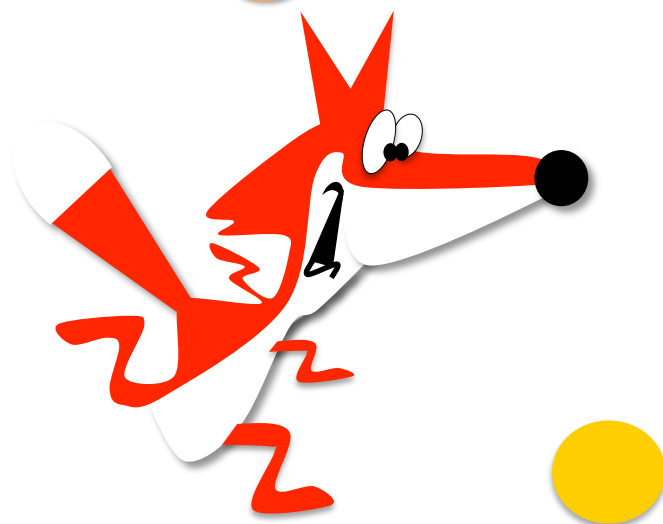




Lightning Piano Teaching Notes & Ideas



By Sally Hopkins

© 2013 Sally Hopkins

This edition first published in 2014

ISBN

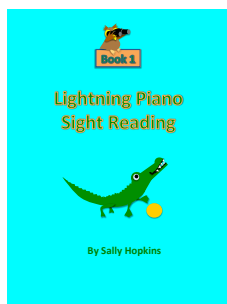
EAN

All rights reserved

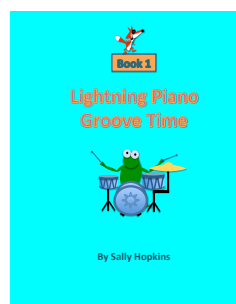
www.lightningpiano.com

The pages of these notes correspond to the relevant page in Lightning Piano Book 1.

For use with:



Exercises in note recognition
& reading by pitch direction



Fun tunes to encourage improvisation
and performance skills



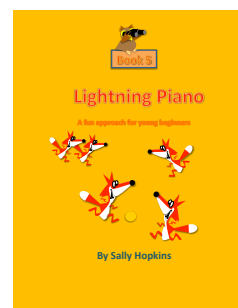
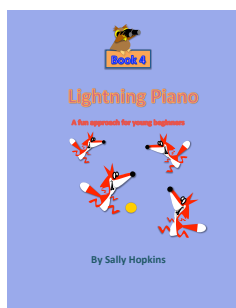
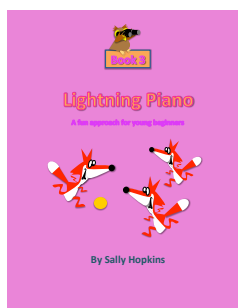
Visit www.lightningpiano.com for

Games to play

Teachers Notes & Ideas

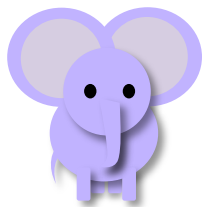
And lots more!

Also in the series:



Introduction

Improvisation & Playing By Ear



Like all piano courses, ***learning to read music*** is a fundamental part of Lightning Piano.

However, I believe ***experimentation, improvisation*** and ***playing by ear*** are equally important in developing true musicianship and this is reflected in the books.

Based on well known songs & nursery rhymes, the method encourages pupils to ***sing*** as they play to promote ***fluency*** and ***phrasing***. As Zoltan Kodaly said, “Everyone who learns an instrument should sing first.”

Children are encouraged to perform from ***memory*** further encouraging ***performance techniques*** and ***artistry***.

Performance & Artistry



Aural Development



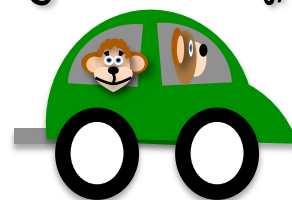
www.lightningpiano.com

Playing with others develops many skills and makes playing more fun. There are printed ***Teacher's Parts*** which are also available as sound files for pupils to play along to at: www.lightningpiano.com/.

The ***ear training games*** suggested in the books and the on-line games promote aural development.

The books feature ***“Monkey Games”*** to embed the ***skills and techniques*** learnt in lessons. These games and exercises can be played/practised away from the piano (eg while in the car or waiting for tea)

Technique: Games & Exercises



Puzzle Time



Chipmunk's Challenge



Finally, ***“Puzzle Time”*** and ***“Chipmunk's Challenge”*** ensure that each new concept is fully understood in theory and can be applied in practise. A separate theory book is not necessary although the books in the Lightning Piano Sight Reading are recommended.

Written Notation & Reading Music

Having already established good piano technique and an understanding of pulse, pitch and rhythm aurally in the first three chapters, **written notation** is introduced in Chapter 4.

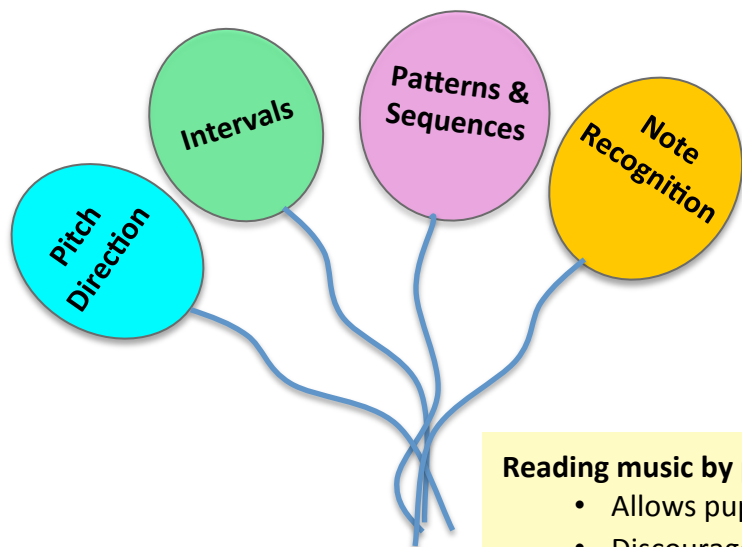
Rather than learning notes on the bass and treble clefs separately, **the grand stave** is introduced from the start, beginning with Bottom Space A and using “**The Balloon Stave**” to demonstrate the **correlation** of pitch and position on the stave.

“Thumbs on C position” is kept to a bare minimum so pupils learn to read with reference to the keyboard and not finger number (ie D is not always played with 2).

Book 1 focuses on:

- reading pitch direction – same pitch, higher or lower;
- Reading intervals using next door notes (lines and spaces / 2nds);
- Spotting repeated bars/phrases; and
- learning to recognise Bottom Space A, and 3 C’s as starting notes.

Books 2 – 5 gradually introduce other notes and wider intervals (3rds, 4ths, 5ths etc)



Reading music by pitch direction & interval:

- Allows pupils to use many notes
- Discourages looking at the hands
- Facilitates fluency & phrasing
- Simplifies transposition

The **flashcards** created specifically for **Lightning Piano** show notes on the *grand stave* and the *same size* as the music in the books they are reading.

Key Learning Objectives

Chapter 1 – Sound Pictures

- **Left & right hand**
- **Correct key stroke & release:** use of arm weight to create tone; relaxed wrist & fingers
- **Pulse** (keeping the beat): dropping alternate hands on lap in 44 time
- **Round finger shape:** “Hand Binoculars” & “Good Fingers, Naughty Fingers
- **Creating Sound:** Experimenting with: High & Low, loud & soft, fast & slow, etc

Chapter 2 – All The Black Keys

- **Keyboard layout:** Understanding the pattern of black key, high & low
- **Sitting Correctly:** Position & height of stool & how to sit – and why it is important.
- **Finger Numbering:** “Tommy Thumb” & rounded finger shape with other fingers relaxed
- **Floating & dropping onto same note without looking at keyboard.**
- **Playing tunes by ear & from memory.**

Chapter 3 – All The White Keys

- **Keyboard layout:** Finding all the A’s; A B C D E F G; all the C’s.

Chapter 4 – Rhythm

- **Counting notes & rests in 44 time**

Chapter 5 – The Balloon Stave

- **The Grand Stave & pitch direction** ie bottom of stave = low notes
- **Lines & spaces:** unlike climbing a ladder, notes go on *both* lines & spaces
- **Magic (ledger) lines**
- **Reading from bottom up** - How to find notes by counting up from A to G, then repeat.
- **Recognising Bottom Space A & 3 C’**

Chapter 6 – Higher, Lower and Doe

- **Reading Pitch Direction & Next door notes** (same pitch, higher or lower) (Line to Space / Space to Line)
- **Moving hand note by note without looking:** Single finger scale
- **Introducing the Doe (Tonic/Home) note**

Chapter 7 – All The Fingers

- **Correct finger action:** moving from knuckles
- **Establishing legato play:** passing weight from finger to finger

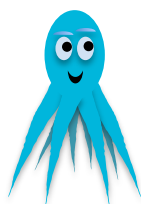
Chapter 8 – The Sew Note

- **Introducing the Sew (Dominant) note**
- **Artistry:** loud & soft

These Pianimals appear throughout the book to remind pupils of particular techniques.
So children don't have to read written reminders, the relevant animal can be circled.



