

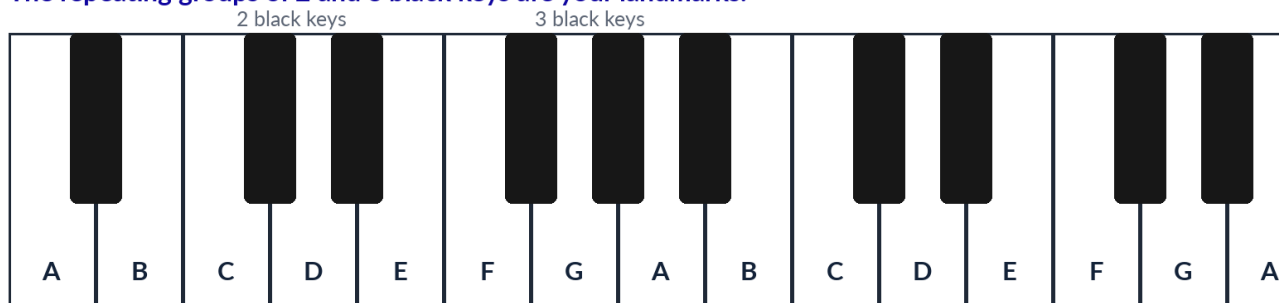


BOOK ONE

Getting Started at the Piano

A first course in keyboard geography, reading, rhythm, finger numbers, hand position, and your first real music.

The repeating groups of 2 and 3 black keys are your landmarks.



Mazza Studio of Music

Music & Piano Lessons

How to Use This Book

The goal is simple: understand one idea, see it, say it, and then play it.

For the student

Do not rush. Say note names and counts aloud. Point to the keys before playing them. When you reach the Play Sheets, count one full measure before you begin.

This first book follows the same sequence as the beginner piano lessons on the Mazza Studio website. It is designed to work by itself at the piano, or alongside the interactive sound-and-light examples on the site.

What you will learn

- How the black-key pattern helps you find every white key.
- How sharps and flats move a note by one half step.
- How the treble staff, bass staff, and Middle C fit together.
- How quarter, half, and whole notes tell you how long to hold a sound.
- How pianists number the fingers on both hands.
- How to keep the hand relaxed and naturally curved.
- How to combine note, finger, letter name, and count into real music.

Teacher note

The printed pages deliberately use large examples and generous white space. Finger numbers and letter names are gradually reduced so the student begins reading the staff rather than depending on labels.

Student: _____

Teacher: _____

Date started: _____

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A note about practice

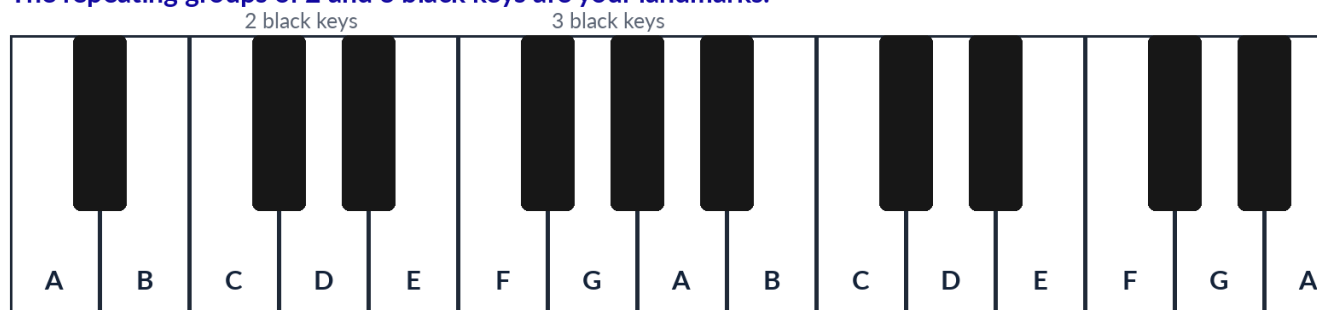
The goal is not to finish pages. The goal is to make each idea feel obvious before moving on.

LESSON 1

Finding Your Way Around the Keyboard

The black keys are not decorations - they are the road signs that tell you where you are.

The repeating groups of 2 and 3 black keys are your landmarks.



