the length of both.
- Sharp \sharp : Play the very next key *higher*.
- Flat \flat : Play the very next key *lower*.
- Staccato  : Short and detached.

MP100
63

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Celebrate the completion of the Premier Level with this certificate, and promote your student to Level One!

The skyline of Piano Town is at the top, and the official Piano Town seal in the bottom right.