George Giraffe says:
Sit Correctly



Oli Octopus says:
Float up with dangling fingers
Drop down



Matthew Mole says:
Don't look at your hands



Freddie Fox says:
Fingers move at knuckles
& rest when not needed.

These symbols suggest things to do before playing to help with reading notation



Set the pulse
Pupil counts 2 bars before playing



Circle same pitch notes.



Mark mountain tops.



Mark valleys.

Marking music facilitate faster
reading thereby increasing fluency

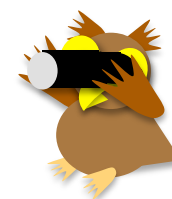


Name Doe?



Name Sew?

Writing the name of the tonic and
dominant notes establishes habit of
playing within key signature.



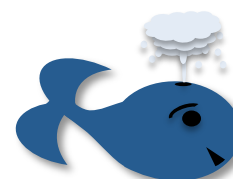
Oliver Owl says:
Use round fingers
& firm fingertips



Lightning Leopard says:
Change the volume



Seren Star says:
Share your music



William Whale says:
Sing while you play
Some pieces need to be transposed
by 1 octave

Music I Like/Don't Like

To encourage active listening during, I encourage pupils to fill in the chart on page 7.

There are suggested activities for pieces from Carnival Of The Animals in the book. Other pieces, either chosen themselves or by you, can be added and a ✓ or ✗ added in the box to indicate like/dislike accordingly.

The Introduction & Royal March by Saint-Saens

Use Octopus Drop (see Page 8) to keep the beat on lap or table.

Talk about the lion roaring and how sound can be used to create pictures.

Hens & Cockrels by Saint-Saens

Encourage pupil to tap different rhythms.

Talk about how the sound creates the picture of hens scratching.

Wild Asses by Saint-Saens

As the music rises and falls, the pupil draws the pitch direction in the air

Talk about how the fast music paints a picture of galloping.

Tortises by Saint-Saens

Ask the pupil about the volume – is it loud or quiet? – does it change?

Talk about how the slower, quieter music paints a peaceful picture..

CHAPTER 1 - SOUND PICTURES



Left Hand, Right Hand, Simon Says

To learn the FEEL of left & right without having to work it out



Developing the neural pathways necessary for independent hands takes time and practice. Knowing the feel of left and right is the starting point for this development. (Working out which hand is which eg by making an L with thumb and 1st finger of left hand, is not the same as being able to *feel* which is which.)

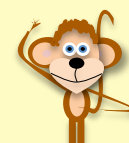
What to do:

- Explain that the pupil should only follow instructions preceded by “Simon says...” & they have 3 lives.
- Call out instructions involving one or other hand preceded by the words “Simon says...” (eg Simon says Put your right hand on the red hand print; Simon says Put your right hand on the piano; Simon says Octopus drop you left hand on your lap).
- After a while, call out an instruction without the words “Simon says....”
- If the pupil acts on words *not* preceded by “Simon says...”, or uses the wrong hand, they lose a life.



Pat Your Head & Rub Your Tummy

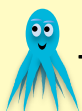
To begin to develop independent hands



Since gross motor skills (eg whole arm movements) develop earlier than fine motor skills (eg finger movements), performing gross motor skills independently is the next step towards full independence.

What to do:

- Ask the pupil to rub his tummy in a circular motion with his left hand
- Ask the pupil to also pat his head with his right hand.
- Then ask the pupil to swap hands.
- You can encourage pupils to try other things eg wave with one hand and scratch head with the other...
- Also encourage pupils to use their weaker hand for routine tasks eg use left hand to turn on taps etc.



Octopus Drops

To establish correct key stroke & release (ie relaxed fingers; use of arm weight to create tone.)



What to do:

- With hand floppy & wrist leading, raise arm in front of the body (like a Zombie!), fingers dangling.
- Drop with fingertips relaxed. Land on the lap, before curling underneath, the heel of hand following.
- Repeat several times with alternate hands.
- Point out contrast between tension and relaxation & importance of muscles relaxing when not used. Tensing the wrist and fingers before relaxing again can help those who find it difficult to relax the hand. Holding the sleeve cuff & raising the arm can help those who find it difficult to relax the arm.



I Hear With My Little Ear

Dropping The Pulse Use 4_4 time (3_4 is introduced in Book 2)

To develop sense of pulse and understand its importance.

Also practices Octopus Drop technique (pg 8) and use of both hands.

What to do:

- Spend time talking about clocks ticking, digital clocks flashing, the drummer in a band etc.
- Establish a steady pulse, then ask the pupil to count aloud and keep the beat with low octopus drops (using alternate hands) while you drop various rhythms..
- Repeat as you play various pieces of music.
- When this is achieved with alternate hands, try using different combinations of hands eg 1 bar l.h., 1 bar r.h.; hands together on 1st beat followed by 3 single hand beats; dropping 1st beat of the bar, counting the other beats aloud: alternating 4 drops, 4 rests (counting aloud and then in the head).

Higher/Lower/SNAP

To develop pitch recognition

Aural development assists sight reading, and encourages musicianship. This game encourages children to listen carefully and identify if the second of two notes is the same, higher or lower than the first. I have pupils standing for this game which breaks up the lesson for fidgety Phil's!

What to do:

- Explain that you are going to play 2 notes. If the second is higher, point up & say "higher". If it is lower, point down & say "lower". If they are the same, clap hands together & shout "SNAP!".
- Play 2 next door notes (eg C, D or E, F). Ask whether it is higher, lower or SNAP.
- Pupils have 3 lives & lose one each time they get it wrong. They win by getting 5 correct in a row.

Echo Tunes

To develop pitch recognition: This game builds on Higher/Lower/Snap.

I always start on C & only use next door notes at this stage ie never C to E or D to E etc

What to do:

- Explain that you are going to play 2 notes (the first will be C) for the pupil to copy.
- The pupil then shuts his eyes or looks away while you play either C, D or C, C or C, B.
- The pupil then opens their eyes and plays the notes back.
- Once established with 2 notes, add a 3rd note (same pitch or a 2nd higher or lower (eg C C D; C D E)
- Finally try adding a fourth note (eg C D E F; C D D E; C B A G; C B C D etc)

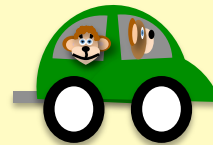
Encourage pupils to play Echo Tunes on-line when they get home



Drop The Pulse ~~44~~ time

To develop sense of pulse & practice Octopus Drop technique (pg 8).

Encourage pupils to find the pulse for music they hear during the week.



Oliver Owl's Telescope

To encourage rounded finger technique with knuckles being highest point..



What to do:

- Pupils make a “hand telescope” to look through. Maintain round shape, while placing hands on table.

Other ways of encouraging rounded fingers:

- Cup hands & imagine you are scooping some water from a pool to drink; rest hands on lap with fingers drooping around the knee; touch each finger to the thumb in turn to make “O” shapes; make tiger claws.

Good Fingers; Naughty Fingers

To encourage rounded finger technique with knuckles being highest point.

Pupils often lose the round shape during a piece. This exercise develops the ability to self-correct.

What to do:

- Demonstrate how to make a fist and rest it on the table / piano & then gradually open fingers until in the correct position with a tunnel under rounded fingers. Identify this as “good fingers”
- Allow fingers to open further until the hand becomes flat. Identify this as “naughty fingers”.
- Pull fingers back to “good fingers”.
- Pupil copies. Repeat from the beginning several times to establish the correct feel.
- Finally, **gently** push each finger down in turn, ensuring it remains round & other fingers stay relaxed. (Some teachers use a tap rather than push down. I prefer continued arm weight through the fingers)

My Animal Sound Story

To experiment with high & low, loud & soft, rhythm, slow & fast, short & long etc

What to do:

- If you have time listen to the Introduction & Royal March together.
- Talk about music in cartoons & films ... scary music, funny music, sad music etc
- Help the pupil to choose 2 more animals & draw them in the boxes.
- Encourage the pupil to find different ways of representing the animals on the piano.

Some pupils create an elaborate story, others will just introduce each animal eg “Here comes a mouse... This can be a good end to the first lesson as there is no right or wrong & pupils can have fun being creative.

