

HOW TO PLAY PIANO

A Guide for You and Your New Piano

With Lettered Notes

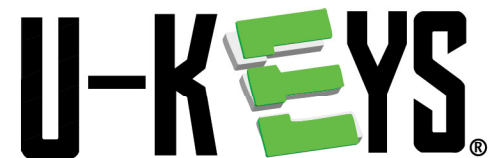
By: Jarvis Rhone

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Introduction



WHY

This book is a labor of love and a bridge of opportunity. It's designed to empower young and adult dreamers - especially those who, like me, might not have the immediate access to traditional music education. With this resource, my hope is to ignite a passion for music, foster creativity, and provide the steppingstones for a brighter musical future.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Understand the basic note counts. To have a broad understanding of music composition and theory for reading piano sheet music. To identify and play the C major scale. To build students confidence to further pursue music.

WHAT WE ARE NOT

This book is NOT intended to replace formal music lessons. Our sole purposes is to serve as a bridge between the moment you acquire a piano or keyboard instrument and the beginning of formal instruction.

FIND A LOCAL TEACHER

To ensure a well-rounded musical journey, we have proudly partnered with the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA). This partnership provides an invaluable resource to help you connect with qualified music instructors in your area. To find an instructor, simply visit www.ukeys.com/mtna, click the "Find a Teacher" button at the top of the page, and begin your search for expert guidance tailored to your needs.

Objective

To visually learn the names of the notes, their positions on the piano, and how they correspond to musical notation on the staff. Gradually, we encourage students to remember the corresponding note names to promote memorization and build confidence in note recognition.

PLAN

Phase 1: Introduction and Familiarization (Weeks 1-2)

Practice playing simple exercises or songs while identifying the note name, its position on the staff, and its location on the keyboard.

Phase 2: Gradually flip the book to the non lettered notes starting from Week 1,

Focus on playing without the lettered notation, emphasizing memorization.

Continue practicing exercises or songs on the flipped side that include the removed notes to reinforce memory.

Phase 3: Mastery and Independence

By the end of the lessons, students should be able to confidently identify and play notes without visual cues on the staff.

EXPECTED OUTCOME:

By progressively removing note names, students will gradually memorize note positions both on the keyboard and the staff. This approach will help them develop fluency in reading music and playing the piano with confidence.

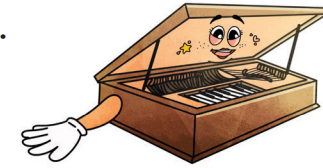


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How to Use U-KEYS® Flip Book

This flip book is designed to guide students in developing both their piano playing skills and their ability to read musical notation. We use a two-step learning approach to transition from lettered notation to pure notation, promoting gradual memorization and confidence. Here's how to use it effectively:

Step 1: Start with the Assisted Side (With Lettered Notes)

Open the Book to the Assisted Side - “How To Play Piano”: Begin with the pages that include alphabetical notations (letter names of the notes written inside or near the musical notes).

Introduce the Music Piece: Familiarize the yourself or the student with the song by first identifying the letter names of the notes. This helps build an understanding of pitch and placement on the keyboard.

Point to each note. We encourage students to say the letter name out loud.

Play with Assistance: Play the piece on the piano or keyboard while referencing the lettered notations.

Practice for Fluency: Repeat the piece multiple times until the student feels comfortable with both the notes and the rhythm.

Step 2: Transition to the Flipped Side (Without Lettered Notes)

Flip to the Unassisted Side “Without Lettered Notes”: Turn the book to the corresponding page where the same music is presented without alphabetical notations.

Challenge Yourself/Student to Recall: We encourage students to rely on their memory and understanding of the musical staff to play the same piece.

If they struggle, refer back to the assisted side as needed for a quick review, then return to the unassisted side.

Reinforce Music Reading Skills: Gradually reduce assistance and focus on recognizing the notes and their positions on the staff.