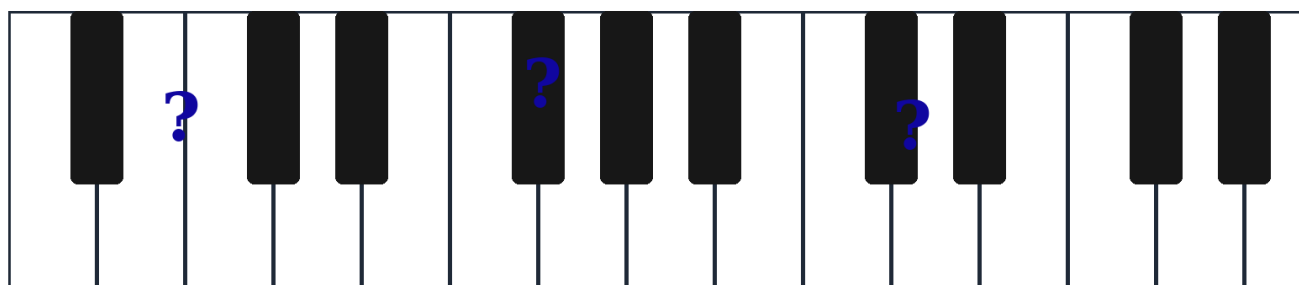
Look for the repeating pattern:

- A group of two black keys.
- Then a group of three black keys.
- Then the pattern repeats all the way up the piano.

Try this

Point to every group of TWO black keys on your piano. Then point to every group of THREE. Do this before naming any white keys.

Without the black keys, where are you?

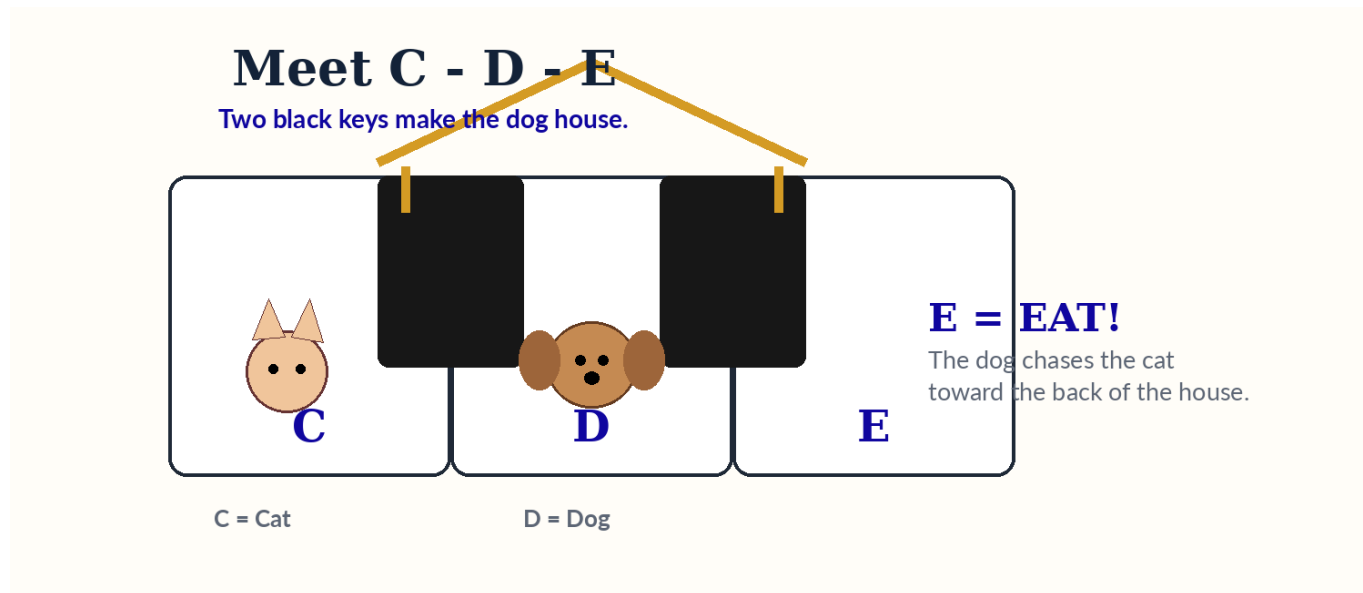


Take away the black-key landmarks and the white keys all look alike.

LESSON 2

Meet C - D - E

Use the two-black-key “dog house” as your first landmark.