CHAPTER 2

ALL THE BLACK KEYS

Chipmunk's Challenge

To recognise the pattern of black note keys
& practice Octopus Drop technique

What to do:

- Ask questions about the black notes to encourage the pupil to discover the pattern. Eg Do the black and white notes alternate? Can you see a pattern? etc
- Ask the pupil to find all the pairs of black notes (C#’s & D#’s) dropping onto each pair with rounded fingers 2 & 3. Start at the bottom of the piano.
- Repeat with triplets of black notes (F#’s, G#’s & A#’s) dropping onto rounded 2, 3 & 4.
- Additional challenge options:
 - Find the highest sounding black note pair
 - Find the lowest sounding black note triple

Oh Can You Wash A Sailor's Shirt

To internalise pattern of black note keys

What to do:

- Explain:
 - l.h. and r.h. are going to play alternately (left, right, left, right...)
 - L.h. remains on one note throughout (show them F#; they don't need to know it's name!)
 - r.h. starts on one note and then moves down to the next black note 4 times (show them A#)
- Establish pulse then demonstrate how to play the first 2 bars & ask pupil to copy it back.
- Once the first 2 bars have been memorised, demonstrate bars 3 & 4 & again ask pupil to copy it back.
- Continue until whole piece is memorised.

This is an alternative way to end the first lesson – leaving pupils with a sense of achievement.

George The Giraffe's Song

To teach/remind pupils how to sit correctly

What to do:

- Explain why it is important to sit correctly (to be able to use correct octopus drop, to be able to reach **all** the keys, highest and lowest, to prevent strains, etc)
- Explain how to ensure the stool is the correct height and in the centre of the piano.
- Talk through each line of the song ensuring pupil corrects their position each time.

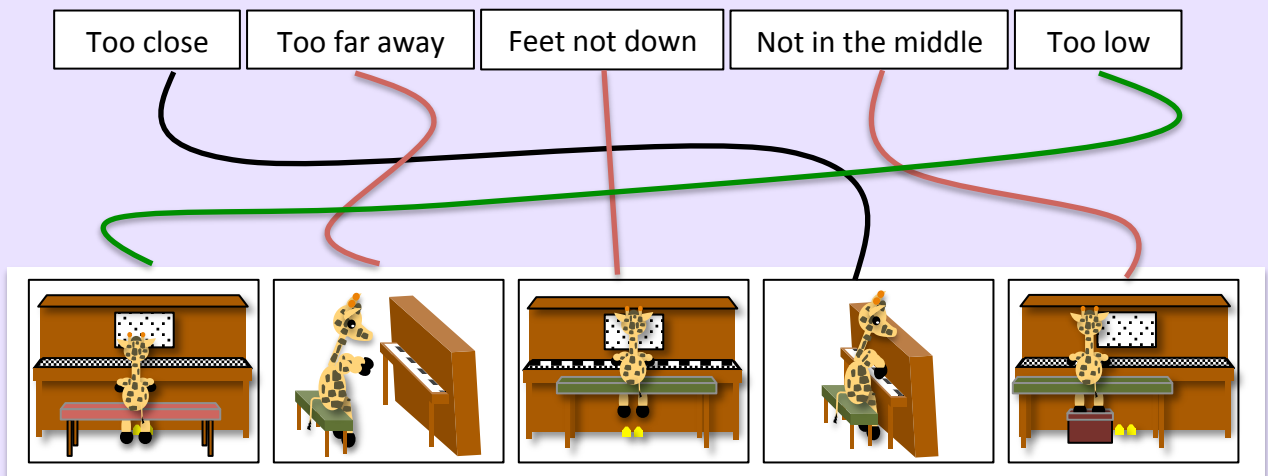
Puzzle Time

To ensure pupils understand how to sit correctly

What to do:

Read the text in each box in turn and ask the pupil to draw a line to join the text box to the relevant picture.

Solution:



Tommy Thumb

To encourage correct rounded finger action from the knuckle.

Also strengthens the fingers & reminds pupils how the fingers are numbered.

What to do:

- Put hands together as if about to pray.
- Relax fingers and let them gently curl while heels of hands and fingertips remain touching
- With fingers 2 to 5 remaining gently touching, gently push thumbs together.
- Repeat with each finger in turn ensuring that it remains rounded and that the other 4 digits remain still and touching.
- Finish exercise by pressing 3rd fingers together in preparation for playing Oh We Can Play. The shape established in the exercise can be translated onto the piano with all fingers rounded and all fingers except finger 3 relaxed.

Use this exercise to prepare to play every tune until Chapter 7. Press each pair of fingers together ending with the fingers being used for the tune.

In weeks to come & once this can be done with each finger independent of the others, repeat the exercise tapping fingers together instead of pushing, again without affecting the resting fingers

Oh We Can Play...

To establish pulse & experiment with high & low sounds

What to do:

- Remind pupil of how to keep the pulse.
- Explain that ♩ tells you to play for one count.
- Explain how the notation reflects the left, right, left, right pulse.
- Use Tommy Thumb exercise to prepare 3rd fingers to play without tensing other fingers
- Establish pulse & then with l.h. 3 on C#’s & r.h. 3 on G# pupil drops the pulse while you play tune.
- Encourage pupil to look at music and not at their hands.
- Discuss what other instruments the child knows and what sort of sound they make. For verse 2 onwards, substitute other instruments eg triangle, violin

Old MacDonald

To establish pulse & playing by ear

What to do:

- Explain how the notation reflects the right, right, left, left pulse.
- Use Tommy Thumb exercise to prepare fingers to play without tensing other fingers
- Establish pulse. Then, with l.h. 3 on C#’s & r.h. 2 on F# pupil drops the pulse while you play the tune.
- Encourage pupil to look at music and not at their hands.
- Experiment with different octaves and loud/soft for different animals

Chipmunk's Challenge

To develop ability to play by ear & improvise

What to do:

- Explain that the tune can be played entirely on the black notes
- Show the pupil which notes to begin on ie F# & C#
- Help pupil to learn the first line of the song
- Assist with each line in turn.
- Point out the repetition of lines 1,2 and 3
- Point out the repeated note in line 3 and the importance of rhythm and pulse
- Encourage pupil to experiment with other black note tunes & to be creative at home.

This is a good way to end the second/third lesson

CHAPTER 3

ALL THE WHITE KEYS

Chipmunk's Challenge

To recognise the note A on the keyboard

What to do:

- Remind pupils about the pattern of black notes
- Using the picture, ask pupils if they can find an A on the piano
- Ask pupil to find all the A's and identify the highest and lowest. (Talk about the highest and lowest black notes not always being a complete double/triple depending on how many keys the keyboard has; refer to the keyboard they are using. (Sometimes an A can look like a E if the third note of the triple is missing.)
- Show pupil how to play A's from lowest to highest using alternate hands ie left, right, left right with arms crossing over and landing on a rounded finger with octopus drop.

Kookaburra

To learn where A is & the pattern of white notes.

What to do:

- Explain how the notation reflects the left, right, left, right pulse.
- Use Tommy Thumb exercise to prepare fingers to play without tensing other fingers
- Ask pupil to find 2 low A's; one for each hand
- Establish pulse.
- Pupil drops the pulse with alternate hands while you play tune.

(I very rarely encourage children to play this by ear as most would find it depressingly tricky!)

Chipmunk's Challenge

To recognise the note C on the keyboard

What to do:

- Remind pupils about the pattern of black notes & finding A;s
- Explain that the notes are named A to G and then they repeat and allow the pupil time to experiment counting up the notes.
- Ask pupil to find all the C's and identify the highest and lowest.
- Show pupil how to play C's from highest to lowest using alternate hands ie right, left, right with arms crossing over and landing on a rounded finger with octopus drop.
- Encourage pupil to find a C and then play 3 notes (ABC) without looking at their hands.
- Additional challenge: Can they play CBA without looking?

Peter Hammers

To understand white note logic & learn how to find C's

Also practises independent hands & feet

What to do:

- Explain how the notation reflects the pulse beginning with r.h. and adding l.h. in verse 2, right foot in verse 3 and left foot in verse 4.
- Explain how to tap the toe/ball of foot with heel remaining on floor (This is good preparation for using pedal in due course)
- Use Tommy Thumb exercise to prepare fingers to play without tensing other fingers
- Ask pupil to find 2 C's; one for each hand
- Establish pulse.
- Pupil drops the pulse with right hand while you play tune.
- For verse 2, pupil drops pulse with both hands.
- For verse 3, pupil uses both hands & right foot.
- For verse 4, pupil uses both hands & both feet.