Repeat and Refine: Practice the unassisted version until you can play the piece smoothly without hesitation.



Finding Middle C on Various Keyboards

1. Finding Middle C on an 88-Key full size keyboard or Piano:

- An 88-key piano has 52 white keys and 36 black keys.
- Middle C is the 4th C from the left side of the keyboard.
- Start at the far left of the key and count each C (C is the white key immediately left of a pair of two black keys).
- Middle C is positioned in the exact center of an 88-key piano, making it relatively easy to find by sight as well.



2. Finding Middle C on a 72-Key Keyboard:

- A 72-key keyboard has fewer keys, often used for synthesizers or smaller keyboards.
- Middle C is the 3rd C from the left.
- Start at the far left and count until you reach the 3rd C.
- It is slightly left of the physical center of the keyboard due to the reduced number of keys.



3. Finding Middle C on a 61-Key Keyboard:

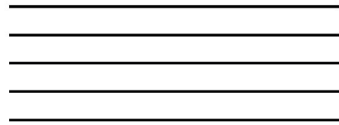
- A 61-key keyboard is more compact and common for beginner keyboards.
- On this keyboard, Middle C is the 3rd C from the left side, just like the 76-key keyboard.
- Start at the far left and count the C's until you reach the 3rd one.
- It will be closer to the physical center of the keyboard, though not perfectly centered.



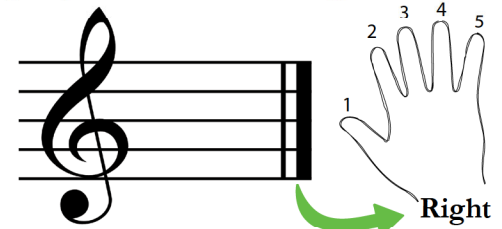
The Musical Staff and Clefs

Goal: Understand the musical staff, treble clef, and bass clef.

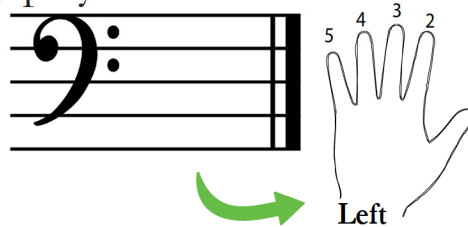
The Staff: A staff consists of 5 lines and 4 spaces where musical notes are placed. Notes can be placed on the lines or in the spaces.



Treble Clef: The treble clef is also called the G clef because it curls around the G line (second line from the bottom of the staff). It represents higher-pitched notes, usually played with the right hand on the piano. You'll often see notes like C, D, E, F, G, A, and B written here.




Bass Clef: The bass clef, also called the F clef, places the F note on the fourth line from the bottom. It represents lower-pitched notes, usually played with the left hand on piano. You'll see lower notes like the C below middle C, B, A, and G here.




Note and Rest Values


Goal: Understand the value of whole, half, and quarter notes as well as whole, half, and quarter rest.


Whole Note: A whole note looks like an open circle. It lasts for four beats. Think of it as a long, sustained sound that lasts for the entire measure in 4/4 time. 

Whole Rest: A whole rest looks like a small, solid rectangle (or a thick horizontal bar) hanging *below* the fourth line of the staff. It lasts for four beats. Think of it as a long, sustained sound that lasts for the entire measure in 4/4 time. 

Half Note: A half note looks like an open circle with a stem. It lasts for two beats, half the time of a whole note. 

Half Rest: A half rest resembles a whole rest but sits *on top* of the third line of the staff. It lasts for two beats, half the time of a whole note. 

Quarter Note: A quarter note looks like a filled circle with a stem. It lasts for one beat, a quarter of the time of a whole note. 

Quarter Rest: A quarter rest is a wiggly shape that looks like a lightning bolt or a curly “Z” with a hook. It lasts for one beat, a quarter of the time of a whole note. 

