Andersonstown
Traditional & Contemporary
Music School

KEYBOARD

HANDBOOK

Updated - March 2015
KEYBOARDS & PIANO

BOOK ONE
How to sit at the piano

Posture

It is important to sit correctly at the piano otherwise you may develop back problems. Sit facing the middle of the keyboard making sure that you are sitting straight but relaxed. If you feel uncomfortable, lean slightly forward. Adjust your piano stool so that your arms are an inch or so above the keyboard. Make sure your feet are flat on the floor - the right foot may be slightly forward.

Hand Position

![Correct hand position](image)

Curve the fingers so that the top of the finger plays the key by falling directly from above. Imagine you are holding a small object in the hollow of your hand as you play and keep your wrist in line with your arm. Place the thumb tip near the tip of the forefinger to form a sort of O. Keep your nails short!

![Incorrect hand position](image)

Don’t play with flat fingers - if you do, your hand will not be flexible and you will never be able to play anything fast or expressively. Although the fingers should be directly above the keys, make sure that you touch only the key that is being played. Try not to look at your hands as you play.

Fingering

![Fingering](image)

To make learning easier, the fingers of both hands are given numbers. Fingering is numbered from the thumb, this being number 1.

Practise moving each finger as you say its number aloud.
Always

- Play with clean hands and short fingernails.
- Check that the chair or piano stool is in the middle of the keyboard and at the right height.
- Make sure you are sitting correctly.
- Play with curved fingers, like this:

- Use the same fingering every time you play a piece.
- Listen to every sound you make on the piano.
FINDING KEYS AND NOTES

Treble, or G. clef

Bass, or F. clef

C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C D

F A C E E G B D F

A C E G G B D F A

G A B C D C B A G

G F E D C C D E F
Introducing the Keyboard

The piano keyboard has white keys and black keys, with the black keys in groups of twos and threes. Starting with the lowest, find all the groups of two black keys on the piano.

**Middle C**

The note C is the white key to the left of the two black keys and the C that is closest to the middle of the keyboard is called Middle C.

**The Musical Alphabet**

There are only seven letters used in music and they are the first seven letters of the alphabet - A B C D E F G. These same letters are used over and over again. The distance from one note to the next note with the same letter-name is called an Octave.

**The White Keys**

Practise finding all the Cs on the keyboard, then all the Gs.

With your right hand choose a group of three high black notes and play the A nearby.

With your left hand choose a group of two low black notes and play the D nearby.

What are the notes marked with a *?
Introducing time

Each piece of music has various patterns of long and short notes. These patterns are called rhythm. The position of the note on the lines and spaces of the stave tells you which key to play, but it is the shape or design of the note which tells you its time value, i.e., its length in terms of rhythm.

Note Values

There are different types of notes for different lengths of notes (counts).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Has Counts</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>semibreve</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dotted minim</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minim</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crotchet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Signature

The time signature is written at the beginning of a piece of music to indicate the number of beats in each bar. Note values add up in each bar to make this time signature.

The upper number tells you how many counts in each bar. In this case 4.

\[ 4 = \text{a quarter of a semibreve}. \]

Therefore, in the time signature of \(\frac{4}{4}\), there are 4 counts in each bar and each count is a \(\frac{1}{4}\).

The lower number tells you what kind of note gets one count.

Right Time!

Place the thumb of your right hand on Middle C and play this as you count the following rhythm:

\[
\text{Count: } 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4
\]
Introducing notation

Notes show the player which keys to play on the piano and are written on the five lines and four spaces which comprise the stave.

The Stave

- 4th space
- 3rd space
- 2nd space
- 1st space

This note is in a space (the second space).

- 5th line
- 4th line
- 3rd line
- 2nd line
- 1st line

This note is on a line (the first line).

Piano music uses a treble clef (or G clef) sign for high notes (usually played by the right hand using the right half of the piano keyboard).