Chipmunk's Challenge

To develop ability to play by ear & improvise

What to do:

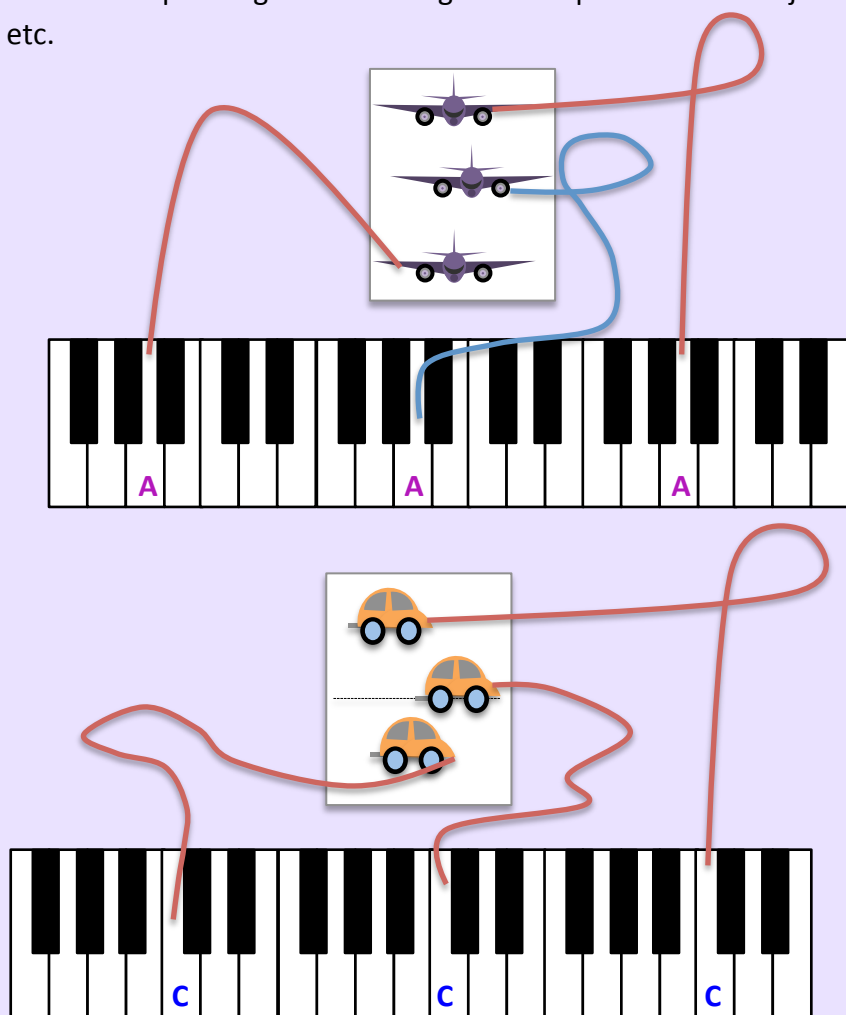
- Help pupil to play Peter Hammers by ear & to make up one finger tunes on white notes.
- You can experiment with starting on different notes and talk about the different moods created eg happy (major) and sad/spooky (minor) when you begin on or D.
- Introduce the concept of "Doe" (home/tonic) if appropriate (the tunes often want to end on C!)

To introduce concept of high pitch being indicated by high on the page

What to do:

Pupil draws a line to join each picture to a corresponding note. The highest aeroplane should be joined to the A furthest right on the keyboard etc.

Solutions:



CHAPTER 4 - RHYTHM



Echo Rhythms 1

To develop rhythm memory


This game is similar to Echo Tunes.

What to do:

- Talk about different length notes & how they can be combined to make rhythms
- Explain that you are going to drop the pulse followed by a rhythm. Ask the pupil to copy it back.
- Establish pulse dropping on lap. Ask pupil to join in.
- Once pupil is ready, continue dropping pulse for one more bar, counting aloud, and then drop one 4 bar rhythm.
- Continue counting one more bar
- Pupil then tries to repeat the rhythm.
- Encourage pupil to count aloud without you.
- Dropping the rhythm in one hand & pulse in the other develops hand independence

Encourage pupils to play Echo Rhythms on-line when they get home.

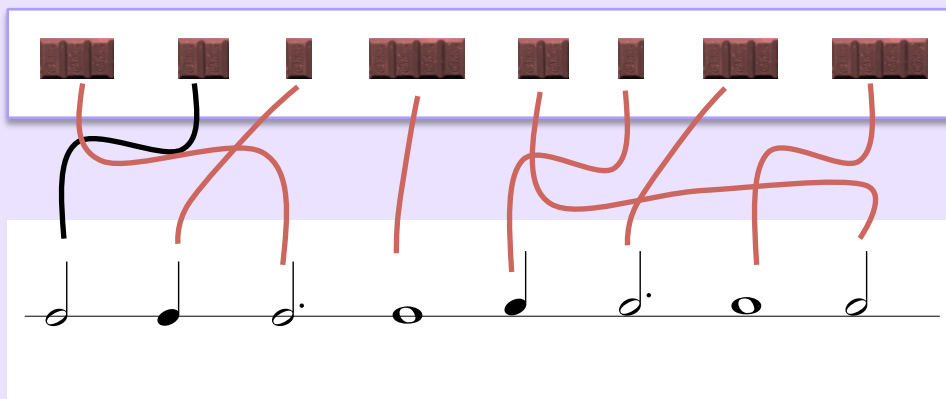
To learn the note values of

Give Pupils the note flashcards 

What to do:

- Talk about how we can represent rhythms by indicating how long each note should be held ie not all notes are held for one beat.
- I find chocolate helpful – the individual pieces can be separated or joined together ...
- Pupil draws a line to join each piece of chocolate to a note of the same value.

Solution:



Baa Baa Black Sheep

To understand how note values indicate rhythm

What to do:

- Play & sing the tune while pupil drops the pulse
- Talk about the difference between pulse & rhythm
- Help pupil to write in the counting under the notes.
- Establish pulse, then drop the rhythm
- Sing the tune again pointing to the rhythm while pupil plays the rhythm on C

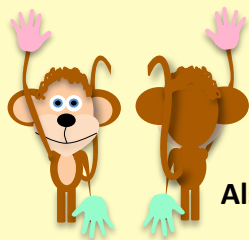
- Some pupils may be able to play the tune by ear in C major (ie transposed down a tone). (Some pupils like to write the note names beside each note to help)

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

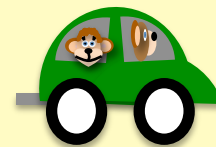
To practise counting notes

What to do:

- Pupil writes counting under the notes & then drops the rhythm
- Accompany pupil singing Twinkle Twinkle & ask if they can hear that rhythm
- Pupil points to notes as he sings (the rhythm repeats 6 times)
- Show pupil how to play the first bar by ear. I use l.h. on middle C and r.h.4 starting on G



Stems Down on the left & Up on the right



To explain stem direction

Also revises left and right and continues to develop independent hands.

What to do:

Warm up: With pupil standing, practice putting right hand in the air and pointing down with left hand.

Game: Pupil begins marching on the spot.

Whenever you say “stems down on the left” he/she stops and points left hand down.

Whenever you say “stems up on the righty” he/she stops and points right hand up.

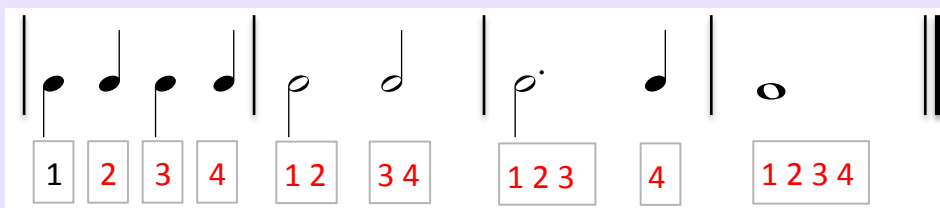
To learn the note values of 

Give pupils the note flashcards

What to do:

- Explain that the pulse is broken down into groups (usually 4), separated by bar lines ie each bar has the same number of beats though not necessarily the same number of notes.
- Help the pupil to write the counting under the notes
- Ensure pupil understands that these bars all have the same value ie 4 beats.
- Help the pupil to drop the rhythm
- Some pupils like to make up a tune using the rhythm

Solution



One Man Went To Mow

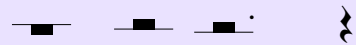
To practise counting notes and, more importantly, rests

What to do:

- Explain the importance of rests
- I use the analogy with chocolates removed from a box leaving a tell-tale gap where they were!
- Write in the counting under the notes & rests.
- Establish pulse. Then drop the rhythm.
- Play & sing the tune while pupil plays their part on C with r.h. in verse 1, both hands in verse 2, both hands and right foot in verse 3, both hands and both feet in verse 4. (Ensure heels remain on floor while toe taps as this is good practise for pedal work later)
- Encourage pupil to play the tune by ear

To learn the values of rests

Give pupils the rest flashcards



What to do:

- Explain that rests show us where there is a gap in the sound. (I use the analogy with chocolates removed from a box leaving a tell-tale gap where they were!)
- Help the pupil to write the counting under the notes
- Ensure pupil understands that these bars all have the same value ie 4 beats.