Note Stems: The stem is the vertical line attached to the note. It goes up on the right if the note is below the middle line of the staff and down on the left if the note is on or above the middle line. Stems help visually balance the notation, especially when reading many notes.

Activity: Practice clapping the rhythm of whole, half, and quarter notes. Try holding down a key on the piano for four beats (whole note), two beats (half note), and one beat (quarter note).

Measures and Time Signatures

What is a **Measure** - Measures help musicians stay in time and play together without getting lost. It's like having spaces between words in a sentence—it makes everything easier to follow! Each measure has a certain number of beats, kind of like counting steps in a dance or clapping to a song. For example, if a song has a **time signature** of 4/4 time, each measure has 4 beats.



Single Bar line – Separates one measure from the next.



Final Bar line – A thick line that marks the very end of the song.



What is a **Time Signature**- A time signature tells you how to count the beats in a song. It looks like two numbers on top of each other. Every piece of music in this book will be in 4/4 also known as common time.



-The Top Number: Tells you how many beats are in each chunk of the music. Imagine each chunk is a like as box and the top number say how many claps or taps go in that box.

-The Bottom Number: Tells you what kind of note gets one beat- like if it's a quick tap or a longer one. Just think of it as how we measure those claps.

4/4 also know as “common time” has 4 beats/claps in each measure (we will only use 4/4 in this book)

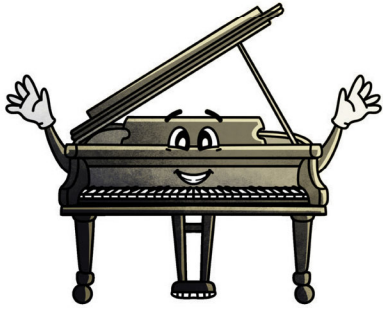
3/4 means 3 beats/claps in each measure

6/8 has 6 beats in a measure

2/4 has 2 beats in a measure

Why did the pianist break up with the metronome?
Because it kept ticking them off!





LET'S MAKE SOME MUSIC!

Set Your Metronomes to 4/4 & 78 BPM



If you have digital piano/keyboard, sometimes it's fun to play with one of the preloaded backing tracks in your instrument. Set the tempo to 78.

Take a look at the number
above the note.

This tells you what finger to
use to play the note.

Right Tightly

In this lesson use your right thumb .



1

Right

The Time Signature is 4/4. Meaning
there are four beats in a measure.

Tempo should be 78 BPM.

On your keyboard set the metronome
tempo or backing track to 78.



Remember;

Whole notes = 4 Counts

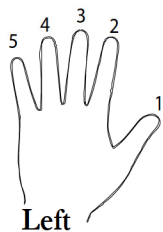
Half Notes = 2 Counts

Quarter Notes = 1 Count

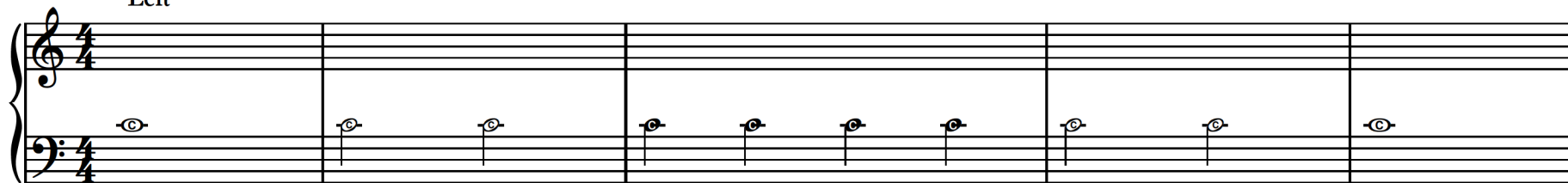
Wholes Rest = 4 Counts

Hold the beat
Now play it without letters.
Go to page **3**.

Lefty Loosey



Left



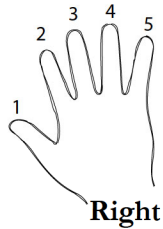
Use your left thumb to press C.