Piano music also uses a bass clef (or F clef) sign for low notes (usually played by the left hand using the left half of the piano keyboard).

For piano music, two staves are joined together by a brace - one stave for each hand - and this is called the grand or great stave.

Middle C

The Grand Stave

- Brace
- Bass clef

Middle C falls on a line between the two staves but, because it is often played by each hand, it is actually written like this.

Middle C played by the right hand

Middle C played by the left hand

Music is divided into bars with vertical bar lines. At the end of a piece of music is a double bar line.

Each bar contains a number of beats (or counts).
In a semibreve there are 4 crochets.

A crocet = 2 quavers.

A quaver = 2 semiquavers.

A semibreve = 8 minims.

Sixteen semiquavers is worth two minims or a minim.

For example, you can see that a quarter of notes.

You can see at a glance the values.

The note pyramid is very useful.

Use the note pyramid to test your observation.
Rests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crotchet rest</th>
<th>Minim rest</th>
<th>Semibreve rest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Crotchet rest" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Minim rest" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Semibreve rest" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One silent beat</td>
<td>Two silent beats</td>
<td>Four silent beats or a whole bar's rest even in $\frac{3}{4}$ time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clap the notes, counting the beats aloud:

```
\(\frac{3}{4}\) 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2
\(\frac{3}{4}\) 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
\(\frac{3}{4}\) 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
```

```
\(\frac{4}{4}\) 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
\(\frac{4}{4}\) 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
\(\frac{4}{4}\) 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
\(\frac{3}{4}\) 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
```
Some tips to get the most from your practice …

The most important thing you can do to become better at the keyboard is to practice. We’ve put together some tips to remind you of the best ways to practice.

Here are a few of the golden rules:

• SET PRACTICE TIMES
Aim to practice at the same time every day e.g. after you finish your homework or just after dinner. This will help you to get into a routine.

• PRACTICE EVERY DAY
It is better to practice for 10 minutes every day than for one hour once a week. You might find it useful to keep a practice diary.

• WARM UP
Practice some easy exercises or scales to get your mind and body back into the idea of playing.

• WORK ON IT
Spend some time practising the hard stuff! Be strict with yourself and try to get it as perfect as possible – but don’t be too hard on yourself when you don’t. If you find something very difficult in a piece or exercise, keep practising it over and over again until you notice an improvement - its the only way you will get better at it!

• COOL DOWN
Play something that you know well and enjoy playing. This will help you to relax, especially if you have been practising something really difficult!

• EVALUATE
After playing something, ask yourself what was good as well as what could be better. Concentrate on the things you could improve upon rather than just playing the whole piece.

I should be practising for ______ minutes every day!

Remember – The more you practise, the better you will get!
Ready to play

Place your **right hand** in the position shown.
You are now ready to play the notes C D E F G.
Play these five notes going up and then down.
Look at where the notes are positioned on the stave (i.e. on which line or space).

**Legato**

As you play the exercises below, hold each note until you play the next note. Then let it go - it is a ‘see-saw’ action. This kind of touch is called *legato* - Italian for smooth or ‘joined-up’. It is used for most of the music you will play. Think of smooth, even, connected, but make sure that one sound does not overlap with the next.

Starting points - **Right hand**

Look at the time signature of each exercise and count evenly as you play.

1. **Fingering**

```
\[ \text{\textbf{Count:}} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \]
```

2. **Fingering**

```
\[ \text{\textbf{Count:}} \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \]
```

Now practise the above exercises saying the letter-names (in time) as you play. Notice where each note is written on the stave e.g. C is in the space **below** the stave, D is **on** the 1st line and E is **in** the 1st space.
Change hands

Place your left hand in the position shown. You are now ready to play the notes F G A B C.

Play these five notes going down from Middle C and then up. Notice where each note is positioned.

Look at page 12: the stems go up on the right of the note head from Middle C upwards.

On this page: on these notes the stems go down on the left of the note head from Middle C downwards.