Solution

The ***flashcards*** *have been* created specifically for ***Lightning Piano Fun!***

They show notes on the *grand stave*

They are the *same size* as the music in the books they are reading.

Encourage parents to cut out the flashcards and regularly play memory games with their child

A game of “pairs” can be downloaded free from the website.

Activities

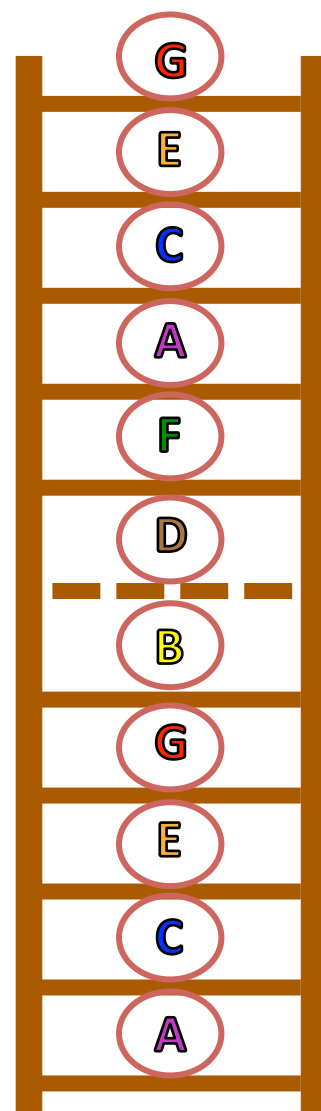
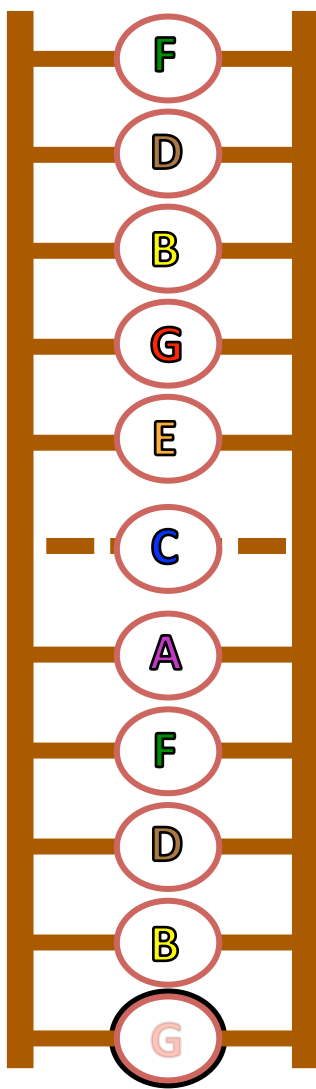
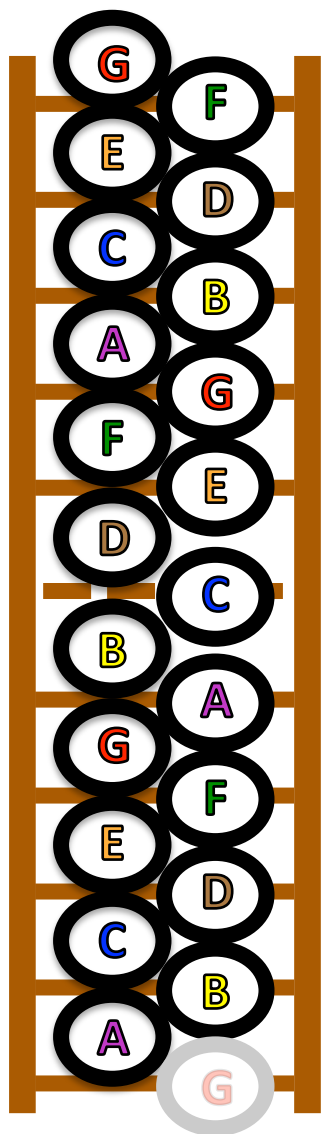
1. Putting the notes in order from low to high
2. Choosing a card and naming 3 things which begin with the letter.
(Choose a different theme for each round eg animals, vehicles, names)
1. Go to www.lightningpiano.com for a free printable “Note Pairs” game

CHAPTER 5

THE GRAND STAVE

Note Ladders

Can pupil spot A C E in different places



Carefully walking fingers 2 & 3 up the ladder saying “line, space, line, space...” establishes the idea of lines & spaces and reading from the bottom up while introducing a degree of finger co-ordination and the importance of accuracy. (R.H. 2 on Bottom Space A, 3 on B etc. Swap for L.H.) Repeat saying note names.

Carefully walk fingers 2 & 3 up the ladder saying “line, space, line, space...” to understand lines & spaces

25

Explain notes are named from the bottom up. With a normal ladder, feet only use the rungs, not the gaps

CHAPTER 5 - THE GRAND STAVE



The Balloon Stave and Note ladders may be photocopied for educational purposes only.

It may not be used in other publications or sold without written consent.

Please acknowledge Lightning Piano when photocopying or using this tool.

**Encourage parents to help make the balloon stave
ready for the next lesson
Following the instructions in the book**

Balloon Games

To establish correlation of pitch and position on the grand stave

- First find the things in the search bar ie lines, spaces, bass clef, treble clef,
- Talk about the magic line for Middle C which is usually invisible but appears when it is needed.
- Talk about the bottom and top of the ladder/stave. Can the pupil point to the highest line (rung), the lowest space (gap) etc.
- Explain how the notes correlate with those on the piano.

Follow My Leader From A: Show pupil which A correlates to the bottom space on the stave. As you move the balloon up or down by a melodic 2nd (next door notes) the pupil plays the corresponding note. Use this method to find the 3 C's. This introduces the idea of moving note by note up or down & to allow the pupil to find the C's for himself.

Hide & Seek C's: Move the balloon up & down the stave slowly, stopping as you pass over each C. The pupil plays the correct C to make the balloon move again. As the pupil becomes more confident, make it less obvious where you are going next, sometimes going back to the same note more than once. Finally add Bottom Space A in to the game.

Tell A Friend: This confirms whether the pupil really does know where the C's and Bottom Space A are on the stave. If the pupil can explain the position of bottom space A and the C's, then you know they have understood.

I Hear Thunder

To understand how pitch direction correlates to position on the stave

Give Pupils the note flashcards for A and 3 C's

You will need to sit in the centre of the piano; the pupil will stand and run round the back of you in the middle – ensure there is safe passage (risk assessment!!)

What to do:

Explain that all the notes shown are C's & help pupil to work out which one is which.

Ask pupil to find middle C's and the 2 other C's they know

Ask pupil how long each note will be held.

Ask pupil what happens in bars 5 & 6 – discuss the importance of counting rests

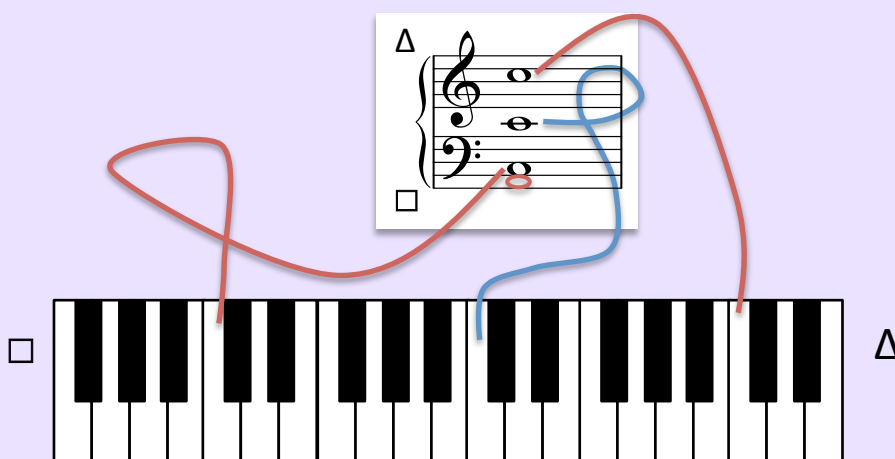
Establish pulse. Play together...

Encourage pupils to listen for high and low sounds at home.



Join the notes to the keys.
(Middle C has been done.)