*Remember the 1 represents what finger to use.

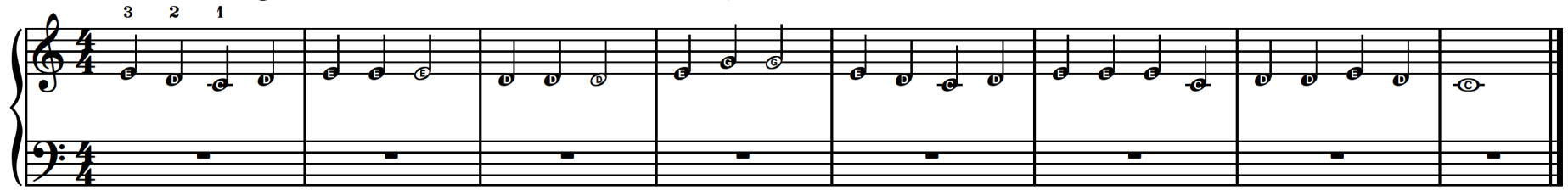


Take a rest,
and flip the book.
Stay in time on page 4.

Mary's Lamb

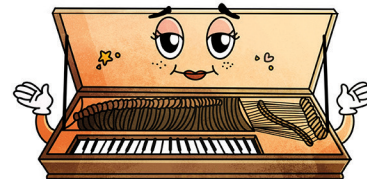


Play G with you pinky finger.



I hope you are ready! In this lesson we will add two new notes!
Pay attention to the fingerings!

Let's play something familiar.



Like flipping a record,
side B is where the magic happens.
Turn to page **5**.

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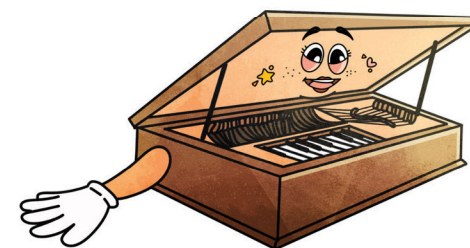
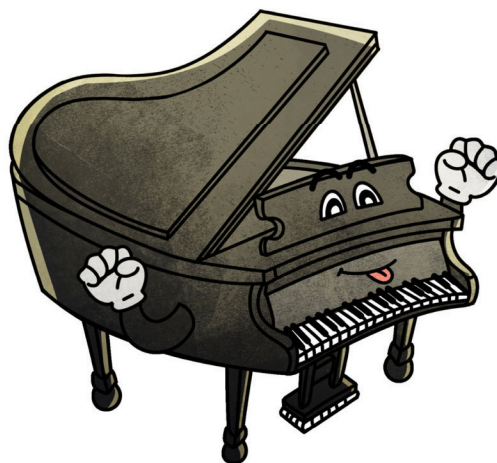
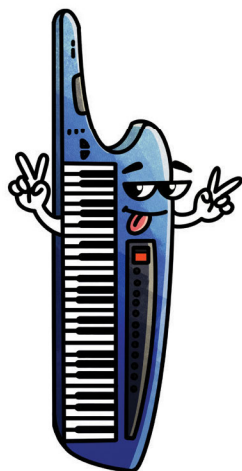
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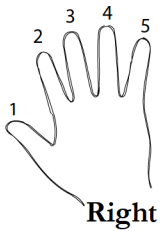
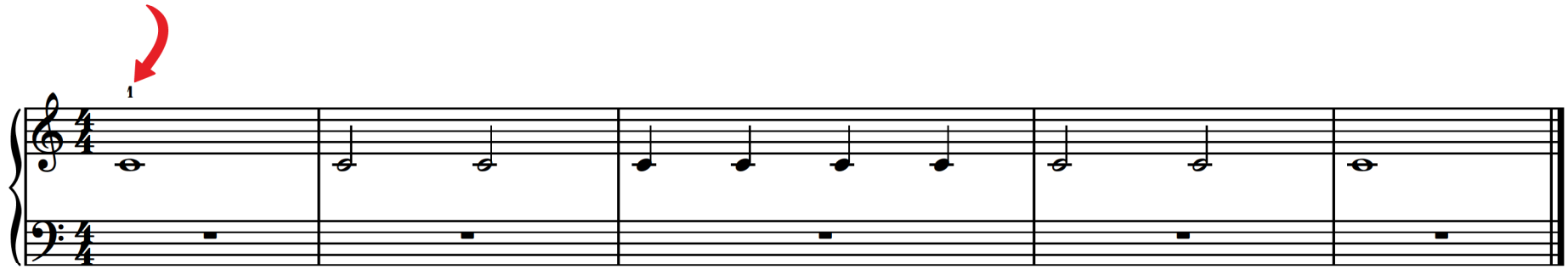
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Right Tightly



