

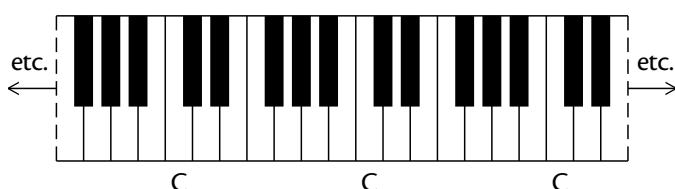


Seven letters for seven notes

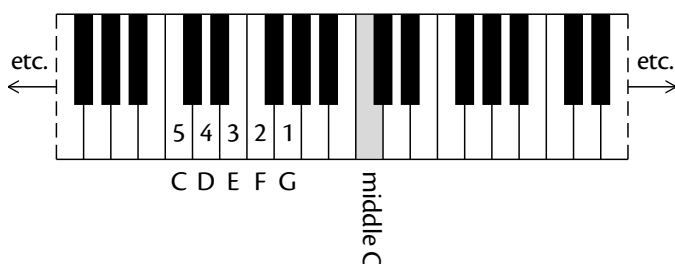
In music, the first seven letters of the alphabet are used to name the notes—A, B, C, D, E, F, G, then back to A again. The notes go from left to right on the keyboard, as you can see in the diagram on pages 12 and 13. The further to the right you go, the higher in **pitch** the notes become, and as you move to the left the notes become lower. The distance between one note and the nearest note with the same name is called an **octave**.

The five-finger position: left hand

Find all the Cs on your piano. C is the note immediately to the left of each group of two black notes. On most pianos there are seven or eight of them. Using the third (or middle) finger of your left hand, play each one in turn, starting with the lowest.



Middle C is the C nearest to the centre of the keyboard; it is shaded in grey in this keyboard diagram.



- With shoulders and arms relaxed, place your fifth (or little) finger of your left hand on the C an octave below middle C, with your other fingers and thumb resting lightly on D, E, F, and G (the white notes immediately to the right), as in the diagram.
- Remember to keep your fingers slightly curved.
- Keeping your hand in this position, play each note in turn, at a steady and even pace, moving smoothly up from C to G and down again. There should be no break between the notes. Lift one finger as the next is lowered, as if you were walking on the keys. 🎧 **track 1** demonstrates how it should sound.
- When you are confident with this and can play evenly and steadily, try playing the same finger pattern but starting on other notes. Listen to the effect. For example, try putting the fifth finger on D (one note to the right of C) or on E (one note to the right of that).
- Now you could try making up your own tunes, using just the five notes covered by your hand.

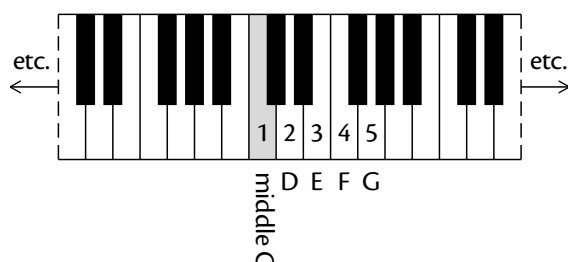
You may well find it hard to play evenly, so if you feel your hand or body getting tense, do the relaxing exercises on page 8, or go and have a cup of coffee!

Remember that the best way to develop your skills is 'little and often'.



The five-finger position: right hand

- Find all the Cs on your piano, and this time play them with the third finger of your right hand.
- Now place your right hand thumb on middle C, with your other fingers resting on D, E, F, and G (the white notes immediately to the right).



- Remember to keep your fingers slightly curved, and your shoulders and arms relaxed.
- Keeping your hand in this position, play each note in turn, at a steady and even pace, moving smoothly up from C to G and down again. 🎧 **track 2**
- Try starting on different notes (e.g. on D or E) as you did with the left hand.
- If you like, make up your own tunes as well.

On the CD are some more exercises to help you with finding your way around the keyboard and with note names.

Sit at your piano and listen to 🎧 **track 3**.

Reading music

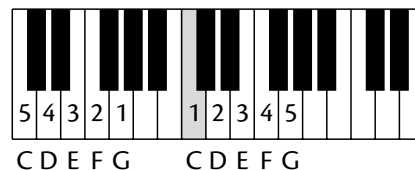
So far we've managed without having to read music, but that bridge will have to be crossed very soon. On the next two pages are the basic facts about how music is written down. If you can read music already, you can skip these pages; if it's all rather new to you then please read them, but don't worry if it doesn't all make sense at first as the main points will be explained again in later pages.



On the CD you will find recordings for each of the pieces in the book: **Solo** shows how you should sound, and **Duet** is another piano part that you can play along with, like a backing track. On some tracks there is a two-bar 'count-in' of clicks, to indicate the pulse.

- 🎧 track 5 Solo
- 🎧 track 6 Duet

Joyful



Moderate speed

1

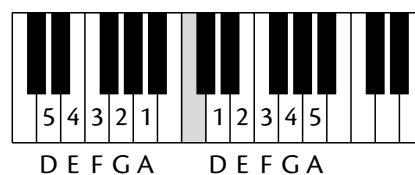
(count) 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 (etc.)

6

1

- 🎧 track 7 Solo
- 🎧 track 8 Duet

Sorrowful



Slowly

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(count) 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 (etc.)

6

1



Time signatures

The pieces you have played so far have had four crotchet beats in a bar, and the pulse has been in crotchets (quarter notes), hence the $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature.

$\frac{4}{4}$ is sometimes abbreviated to **C** (**common time**).

In $\frac{3}{4}$ the first of every three crotchet beats is slightly accented.

Count 1-2-3 1-2-3.

You often find ♩. (dotted minim/dotted half-note) in $\frac{3}{4}$; it lasts for three beats.

In $\frac{2}{4}$ the first of every two crotchet beats is slightly accented.

Count 1-2 1-2.

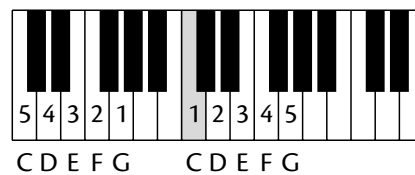
Approach the pieces on the next two pages as follows:

- Find out how many beats there are in the bar from the top number of the time signature.
- Count the pulse regularly—either 1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3 1-2-3, or 1-2 1-2, depending on how many beats there are in the bar, slightly accenting the ‘one’ each time.
- Tap the rhythm while you count the pulse in your head.
- Using the keyboard diagram as a guide, place your hands in the correct hand position and rest your fingers lightly above the keys, ready to play.
- Keep counting the pulse steadily while you play.
- Follow the line of the notes as they rise and fall on the stave. In these pieces there are more leaps, but you never have to move your hand, so use the position of your thumb as an anchor.
- Move your fingers steadily and evenly. As you press each key release the previous one to produce a smooth musical flow, like walking.
- You may find it helpful to break the piece into sections and practise them separately. The final aim is to get to the end without stopping, but this will probably take several attempts, so don’t give up!



- track 9 Solo
- track 10 Duet

Dance



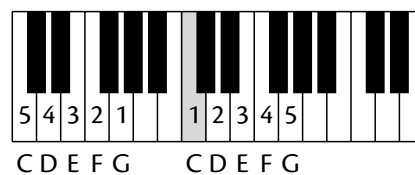
Susato
16th cent.

Rhythmically

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9

5



- track 11 Solo
- track 12 Duet

A Hurried Conversation

Quite fast

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