Draw Bottom Space A on the stave



Chipmunk's Challenge

To develop ability to play by ear & improvise

What to do:

- Help pupil to play I Hear Thunder by ear & to make up one finger tunes on white notes.
- Point out the way tunes always seem to want to end on C when you only use white notes.

Middle C pg 30 & 31

To understand how Middle C looks on the real stave
& to read rhythms on Middle C

What to do:

Establish the rhythm on Middle C on pg 30

To revise counting rhythms

What to do:

Pupil draws a line to join each picture to a corresponding note on the keyboard

Four boxes of chocolate bars are shown at the top, each connected by a red line to a musical note on a staff below. The boxes contain: 1. Four bars, 2. Two bars, 3. Four bars, and 4. Four bars. The staff has five measures: 1. Four eighth notes (beamed in pairs), 2. A half note, 3. A quarter note and a half note, 4. A whole note, and 5. A double bar line. Below the staff are counting boxes: 1. [1] [2] [3] [4], 2. [1 2 3 4], 3. [1 2] [3 4], 4. [1 2 3 4].

Middle C Again!

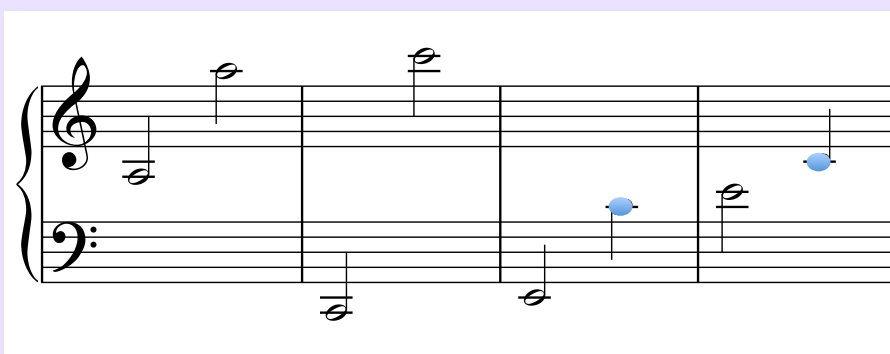
To understand how Middle C looks on the real stave
& to read rhythms on Middle C

What to do:

Discuss why it looks different from pg 30. ie The staves have been pulled apart to make a larger gap between. This makes it easier to see which notes are for which hand.

To ensure pupil fully understands Middle C

- Explain that not all notes with one Magic (ledger) line are Middle C
- Explain that not all notes in the middle of the stave are Middle C (eg if they have more than one ledger line)
- Pupil colours in the Middle C's



Three Blind Mice

To practice reading rhythms on different C's

What to do:

Ensure pupil understands how to count the rhythm

Establish pulse then Play together.

Some pupils will manage the tune by ear – or try a duet where you play even numbered bars and they play odd numbered bars.

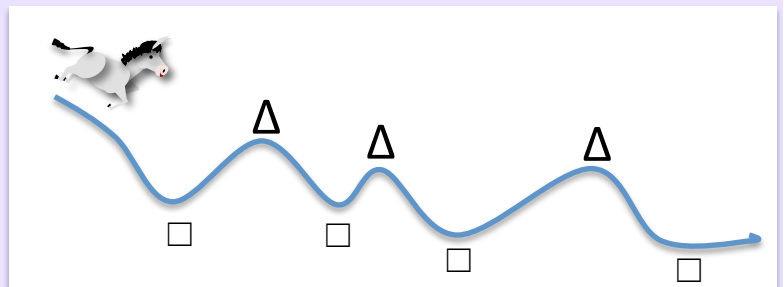
To practice reading pitch direction

Marking changes of pitch direction encourages pupil to read more fluently. Instead of reading note by note the pupil follows the shape of the music.

Pupil marks Δ s & \square s

Pupil traces the blue line with finger

(I ask pupils to make a siren sounds)



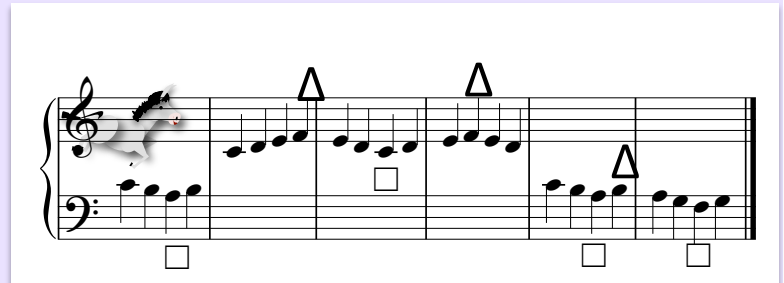
Discuss following noteheads –not stems

Discuss lines & spaces - next door notes

Pupil marks Δ s & \square s

Pupil traces the shape of the noteheads

Pupil can be asked to play the notes



Doe Ray Me Far Sew La Tea Doe pg 33

&

Doe Tea La Sew Far Me Ray Doe pg 34

To practice reading pitch direction with next door notes

&

Develop ability to move whole hand to next door note without looking

Marking same pitch notes and changes in pitch direction develops an ability to read more fluently since individual notes don't need to be processed.

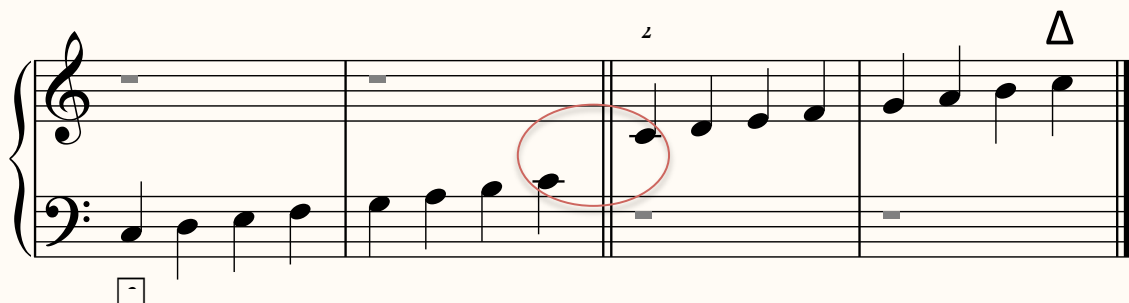
What to do:

Ensure pupil understands how to read from left to right following noteheads from space to line to space for next door notes (melodic 2nds).

Discuss the home note (Doe)

Establish pulse then play

Work towards playing next door notes with octopus drop with **eyes shut**.



Doe A Deer

To practice reading pitch direction & rhythm at the same time

What to do:

Discuss rhythm

Discuss pitch direction Add Δ above highs and \square below lows and circle same pitch notes (see below)



Establish pulse then Play

This needs to be played an octave higher to be at the correct pitch for singing. Encourage pupil to play in different octaves as an introduction to transposition.

Talk about the home note

Teacher's part is not printed but is available at www.musicnotes.com written at half speed. To use as accompaniment use $\text{♪} = \text{♪}$

To revise pitch direction & Bottom Space A and C





Mary Jayne's Monkey Games

Play my games
anywhere!

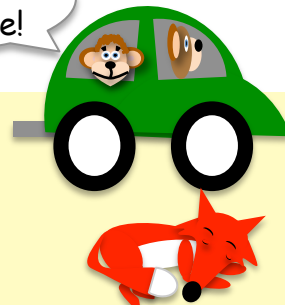


Table Olympics 1

To establish correct finger & thumb action. Also revises how fingers are numbered

It can be difficult to establish correct finger action (rounded & moving from knuckle) while pressing stiff keys down; pupils tend to flatten their fingers, especially when using the weaker fingers eg 4 & 5. Teachers who promote high finger action in beginners can ask pupils to lightly tap rather than gently push.

What to do:

- Establish correct finger shape on table/piano (use “Good Fingers, Naughty Fingers” etc if appropriate.) Ensure correct thumb position ie side of thumb nail.
- With thumb and fingers 3 to 5 resting on the table, gently “push” finger 2 four times. (For some pupils I find it helps to say “lean on finger 2”)
- Repeat with each finger in turn ensuring the other 4 digits remain at rest.

Table Olympics 2

To develop independent fingers & correct thumb action

May be used to develop legato play at teacher’s discretion

What to do:

- Push 2 fingers alternately (like doing a trill) ensuring other digits remain at rest.

Balloon Games

To establish correlation of pitch and fingers

Helps pupils to adapt from playing with one finger (moving whole hand up or down the keyboard) to playing with all the fingers, (keeping the hand still over the same notes).

Follow My Leader From Bottom Space A: Ask pupil to put l.h. 3 on Bottom Space A on the piano. As you move the balloon up or down by a melodic 2nd (next door notes) the pupil plays the corresponding note using the next door finger. Eg A B A B C B A G F etc.