Congratulations you made it through your first lesson!

Now we will redo the same songs without letters in the notes.

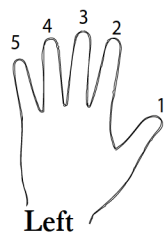
If you have U-KEYS®, we encourage all U-KEYS® students to temporarily remove the aid for the specific notes used in the lesson.

In this lesson we are going to remove the **C** sticker.

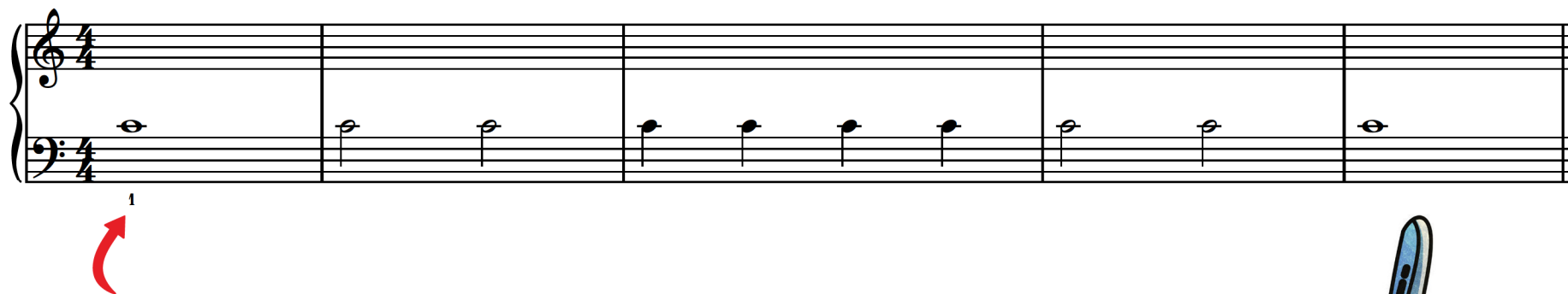


You rocked it!

Flip the book back to your next lesson!



Lefty Loosey

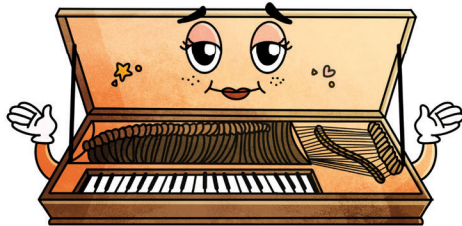
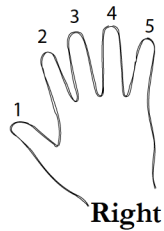


Remember to keep the tempo at 78 BPM (Beats Per Minute) on your metronome. Don't go too fast. In this lesson we are going to remove the **C** sticker



You nailed it!
Flip and tickle the next
tune!

Mary's Lamb



After practicing a few times.
We removed notation C, D, E, F, G
Practice until you are comfortable

Flip the book,
groove into the next lesson.

Your Keys, Your Way, With U-KEYS®



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