The story

D is inside the dog house: D for Dog. C is the Cat at the front/left side. E is where the dog wants to Eat - toward the back/right side.

At the piano

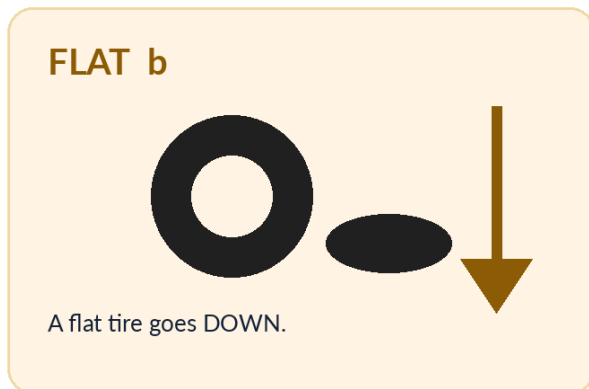
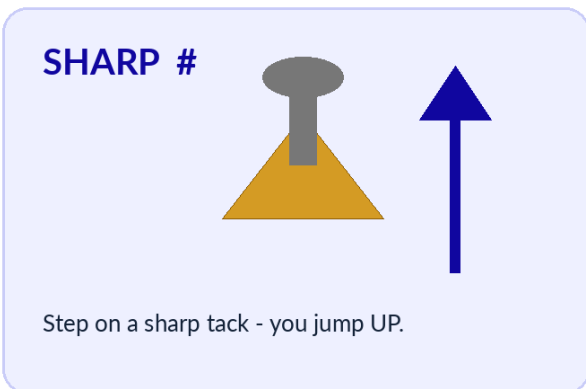
- Find every group of two black keys.
- Play the white key between the two black keys and say “D.”
- Play the white key immediately to the left and say “C.”
- Play the white key immediately to the right and say “E.”
- Mix them up: C - E - D - C - D - E.

Teacher check: C [] D [] E []

Sharps and Flats

A sharp or flat moves a note by one half step - to the very next key.

Sharps go UP. Flats go DOWN.



Remember it

SHARP = up. FLAT = down. On the keyboard, "up" means move to the right and "down" means move to the left.

Say and play

- Play C. Move one key up: C# (C sharp).
- Play D. Move one key down: Db (D flat).
- Notice: C# and Db are the same piano key, but the name depends on how the note is being used.

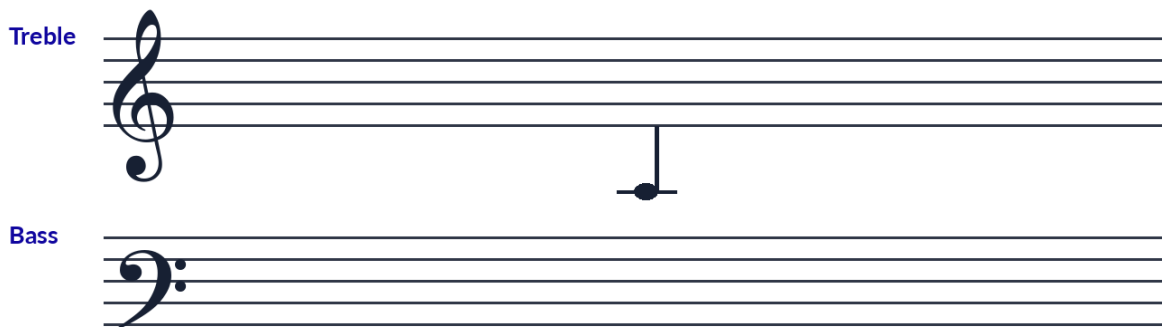
Write the answer:

One half step above F is _____ One half step below B is _____

The Staff and Middle C

Music gives each pitch a vertical address: higher notes sit higher, lower notes sit lower.

The Grand Staff and Middle C



Middle C The short line through the note is a ledger line.

Two staves work together

- The treble clef is commonly used for the right hand.
- The bass clef is commonly used for the left hand.
- Middle C sits between them and needs a short extra line called a ledger line.

Ledger line

A ledger line is simply a short extra staff line used when a note falls just above or below the regular five lines. Middle C is the first ledger line most beginners meet.

Find Middle C on your piano and play it three times slowly.

Notes and Their Counts

The shape of the note tells you how long to hold the sound.