Hints and Reminders
1. Listen as you play - make sure that you are playing legato.
2. Try not to look down at your hands.
3. Remember to hold your fingers in a curved shape.

Starting points - Left hand

1.

Count 1 2 3 4 etc.
Fingering 1 2 3 4

2.

Count 1 2 3 etc. 1 2 3
Fingering 1 2 3

Now practise the above exercises saying the letter-names (in time) as you play. Notice where each note is on the stave e.g. B is in the space above the stave, A is on the 5th line, G is in the 4th space.
Old MacDonald

Old Mac-Don-ald had a farm,
Ee-eye, Ee-eye, oh!
And

on this farm he had some ducks
Ee-eye, Ee-eye, oh!
Quack, Quack, here
Quack, Quack, there

Ev-ry-where a Quack, Quack, Quack,
Old Mac-Don-ald had a farm,
Ee-eye, Ee eye, oh!
Oh when the Saints go marching in

In march style

Oh when the Saints
Go marching in

Oh when the Saints
Go marching in

I want to be in that number

When the Saints go marching in.
When the saints

The first note in the left hand of this tune is a D. It has an extra line of its own.

When a note is higher or lower than the staff, it uses extra lines, called ledger lines. Find out more below.

Ledger lines

To find out which note to play, count up or down from the last note on the staff like this.
The Dancing Bear

When notes are marked with the pause sign, hold them for a longer time.
I like watching TV.

Monkeys

When you see them in the zoo, you may catch a pea or two.

Monkeys climbing in the trees, scratch themselves to catch the peas.
Caterpillar

What is your name?

Don't tell me now, I'll ask you again.

Gem - ma or Jane?

His 8 feet make not a sound.

The Caterpillar Accompaniment

What is your name? Accompaniment
The Pipers are Coming!
(Musette)
from J. S. Bach
NEW POSITION

on the C below Middle C

Allegro

From C. Czerny
Scales, Broken Chords and Arpeggios

Scales

To be played legato and from memory.
Minimum speed: crotchet = 69.
C, G, D and F majors with separate hands (two octaves).

C Major

R.H.

L.H.

G Major

R.H.

L.H.

D Major

R.H.

L.H.

F Major

R.H.

L.H.
C, G and D major scales hands together similar motion (one octave).

C Major

G Major

D Major

A and D minor scales (melodic or harmonic, at the candidate's choice) with separate hands (two octaves).

A Harmonic Minor

A Melodic Minor
Chords with Stationary Bass
In F Major

Preparatory Exercise

Left Hand

Skip to My Lou
Old Singing Game
The Bouncing Ball

Allegretto

Meeting some Italian terms

\[\text{staccato} = \text{short, clipped}\]

\[\text{tempo} = \text{speed (rate of movement)}\]

\[\text{a tempo} = \text{back to the original speed}\]

\[\text{Allegro} = \text{bright and quick}\]

\[\text{Allegretto} = \text{fairly quick, but unhurried}\]

\[\text{Moderato} = \text{at a moderate speed}\]

\[\text{Andante} = \text{moving at a walking pace}\]

\[\text{rallentando or rall.} = \text{gradually getting slower}\]

\[\text{ritenuto or rit.} = \text{hold back (i.e. slower at once)}\]

\[\text{accelerando or accel.} = \text{gradually getting faster}\]
Theme from the Trout Quintet

This tune is by the Austrian composer Schubert (1797-1828). Andante means "at a walking pace".

The Trout Quintet was written for a violin, a viola, a cello, a double bass and a piano.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO, MY PRETTY MAID?

Nursery Rhyme
This tune is from an old English folk song.
Little Waltz

Allegretto

\( \textit{mf cantabile} \)

\( \textit{sempre staccato} \)

Meeting some Italian terms

cantabile = with singing tone
sempre = always
subito = suddenly
Largo = slow and broad

\( \text{\textsuperscript{8}} \)\( \text{\textsuperscript{5}} \) This sign means that the written note is to be played an octave higher.