Follow My Leader From C’s: Repeat above but beginning with l.h. 3 on Second Space C, then on Middle C. Repeat with r.h. 3 on Middle C and then r.h. 3 on high C.

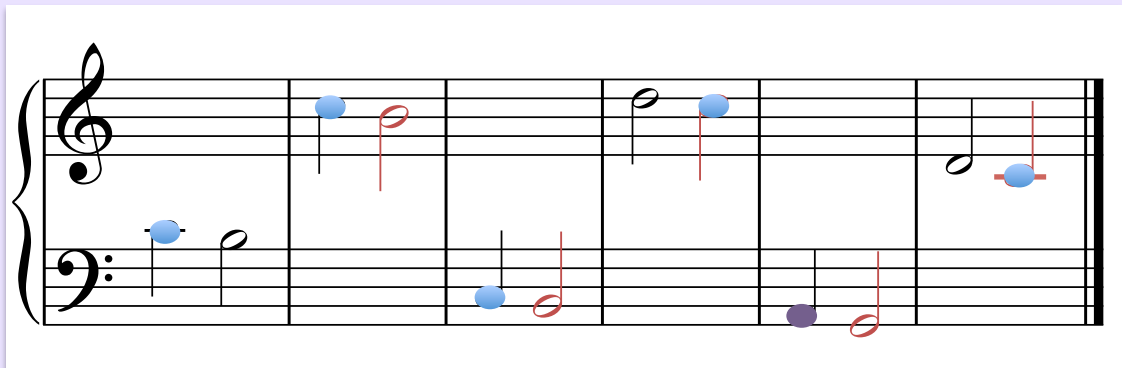
Next Door Notes pg 38

To establish correct finger action
&
To connect pitch direction with fingers

What to do:

- Discuss changes in pitch direction
- Discuss octopus drop and finger action
- Establish pulse then Play
- Repeat with different finger combinations: 1 & 2, 2 & 3, 3 & 4, 4 & 5

To consolidate how next door notes appear on the staff and learn Bottom Space A & 3 C's



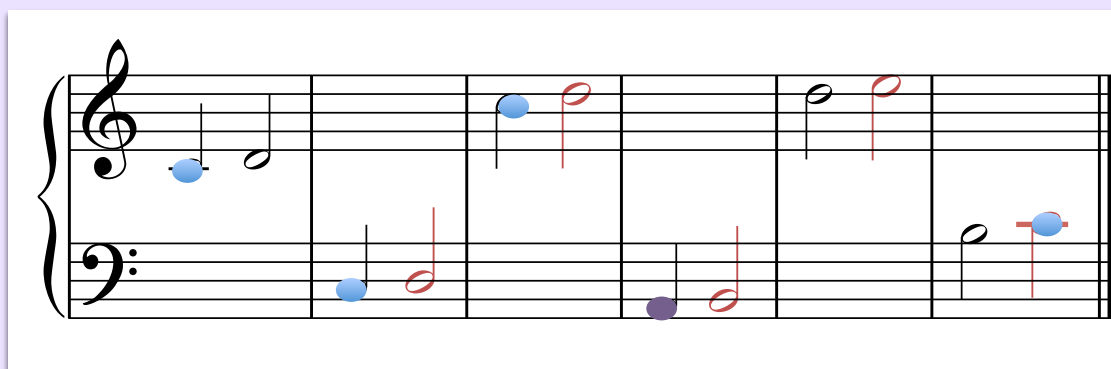
Walking Up Walking Down

To establish correct finger action
&
To connect pitch direction with fingers

What to do:

- Discuss changes in pitch direction
- Circle repeated notes (consecutive notes of the same pitch)
- Mark changes in pitch direction with Δ or \square
- Discuss octopus drop and finger action
- Establish pulse then Play

To consolidate how next door notes appear on the stave and learn Bottom Space A & 3 C's



Pease Porridge Hot

**To establish correct finger action
&
To connect pitch direction with fingers**

What to do:

- Discuss changes in pitch direction
- Circle repeated notes (consecutive notes of the same pitch)
- Mark changes in pitch direction with Δ or \square
- Discuss octopus drop and finger action
- Establish pulse then Play
- Allow creativity with choosing a note (or chord) for YUK!

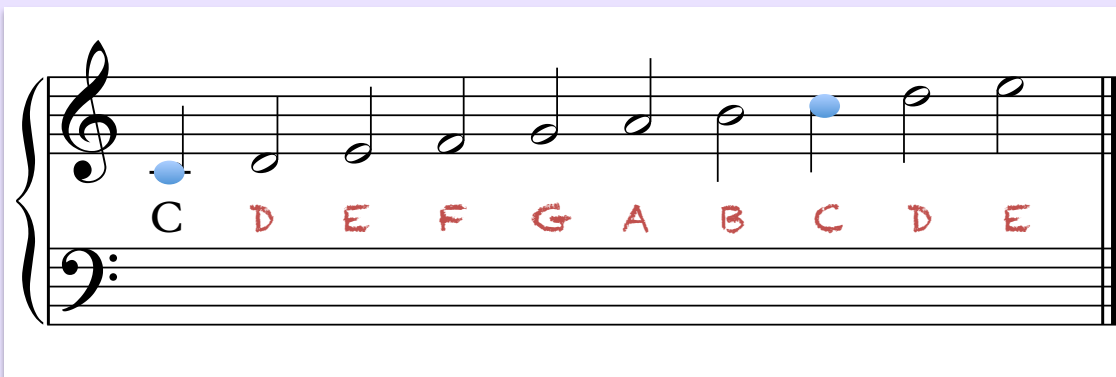
This needs to be played an octave lower to be at the correct pitch for singing. Encourage pupil to play in different octaves as an introduction to transposition.

Mary Had A Little Lamb

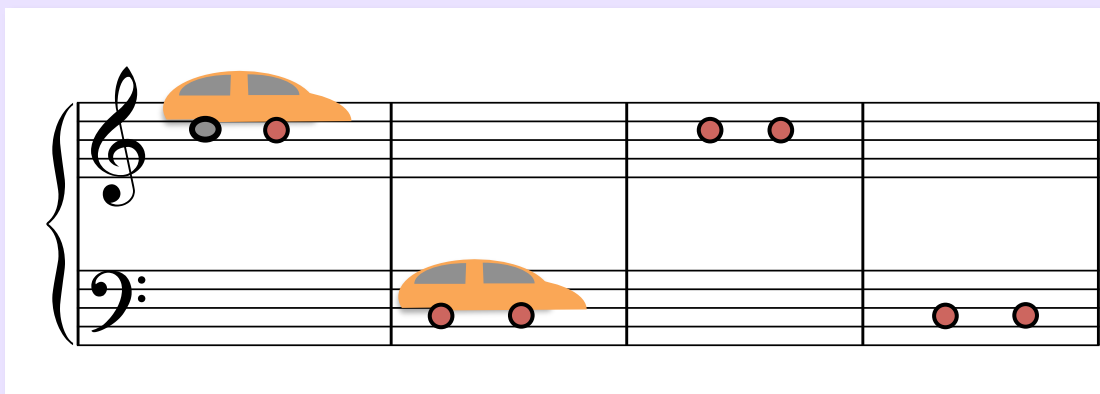
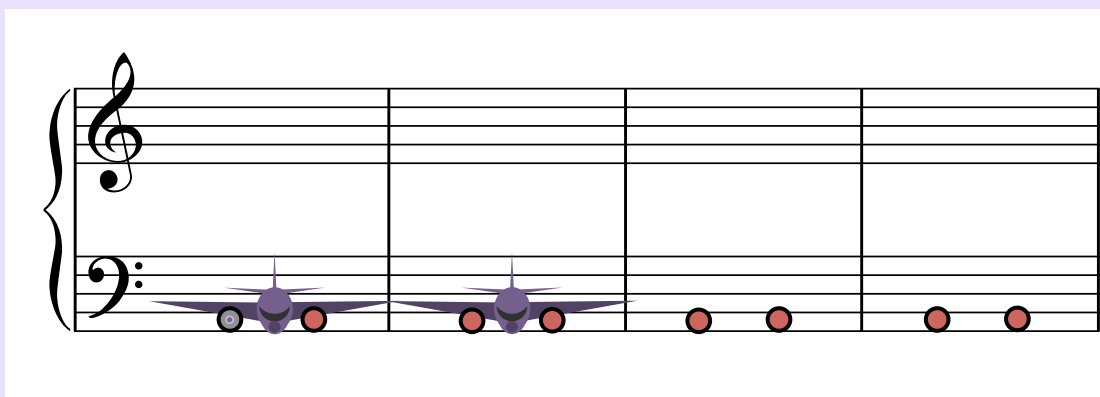
To practice reading pitch direction & rhythm at the same time

What to do:

- Discuss rhythm
- Discuss pitch direction Add Δ above highs and \square below lows and circle same pitch notes
- Establish pulse then Play
- Talk about the home note



To revise bottom space A and second space C's



To establish revise A's & C's

What to do:

- Using a timer, time how fast they can play all the notes.
- Put a star beside the time they have achieved
- I allow 3 attempts at this exercise & then repeat next lesson hoping for an improvement!