Notes and Their Counts

		
Quarter note	Half note	Whole note
1 count	2 counts	4 counts
1	1 - 2	1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Count with a steady pulse

- Quarter note: play on the count and release after one count.
- Half note: play on the count and hold for two counts.
- Whole note: play on count 1 and hold through counts 1-2-3-4.

Metronome

A metronome gives a steady click so each count takes the same amount of time. Count with the clicks; do not let the long notes slow the count down.

Clap and Count

Before playing pitches, make the rhythm feel comfortable by itself.

Clap and count aloud

1.   

2.   

3.   

4.   

1-2-3-4

Practice method

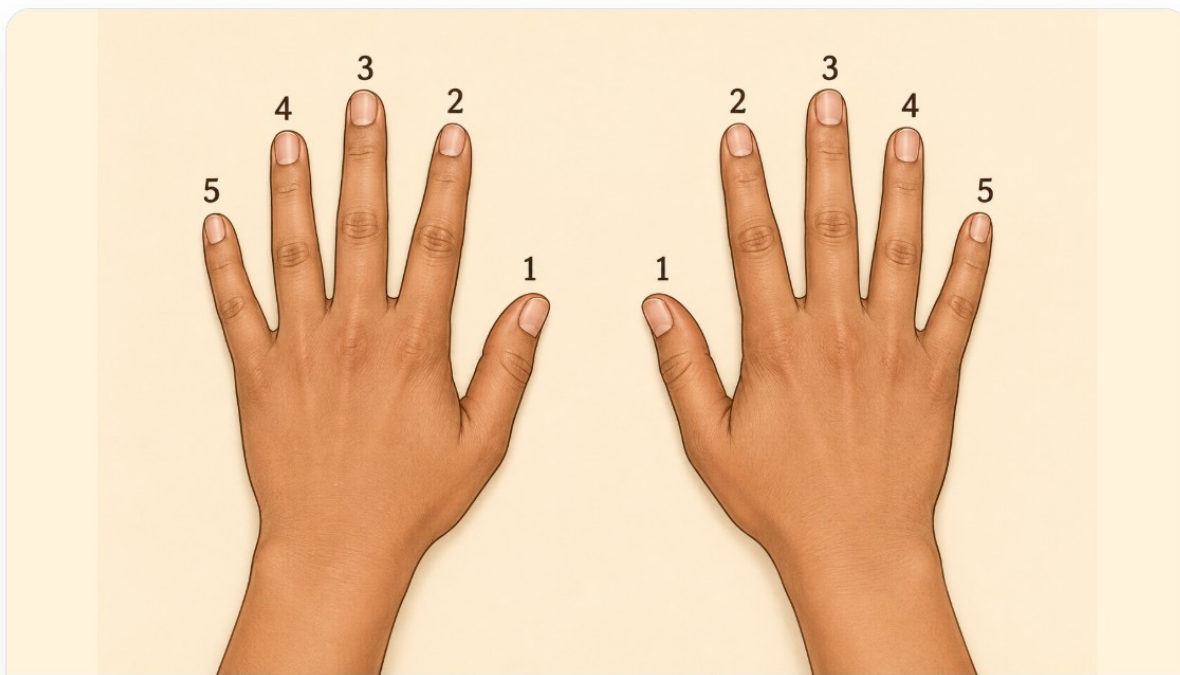
- Tap a steady pulse with one hand.
- Clap the note pattern with the other hand.
- Say every written count aloud.
- Repeat each line until you can keep the count steady without stopping.

Good habit

Count one complete “1-2-3-4” measure before you begin. That gives your mind and body the tempo before the first note.

Meet Your Finger Numbers

Before we play a melody, we need to know which finger should play each note.



The numbering is the same on both hands:

1

Thumb

2

Index

3

Middle

4

Ring

5

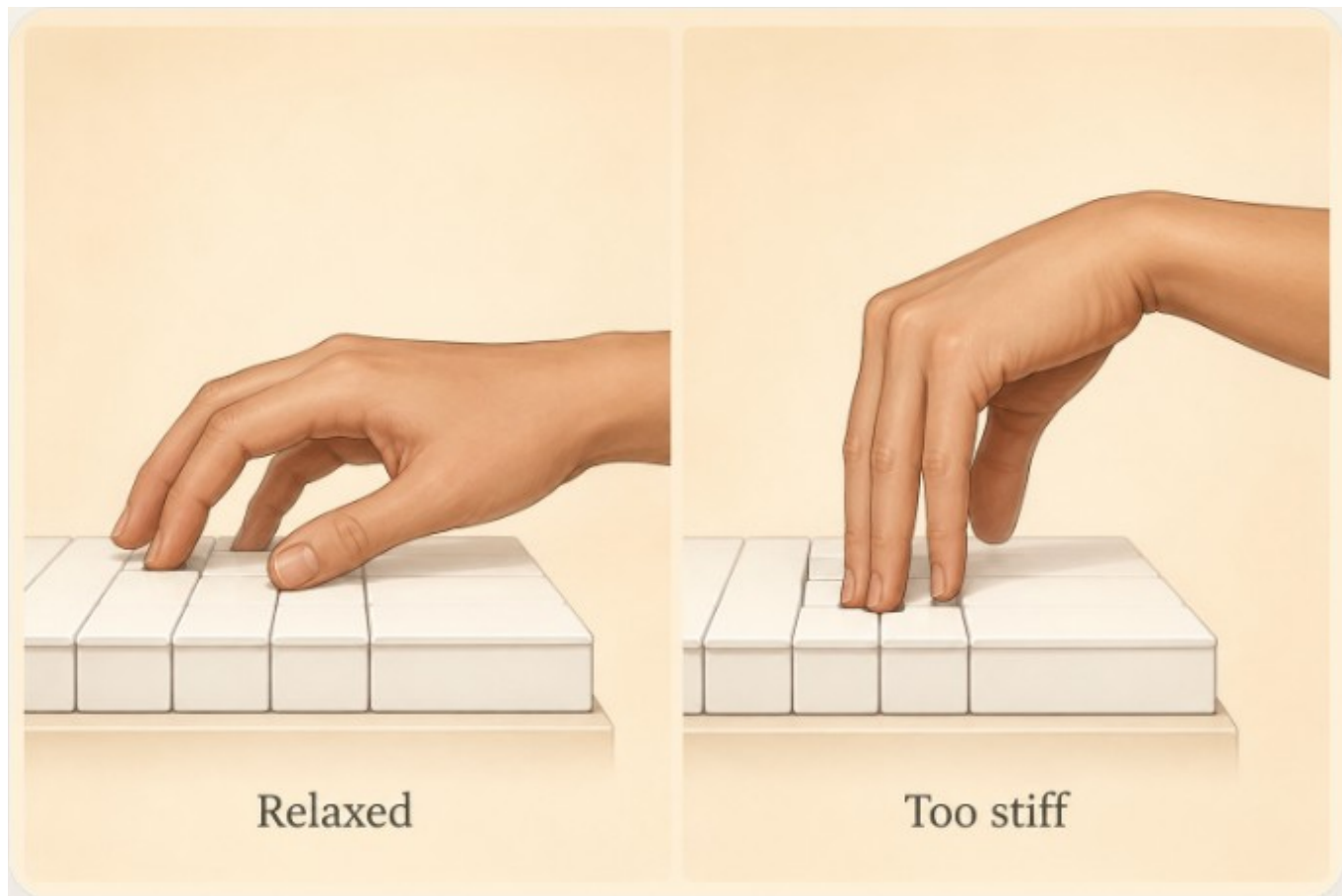
Little

Say it while you point

Touch each fingertip and say: 1 thumb, 2 index, 3 middle, 4 ring, 5 little. Then switch hands. The thumb is always 1.

Let Your Hand Take Its Natural Shape

A relaxed hand can move. A stiff hand has to fight itself.



Try this away from the piano

Stand and let your arms hang comfortably at your sides. Notice that your fingers are neither perfectly straight nor tightly curled. Bring that relaxed shape to the keyboard.

- Keep the wrist approximately level with the hand.
- Let the fingers stay naturally curved.
- Rest on the fingertips; do not poke the keys with straight fingers.
- Keep enough looseness that the hand can move freely.

Not “standing at attention”

Do not hold the fingers stiff and pointed downward. Natural is better than forced.

Putting It All Together

Real music asks several questions at the same time - but you already know how to answer each one.

For every written note, ask:

1

What note is it? Read its position on the staff.

2

Which finger? Use the printed finger number while you are learning.

3

When do I play it? Follow the steady count.

4

How long do I hold it? Use the note shape: quarter, half, or whole.

Think of it this way

The letter name tells you WHERE. The finger number tells you HOW. The count tells you WHEN. The note value tells you HOW LONG.