\( \text{\textsuperscript{8}} \)\( \text{\textsuperscript{5}} \) This sign means that the written note is to be played an octave lower.
TARA’S RAG

Moderato

\[ \text{Music notation image}\]
Morning Has Broken

The opening of this famous melody should present no problems to those who have practised their one-octave
arpeggios! The R.H. finger substitution at the beginning of the second bar allows the legato to be continued
without any break in the phrase.

In the first instance the melody is accompanied by a L.H. broken chord figure. This should lift along gently; take
care with the L.H. dotted rhythm in bar 5 – the first note must be held for its full value.

In the second phrase the melody moves into the L.H. and the little two-note accompaniment figure which is heard
in the R.H. should be made to sound as though it is in the background.

The piece combines and juxtaposes single note lines with more chordal passages; take care with the sustained tied
notes which help to bind the harmonies.

At the end of bar 16, both hands should move swiftly into position for the following phrase.

Flowing \( J = 136 \)
Rondo

In a rondo, the first tune you hear comes back several times during the piece, with new tunes in between.

This tune is by Mozart.
The left hand plays in the treble clef at the beginning of this tune.

The groups of semiquavers will become easier if you play them slowly at first.
PRELIMINARY

Studies

List A

CADENZA.

A. Diabelli.

PIANO

Moderato.


# Musical Terms and Signs Used in Book Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musical Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ff</strong></td>
<td>very loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pp</strong></td>
<td>very soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mf</strong></td>
<td>moderately loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mp</strong></td>
<td>moderately soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>s</strong></td>
<td>play an octave higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>s</strong></td>
<td>play an octave lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#</strong></td>
<td>Natural sign. This cancels a $\flat$ or $\natural$ sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>&gt;</strong></td>
<td>Accent. The notes are played with extra force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A dot above or below a note</strong></td>
<td>means <strong>staccato</strong> = short, crisp notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(\text{\H{a}\text{\accent}})</strong></td>
<td>Pause. The notes are held on for a longer time than their value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[\H{a}\text{\accent}]</strong></td>
<td>A triplet is a group of three notes in the time of two. Look out for the figure 3. Example: a quaver triplet fills the time of a crotchet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adagio</td>
<td>slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>fairly slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderato</td>
<td>moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presto</td>
<td>very fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rit. (Ritardando)</td>
<td>slow down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accel. (Accelerando)</td>
<td>get faster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Tempo</td>
<td>back to the original speed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**My favourite Musical term...**

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**To Remind You**

Don't forget to:
1. Practise regularly every day
2. Practise slowly at first
3. Start by practising hands separately
**VIVA VOCE**

The examiner is looking for awareness and understanding of the musical text. Here are some examples of the sort of question which might be asked at this level of examination.

1. Questions relating to the stave

   What is the name given to the five lines and four spaces which the music is written on? (stave or staff)
   What is this sign called at the beginning of the stave? (e.g. treble clef or G clef)
   What is this line called? (points to bar-line)
   Why do we have bar-lines? (the bar-lines divide the music into bars, each bar has an equal number of beats)
   Could you show me the double-bar?
   What does this sign mean? (points to a repeat mark)

2. Note/rest length names and values

   What is the length name of this note/rest? (semibreve, crotchet etc.)
   The following diagram gives details of notes, rests and their values:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME (American equivalents in brackets)</th>
<th>NOTE</th>
<th>REST</th>
<th>VALUE in crotchets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>semibreve (whole-note)</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dotted minim (dotted half-note)</td>
<td>♬ ♬</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minim (half-note)</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dotted crotchet (dotted quarter-note)</td>
<td>♬ ♬</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>1½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crotchet (quarter-note)</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dotted quaver (dotted eighth-note)</td>
<td>♬ ♬</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>¾</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quaver (eighth-note)</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semiquaver (sixteenth-note)</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>♬</td>
<td>¼</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>