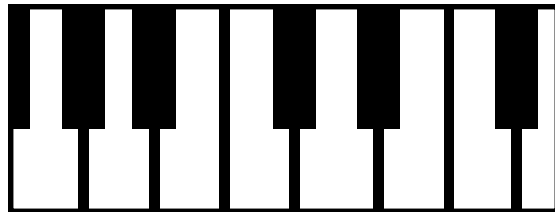
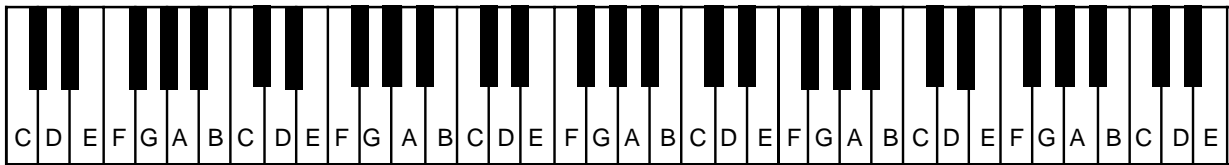


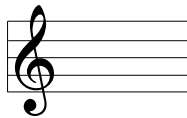
**How
to
Read
Music
Notation
IN JUST
30 MINUTES!**



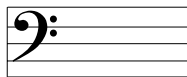


1. MELODIES

The first thing to learn about reading music is that you can ignore most of the information that's written on the page. The only part you really need to learn is called the "treble clef." This is the symbol for treble clef:



The bass clef is for classical



pianists only. It is totally useless for our purposes. At least for now.

The notes (♪) placed within the treble clef represent the melody of the song. You will only need to play one note at a time when you read music. On the piano you play the melody with the right hand.

The notes written on the lines and spaces of the treble clef tell you two things about them:

- 1) Their pitch (how high or low)
- 2) Their duration (how long they're held)

Facing the keyboard, as you go left the notes become lower in pitch, and to the right they become higher. We'll learn the specifics of how the note symbols reveal pitch and duration shortly.

2. THE PIANO KEYBOARD

A typical piano has 88 keys total (including all white keys and black keys). Most electronic keyboards and organ manuals have fewer. However, there are only twelve *different* notes—seven white and five black—on the keyboard. This twelve note pattern repeats several times up and down the piano keyboard.

In our culture the white notes are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet:


A B C D E F G

You can learn to recognize all the notes by sight by looking at their patterns relative to the black keys. Notice the black keys are arranged in patterns of two and three. The piano universe tends to revolve around the C note which you can identify as the white key found just to the left of a grouping of two black notes. A full-sized piano keyboard has eight C's. The C closest to the center of the keyboard is called middle C. Learn to identify this note quickly.

Once you find C you can easily figure out the names of the other white notes, because they follow alphabetically. The white key to the immediate right of any C is called D. The one to its left is called B. However, since there are only seven different white notes in music, after G the next note is A again. This pattern—A through G—repeats several times the entire length of the keyboard.

Memorize these seven different white notes by name, and learn to identify them on the keyboard without hesitation.

3. THE STAFF

This is called the treble clef staff:  Written on it are the notes of a song's melody. Notice this staff has five lines and thus four spaces. The lines and spaces all have letter names, corresponding to the notes on the keyboard. From bottom to top the five lines are named EGBDF and the four spaces are named FACE. Thus, by alternating and combining the lines and the spaces, you'll get EFGABCDEF. A note (dot) on the staff takes on the name of the line or space upon which it is placed and represents the corresponding musical note on the keyboard. Thus, these notes on the staff...



Middle C

...correspond to these keys on the keyboard:



Sometimes we need to add little lines above or below the staff to indicate notes that fall above or below the notes of the staff. This is middle C, for example:



Memorize the names of the lines and spaces of the written staff. Learn to correlate these notes with the keys on the piano.

4. SHARPS AND FLATS

Sooner or later you will need to learn the black keys (sharps and flats) on the keyboard. Every black key has both a sharp (**#**) name and a flat (**b**). You must learn them both ways. This is what they look like on the keyboard:

AS SHARPS: C# D# F# G# A#
AS FLATS: Db Eb Gb Ab Bb



And this is what they look like on paper:










Notice that every black key is named after one of the seven white keys—A through G. An easy way to learn the sharps and flats is to remember *sharp* means *higher* and *flat* means *lower*. Thus, **F#** is the black key that is immediately higher than the white key **F**. This same note could be called **Gb** because it is at the same time immediately lower than the white key **G**.


Memorize the sharps and flats both as they appear on the keyboard and as they appear in music notation.

5. NOTE DURATION



There is more to a melody than the pitch of the notes involved. Each note, in addition to having a certain pitch, has a specific duration. Learning the system of counting note values (duration) is traditionally a tedious and time consuming task. But it's a task you can avoid for the most part if you play melodies that are already familiar to you. If you can clap the rhythm of a song, you don't need to count it. In terms of note duration in popular music, being approximate is usually sufficient. But just for the record, these are the note values (duration) of the most common notes.


This is a whole note  . It usually gets four beats (foot taps). It is held twice as long as a half note  . The  is twice as long as a quarter note  , which in turn is held twice as long as an eighth note  , which in turn is held twice as long as a sixteenth note  .

Groups of eighth notes can look like this  .

A group of four sixteenth notes can look like this  . Thus, in terms of time values

$$\text{whole note} = \text{half note} = \text{quarter note} = \text{eighth notes} = \text{sixteenth notes}$$

The stems of the notes can go up or down; it makes little difference.  

One more thing. A dot after a note increases its value by half again. 

$$\text{dotted quarter note} = \text{quarter note} + \text{eighth note}$$

Practice the following melodies, observing how this note value system works.

6. SONGS

Here's your chance to take what you've learned so far and try playing a couple of familiar melodies. Use only your right hand.

Skip to My Lou



Jingle Bells



7. TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Now that you've learned how to read a simple right hand melody line, you're qualified to take our workshop so you can learn about chords. Adding chords to your melodies makes the music complete, and learning chords is easier than you might imagine.

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PO Box 751 • Paradise • CA • 95967
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