Doe Ray Me Far Sew

To revise correct finger action

&

To connect pitch direction with fingers

&

To demonstrate how to find Sew & to internalise the sounds of doe & sew

What to do:

- Discuss changes in pitch direction
- Circle repeated notes (consecutive notes of the same pitch)
- Mark changes in pitch direction with Δ or \square
- Establish pulse then Play
- Ask pupil which fingers are on Doe and Sew in each hand. Talk about Sew always being 5 notes up the scale from Doe and how to find Sew when the home note (Doe) is C, G, D, A, or E. I like to continue the pattern into the black notes and all the way back to C through the circle of 5ths with some pupils

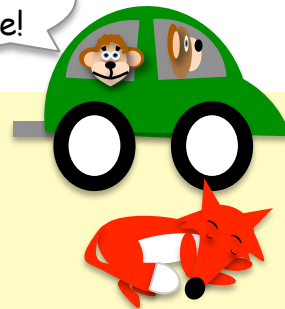
To revise how notes are named on the stave and especially Bottom Space A & Second Space C





Mary Jayne's Monkey Games

Play my games
anywhere!



Five Finger Frenzy

To establish correct finger & thumb action

May be used to develop legato play at teacher's discretion

What to do:

1. Establish correct finger shape on table (using "Good Fingers, Naughty Fingers" if appropriate).
2. Beginning with a small octopus raise and drop, tap each finger in turn from 1 to 5 and back.
3. This exercise can be played legato or portato (detached)
4. Now "play" on the piano.
5. Repeat beginning on D. Some pupils enjoy experimenting with different starting notes which can lead to discussions on the use of black notes and major/minor sounds
6. Practicing on the table begins to develop Mental Play (the ability to hear tunes in the head while visualising the notes to be played).

A useful exercise to assist in developing legato:

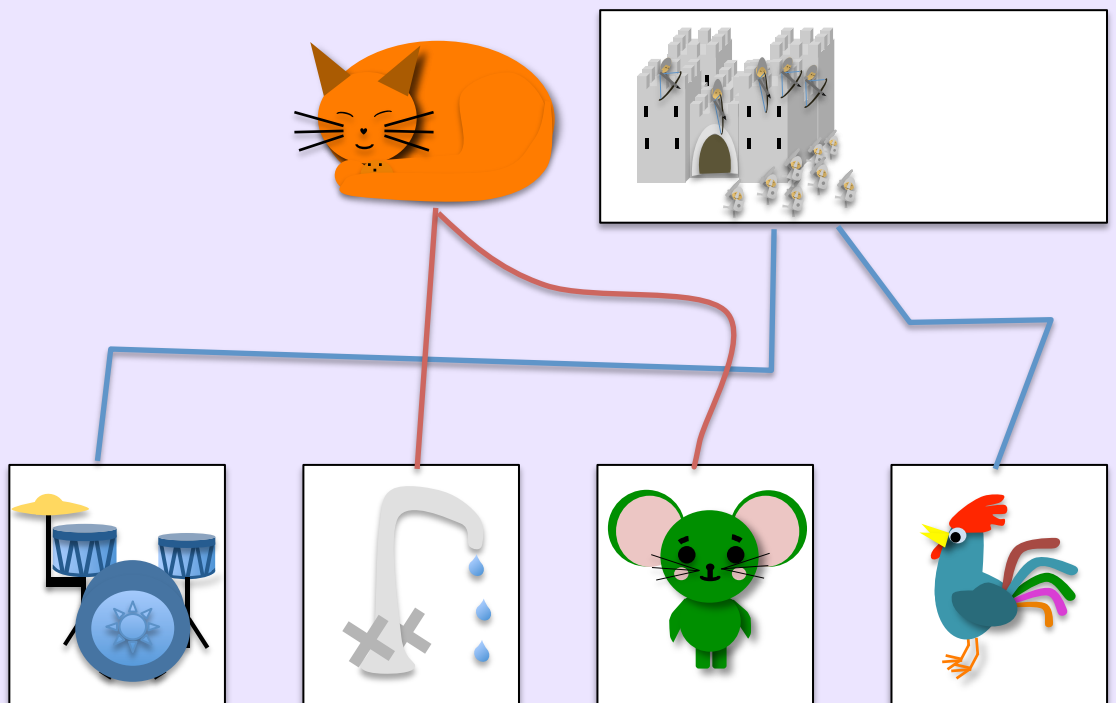
Hold a pencil between thumb and 2nd finger. Transfer to 3rd finger without dropping the pencil. Repeat with other fingers.

To learn about loud & soft (P and F)

Talk about loud and soft sounds & how they are produced on the piano

(This can be a good time to show the pupil inside the piano and discuss why technique and posture help in producing different sounds)

- Pupil joins the loud sounds to the fort and the quiet sounds to the cat
- Encourage pupil to listen for changes in volume during the week



A Happy Day

**To experiment with changing dynamics
&
To connect pitch direction with fingers**

What to do:

- Discuss changes in pitch direction
- Ask pupil if there are any repeated notes (there aren't!)
- Mark changes in pitch direction with Δ or \square
- Discuss octopus drop and finger action
- Establish pulse then Play
- Discuss where it could be made loud or soft
- Encourage pupil to experiment with different dynamics
- Pupil marks P and F where they finally decide they want them

**To experiment with changing dynamics
&
To have fun playing by ear**

What to do:

- Discuss how different pulse, rhythm & volume affect the mood.
- Encourage creativity and have fun sharing different tunes and sounds

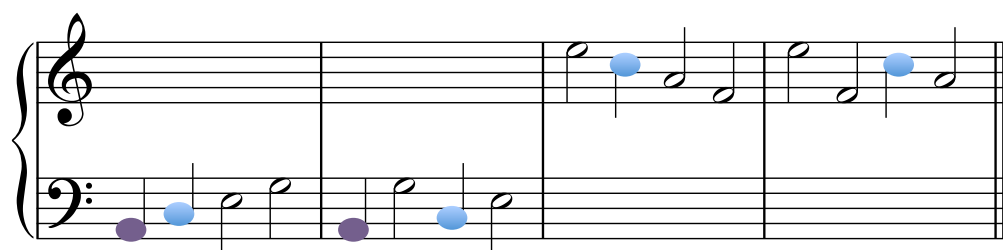
Incy Wincy Spider

To discover usefulness of “Home” note and “Sew” note (Tonic & Dominant)

What to do:

- Play the tune making up a simple C/G accompaniment.
- Play the tune while pupil makes up a simple accompaniment
- Help pupil to play the tune by ear using 5 fingers, beginning with r.h. 1 on C

To learn Bottom Space A & Second Space C's



J'ai Du Bon Tabac

Using the sew note as accompaniment
& revising pitch direction

What to do:

Mark pitch direction & circle same pitch notes

Talk about repetition of phrases in music

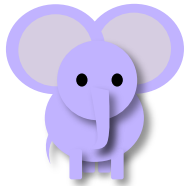
Drop left hand rhythm

Pupil plays left hand while you accompany with right hand

Then swap over

To revise note values

The diagram illustrates a musical exercise for revising note values. It features a staff with five measures of music, each containing a note with a specific value: a quarter note, an eighth note, a dotted quarter note, a half note, and a whole note. Below each note is a box for the student to write the note's value. Above the staff, four boxes represent the 'sew' notes used for accompaniment. The first box contains four blocks, the second contains three blocks labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4, the third contains two blocks, and the fourth contains one block. Red lines connect the 'sew' boxes to the musical notes: the first box connects to the quarter note, the second box connects to the eighth note, the third box connects to the dotted quarter note, and the fourth box connects to the half note. The whole note is not connected to any 'sew' box.



Joel The Elephant's Star Chart

Tunes to play from memory

The star chart is designed to encourage pupils to play to other people. Playing to others at a young age will reap dividends later in life. I talk about “*sharing a tune*” rather than “performing”.

Sometimes the biggest challenge is not persuading the children to play but persuading the parents to spend time listening! Some pupils like to arrange concerts for their teddies or pets!

I always encourage pupils to perform from memory.

Performing from memory facilitates fluency and artistry and is a skill which I like to develop from day 1 – it is much harder to develop later.

Lightning Piano Book 2 introduces

G's and D's,

harmonic 2nds & 3rds and melodic 3rds,

quavers (eighth notes) and different time signatures.