On the next two pages, read from the top of each note downward: finger number -> written note -> letter name -> count.

Guided Reading - Right Hand

C five-finger position: C-D-E-F-G = fingers 1-2-3-4-5.

Guided Reading - Right Hand

Read top to bottom: finger number, note on the staff, letter name, then count.

	1	2	3	4
				
Letter:	C	D	E	F
Count:	1	2	3-4	1-2-3-4

Treble clef - C five-finger position

Before you play

Point to each note and say its letter name. Then say the count. Finally place your right hand in C position and play while counting aloud.

Practice it three ways:

- Say the letters only.
- Clap the rhythm and count.
- Play the notes and count aloud.

Guided Reading - Left Hand

C five-finger position: C-D-E-F-G = fingers 5-4-3-2-1.

Guided Reading - Left Hand

Read top to bottom: finger number, note on the staff, letter name, then count.

	5	4	3	2
Letter:	C	D	E	F
Count:	1	2	3-4	1-2-3-4

Bass clef - C five-finger position

Notice the mirror image

The left hand starts C with finger 5, not finger 1. The finger numbers reverse because the thumb is still always finger 1.

Do not hurry the hand change. Set the left hand carefully, check finger 5 on C, then count one full measure before playing.

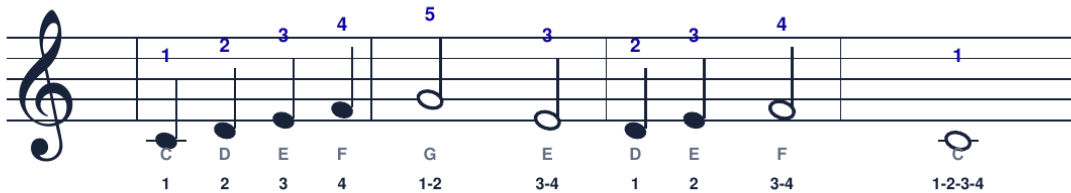
Stepping Up

Right hand - C five-finger position

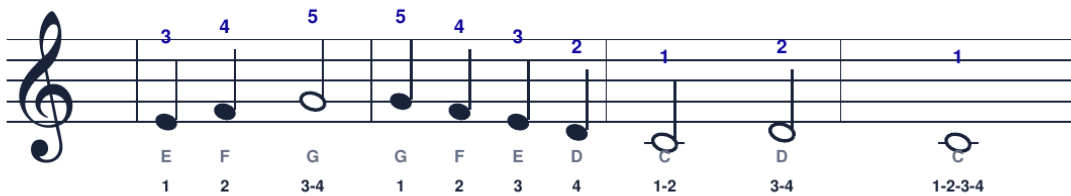
Name: _____

Date: _____

Count 1-2-3-4 steadily. Finger numbers are above the notes. Letter names and counts are below the notes.



Line 1



Line 2

Practice it three ways:

1. Say the finger numbers.
 2. Count aloud while pointing to the notes.
 3. Play slowly and evenly.
- Keep the hand relaxed and naturally curved; let each note finish for its full written value.

Stepping Down

Left hand - C five-finger position

Name: _____

Date: _____

Count 1-2-3-4 steadily. Finger numbers are above the notes. Letter names and counts are below the notes.

Line 1

Finger	5	4	3	2	1	3	2	3	4	5
Letter	C	D	E	F	G	E	F	E	D	C
Count	1	2	3	4	1-2	3-4	1	2	3-4	1-2-3-4

Line 2

Finger	1	2	3	4	5	3	4	3	4	5
Letter	G	F	E	D	C	E	D	E	D	C
Count	1	2	3	4	1-2	3-4	1	2	3	4

Practice it three ways:

1. Say the finger numbers.
 2. Count aloud while pointing to the notes.
 3. Play slowly and evenly.
- Keep the hand relaxed and naturally curved; let each note finish for its full written value.

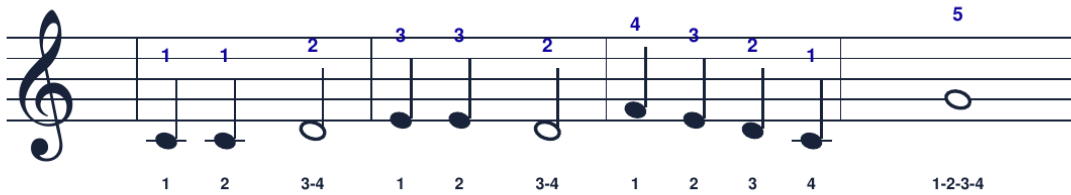
Little Walk

Right hand - C five-finger position

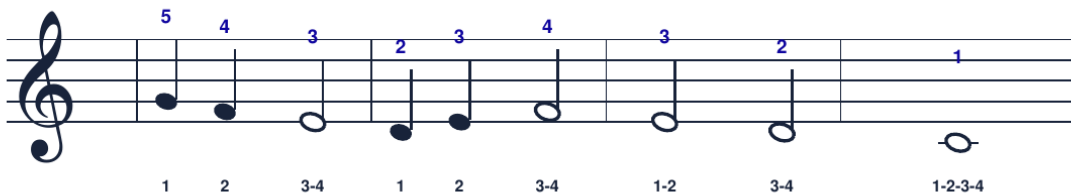
Name: _____

Date: _____

Count 1-2-3-4 steadily. Finger numbers are above the notes. Counts are below the notes; read the note names from the staff.



Line 1



Line 2

Practice it three ways:

1. Say the finger numbers.
 2. Count aloud while pointing to the notes.
 3. Play slowly and evenly.
- Keep the hand relaxed and naturally curved; let each note finish for its full written value.

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Play Sheet 4 - Left Hand Challenge

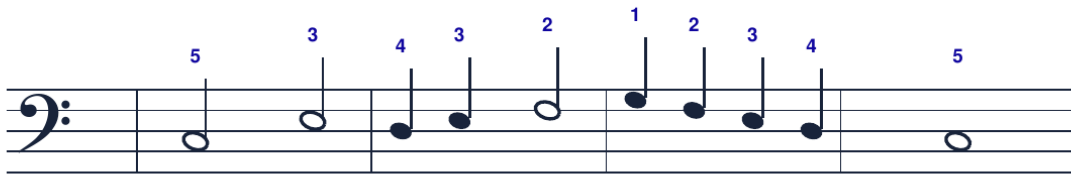
Answer Back

Left hand - C five-finger position

Name: _____

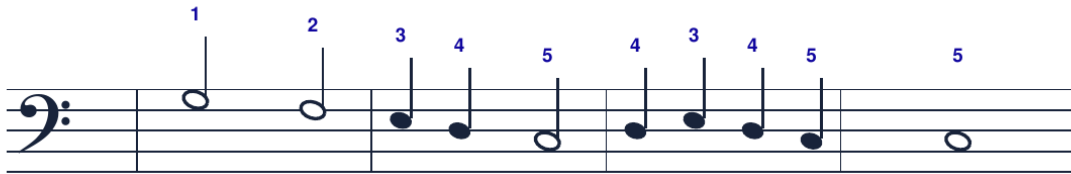
Date: _____

Count 1-2-3-4 steadily. Finger numbers are above the notes. Counts are below the notes; read the note names from the staff.



1-2 3-4 1 2 3-4 1 2 3 4 1-2-3-4

Line 1



1-2 3-4 1 2 3-4 1 2 3 4 1-2-3-4

Line 2

Practice it three ways:

1. Say the finger numbers.
 2. Count aloud while pointing to the notes.
 3. Play slowly and evenly.
- Keep the hand relaxed and naturally curved; let each note finish for its full written value.

My Progress

A simple record of what now feels comfortable.

- ☐ Find groups of 2 and 3 black keys quickly.
- ☐ Find C, D, and E anywhere on the keyboard.
- ☐ Explain sharp = up and flat = down.
- ☐ Recognize treble staff, bass staff, and Middle C ledger line.
- ☐ Recognize quarter, half, and whole notes.
- ☐ Count quarter, half, and whole notes steadily.
- ☐ Name finger numbers 1-5 on both hands.
- ☐ Use a relaxed, naturally curved hand position.
- ☐ Read note + finger + letter + count together.
- ☐ Play all four Play Sheets with a steady count.

Ready for the next book?

Next we can expand reading range, add more independent pieces, introduce intervals and scales, and begin connecting the keyboard to chord construction and harmony.

Teacher comments:



You are reading real music.

That is the point of everything in Book One.

Keep going

Read a little every day. Count out loud. Stay relaxed. Let the notes become familiar instead of mysterious.

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